

SOCIALIZATION PATTERNS AND PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S
TELEVISION AND FILM-RELATED PLAY BEHAVIOR

CARLA JOAN SARETT

A DISSERTATION

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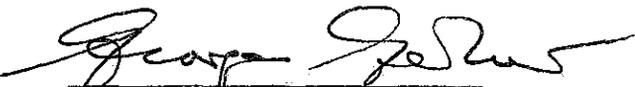
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Graduate Group Chairperson

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PREFACE

No student of childhood socialization can long remain impervious to the increasing importance of television and film in children's everyday lives. Games such as "cowboys and Indians" and "cops and robbers" have become firmly entrenched in the domain of American children's folklore. Yet, despite their persistence and popularity, surprisingly little is known about the nature and function of these imaginative escapades for children.

The present study grew out of earlier research which I had done on humor in children's spontaneous speech play (Sarett, 1978). In my master's thesis, I attempted to identify various resources of linguistic creativity which children utilized in their own interactions with their peers. I had expected, partly on the basis of my own literary biases, that children's humor would draw upon the rhymes and riddles of traditional folkloric material. Instead, it became apparent to me that the mass media, specifically television and film, inspired much of children's improvised speech play. News, commercials, interviews, situations comedies, and science fiction, all found their place in a rich array of children's creative productions. I was particularly impressed by the fact that children did not merely copy television and film material in their play, but transformed it in highly distinctive ways. I saw within these productions potential sources of insight into the ways in which children make sense of the messages delivered by the mass media (cf. Sarett, 1979)

While my initial concern had been to examine aesthetic dimensions of children's play, I began to shift my focus to the more social

aspects of these "borrowings" from television and film. I became absorbed with the ways in which children might transform and build upon the raw materials of television and film in their play interactions. I also felt that media research required more extensive documentation of children's interpersonal uses of television and film. Peer-group play which was related to media content, which could easily be observed under naturalistic conditions, offered a promising source of data for these purposes.

The first phase of research consisted in a three-month observational study of preschool children's free play in a working-class facility in Philadelphia. I was once again shocked to see how totally involved preschoolers were with the images of television and film. Children's conversations, drawings and play all revealed how fully integrated television and film were into their everyday lives. In particular, their imaginative play was almost entirely based upon media content. The Incredible Hulk, Wonder Woman, Superman and other media figures reigned supreme on the playground, woven into the fabric of children's social fantasies. What was especially striking was the highly patterned and redundant nature of these play forms, making it clear that the peer-group gave its own shape to television and film imagery. While many of the themes and heroes seemed to have persisted from my own childhood, the nature of the play that I now observed differed radically. I felt that the reasons for these differences lay not in any discontinuities in the content of television and films, but in social and contextual differences between these working-class children and my own middle-class background.

At the same time, I had become involved in a project which investigated interactions between parents and children which were related to television (Messaris and Sarett, 1981). The results of that research suggested that the arena of children's media-related play might best be conceptualized as part of an interrelated network of learning contexts, in which the family was the more primary. Earlier, the work of McLeod and his associates (1972a, 1972b, 1976) on family communication patterns had suggested intriguing relationships between socialization contexts and children's media behavior. It seemed fruitful to pursue the story of play and media in terms of their capacity to elaborate and refine the lessons of the family.

At this point, my parallel interest in the study of class stratification offered me a broader conceptualization of the problem. My thinking in this area was, and remains, heavily influenced by the work of Melvin Kohn on differential class socialization. In Class and Conformity (1969), Kohn argues that the occupational requirements of professional and working-class jobs generate distinctive patterns of behavior which are then incorporated into family socialization. He established, through interviews, that fathers who occupied professional jobs valued personal autonomy for themselves and their children, while persons of lower class position stressed conformity to authority. I began to wonder whether these kinds of variations in socialization patterns might have implications for children's social learning from the mass media, and might also lead children to develop different emphases in their television and film-related play. If, as I thought, the materials of television and film presented models of potential

social relationships, might they not be shaped in children's play according to the requirements of class position? In this way, the imagery of popular culture would not function in an autonomous sphere of children's own creation, but would be tools which society provides in order to prepare children for their future adult roles.

Finally, play research pointed the way towards various social antecedents of children's imaginative play, as well as conventional games and sports. Cross-cultural research had revealed striking regularities between socialization patterns and certain conventional game preferences in societies (cf. Roberts, Arth and Bush, 1959). And, research on children's imaginative play suggested connections between class socialization patterns and specific features of children play, in terms of authority relations and handling of conflict (cf. Smilan-sky, 1968; Ariel and Sever 1980).

Thus, a combination of perspectives gleaned from media research, studies of class socialization, and investigations of play led to the present theoretical framework. Because I pursue an argument which assumes a basic continuity among separate learning contexts, in particular peer-group play and learning from television and film, each of these perspectives contributes an integral element of theory, which builds upon one another. It was from this considerably more complex viewpoint that I returned to the examination of preschool children's games related to television and film. The methods of presentation and analysis that I used developed out of these theoretical assumptions.

However powerful one's theory, though, it cannot finally

obliterate the equally strong influence of the observational contexts and the children themselves. There is much meaning in the everyday experiences of group life which no study can truly convey. So many of the seemingly elusive factors which help to constitute the texture of social class have been unavoidably lost here. I would hope that the method of presentation of the play data does not allow the reader to forget the fact that I gathered these games from real social interactions among preschool children. Independent of any other considerations, the games themselves offer a rather unique glimpse into children's involvement with the materials of television and film.

Chapter I

SOCIAL CLASS, SOCIALIZATION AND CHILDREN'S MEDIA-RELATED BEHAVIOR

Introduction

Mass communications research has become increasingly aware of the need to incorporate the study of interpersonal contexts into its accounts of children's social learning from the mass media. Studies (e.g., McLeod et al, 1972a, 1972b) have isolated family variables in order to explain variations in adolescents' media behavior. And qualitative analysis of family processes involving television has been argued to be essential for a fuller understanding of social learning from the media (cf. Lull, 1980a). However, the intriguing linkages between the interpersonal contexts of mass communications and social structural imperatives have, by and large, remained unexplored (cf. Messaris, 1977). Too frequently, the family environment is studied as an independent system rather than itself conditioned by social structural processes. The result has been to sever the study of audience behavior from the investigations of the broader social functions of the media, when it is this interrelationship that is of interest.

The present research attempts to integrate the study of children's social learning from the mass media into the theoretical framework of class mobility training. What follows is an empirical exploration of the mechanisms by which children tailor media content to suit class-

specific contexts, through an examination of the play behavior of working-class and upper middle-class preschool children related to television and film. Using naturalistic data which were collected during "free play" periods, the study demonstrates patterns of congruency may become established between class socialization processes and children's media-related play behavior. I argue that these class-related patterns are primarily a response to requirements of occupational conditions which are transferred, via interpersonal processes, across a variety of diverse contexts in the social environment. In this investigation, I examine the appearance of these transcontextual patterns in the pre-schooler's transformations of mediated materials as these manifest themselves in imaginative social play.

This chapter outlines the basic theoretical assumptions guiding the present research. All of these stem, however, from an untested hypothesis that the mass media of communications do play a role in maintaining social control and, therefore, are conduits of social lessons. In this way, it follows a rich tradition in the study of fiction in social life (cf. Malinowski, 1954). I first discuss the importance of the concept of social class as it relates to social research, and then, review relevant research investigating differential class socialization. I suggest that class socialization patterns occur transcontextually within the child's environment, in both family interactions related to the media, and in children's play based on mediated-material. Issues which are specific to play will be discussed in Chapter 2.

The Reproduction of Class Relations Through Media

That the mass media serve to reproduce the structure of class relations, and thereby maintain the values of a dominant elite, or hegemony, has become an almost axiomatic claim of Marxist scholars (e.g., Hall, 1979; Murdock and Golding, 1979). From the angle of institutional analysis, the processes by which values are continuously extended through media have been well documented (cf. Breed, 1959; Elliot, 1972,). And, many content analyses of both television and film repeatedly demonstrate the biases of popular imagery. Audience studies have typically presented a more difficult problem because the connections are, of course, less defined. One may lament that media researchers and analysts of class stratifications have ignored the compelling interrelationships of their respective inquiries (Murdock and Golding, 1979). Clearly, if one grants the initial assumption that the media are controlled by, and transmit the messages of a dominant elite, the investigation of audience behavior becomes progressively intermingled with questions of social control. The culturally mediated representation of power and authority is hardly incidental to the maintenance of the class stratification system. However, while researchers (e.g., Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955) have studied the interpersonal interactions between audience members, they have been largely impervious to the importance of such processes in the media's role of maintaining and legitimating the social order.

It has been suggested that television's portrayal of social power "victimizes" its audience and, therefore, inhibits the potential for social action (cf. Gerbner and Gross, 1976). It can be argued that the

mass media may contribute to the development of "false consciousness", where the worker may be cognizant of his disadvantage social position, but cannot perceive its structural origins. In Marx's sense, true class consciousness is actualized when workers assume political beliefs which are predicated in terms of shared class interests and consistent with other class members (Caplow, 1964:132). One research strategy has been to link heavy viewers' responses to questions about the "real world" to television's presentation of those issues, via content analysis. Recent findings, however, indicate that exposure differences account for the different responses (between heavy and light viewers) only in particular subgroups, suggesting that the model itself must be enriched (cf. Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli, 1980. The problem, from the present perspective, is that victors, as well as victims, abound in society, but both may view equal amounts of television material. While it seems normal, and even predictable, that those at the bottom stratum should manifest symptoms of powerlessness, such as fear and mistrust, this seems less likely for groups having little to fear and frequently much to gain from the dynamics of the social system. The argument to be pursued here suggests that the differential perspectives of class members serve to structure the actual processes by which individuals assimilate mediated content. That this, what individuals learn to expect of society is determined by their role within it. Such expectations then mold their perceptions of their social environment, of which the media are a part (cf. Davis, 1948:62). By this logic, what individuals eventually extract from the variety of lessons that are embedded in the media serves to reinforce

class-related patterns of response. Therefore, the messages delivered by television and film, insofar as they are filtered through and within class-related communicational systems, become increasingly congruent with those systems: In this way, interpersonal interactions among audience members point the media's messages into social currency (cf. Benedict, 1934; Bartlett, 1932).

The Concept of Social Class

The present academic climate might aptly be categorized as overly sensitive to the normative implications of studying differential class perspectives. Frequently, the analysis of social class differences in purely structural terms has been perceived as inherently unjust to the diversity and integrity of working-class culture (e.g., Labov, 1970). Protests that might, perhaps, be more fruitfully directed at the social and political conditions generating inequality are aimed at the researcher's evaluations of its consequences. Of course, given the powerful system of organized rhetoric which protects the myths of the egalitarian nature of American democracy it is hardly surprising that the recognition of class has been uncomfortable. Indeed, class as a concept has been argued to be inapplicable to the structure of contemporary American society (cf. Nisbet, 1959; Faris, 1955). While it is not the task of social research to judge the respective merits of differential behavior systems, it is far more dangerous, and peculiarly naive, to assume that the socialization experiences which are available to new members of society are equally valuable with respect to the access they offer to the larger social system. Whether one thinks that the system is itself worthwhile is, of course, a different question.

It is routinely pointed out that social class remains a problematic concept in social science (cf. Lasswell, 1965). Most social research, unfortunately, has treated social class as yet another independent variable, which perverts its basic explanatory power. Although Marx (1969) can be credited with having discovered the significance of class as an explanatory principle of human history and social behavior, he never explicitly discussed the concept of class. Thus, various scholars have tried to construct what a "Marxist" theory of class might look like. As might be expected, the debate continues as efforts meet with resistance from competing viewpoints. Although it would be presumptuous for me to claim to possess a true "Marxist" position on this issue, I will argue that certain, generally well-known aspects of Marx's theory clarify the concept of class and its relevance for the study of social behavior.

For Marx, class is not a term that describes a hierarchy of status relations within a given society. Rather, class is effectively tied to specific, historical conditions which govern the division of labor within society. Unlike social strata (which can be detected in almost any social system), classes occur only in those societies where certain social groups have been excluded from the control and the ownership of the means of production. It is not status differentiation, which is a communicational issue, but objective and material conditions of life, primarily the relations to the means of production, that form the modes of thought and behavioral patterns that are peculiar to certain social classes. It is essential to Marx's theory that class-specific modes of consciousness include interests that, by definition, are opposed to

to the interests of other classes (cf. Centers, 1949) -- to the degree that objective differences inhere in the respective situations that are experienced by members of a given social class. The thrust of Marx's political analysis of capitalist society is that the widening of the differential between social class groups will eventually produce some conscious articulation of class interests (or, create class consciousness) which, in turn, will promote social change. Thus, class relations are, for Marx, both a constituent feature of the social system, and a principle of social structural change (cf. Dahrendorf, 1959:16). The presence of class conflict, which arises naturally from the oppositional nature of the relations between social classes, continuously serves to alter the structural form of the social system (cf. Radcliffe-Brown, 1935). It is this notion of social class as an integrative structural principle that make it far more than another useful variable of social behavior. However, the problem of class conflict has become even more complex with the changes in the structure of the occupational system, with its progressive upgrading of manual labor, and the growth of routine-skill, white-collar occupations, which all serve to blur what formerly appeared as clear-cut paths to social mobility (cf. Mills, 1956; Sennett and Cobb, 1972; Dahrendorf, 1959; Caplow, 1964; Glenn and Feldberg, 1977).

Differential Class Socialization Patterns

There is certainly no dearth of literature which documents many

differences in value systems and behavior between social class members (cf. Hyman, 1966). For the most part, though, there is no coherent explanation of how these different personality systems prepare new members of society to assume specifically structural roles. What is required, it would seem, is an examination of class membership that encompasses a variety of microinteractional contexts and relates them systematically to objective imperatives of the social system. That is, a connection has yet to be established between class-related values and behavior patterns to aspects of the external environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:244). The communicational patterns that are associated with social class, such as status differentiation or subjective class identification, cannot be taken as the origin of class differences because the argument is unavoidably circular. Rather, the different value orientations and socialization practices that have been correlated with social class membership (see Clausen, 1966; Hess, 1970 for literature reviews in this area) should be seen to result from the worker's accommodation to objective aspects of his/her structural position. Of course, the relationships here are admittedly complex and difficult to establish. It is with this position in mind, however, that studies addressing the problem of socialization shall be addressed.

Early studies of differential class socialization emphasized class as a social group generating specific associational patterns (cf. Davis, 1943; Warner, Meeker and Eels, 1949). Frequently explored were subjective notions of community stratification and interpersonal networks involved in maintaining status hierarchies (Hollinghead, 1949).

American society was shown to possess acute awareness of prestige, as

well as exclusivity in the range of associational patterns (cf. Davis, 1941, 1943; Hollingshead, 1949). Through their discrimination in social contacts, highly ranked members barred upwardly mobile individuals from entering upper strata. Thus, restrictions placed on the new member's range of contacts led to a concentration of values within different classes, due to the minimal interpenetration between them (Davis, 1943:609). Since parents steered their children's friendships to insure their own status, children from different classes engaged in different leisure activities (MacDonald, McGuire, and Havighurst, 1949).

While limits placed upon associational patterns may contribute to the maintenance of values, they fail to explain the functions of those values for different groups. The recognition of the strength of group behavior overlooks larger questions about differential power of groups, as well as the functional interrelationship of values to social roles. Questions of conflicting interests and obvious material variations were blurred in favor of "belongingness" (Coser, 1956:25). Moreover, social exclusivity as a phenomenon became pronounced when the material basis of higher strata deteriorated, and proved ineffectual faced with the increasing power of new money (Mills, 1956).

The more significant contribution of the Chicago school was its investigation of childrearing practices. In community studies which interviewed mothers (e.g., Davis and Havighurst, 1946), middle-class mothers reported more rigorous training in terms of toilet habits,

breast feeding, etc., while working-class mothers reported relatively greater permissiveness. It was concluded that middle-class children were earlier taught to restrain primary sources of satisfaction, and were more carefully supervised and regulated than were working-class children of the same age (cf. Davi , 1948; Davis and Havighurst, 1946; 1942). These findings were used to help explain the higher mental illness rate and delinquency among working-class individuals, who, presumably, had not learned to control undesirable impulses (e.g., aggression) at an early enough stage, creating subsequent difficulties in suppressing antisocial behavior. The practices of middle-class parents seemed generally consistent with their high mobility expectations for their children. Even when race was controlled, class differences in childrearing practices were reported. Lower-class American black mothers reported using more frequent and more violent corporal punishment than did lower-middle class black mothers, who were more likely to report using more psychological methods (e.g., reasoning) to insure compliance. Davis (1953) reasoned that the scarcity of material as well as communicational, rewards in the life of the lower-class black child impeded his subsequent ability to learn to renounce direct impulse gratification and to build more complex behavioral systems.

Other studies failed to confirm the Davis-Havighurst findings concerning the more stringent early training of middle-class children. Earlier, the Lynd's (1929) Middletown study had provided data that working-class mothers placed greater emphasis on obedience, than did mothers of higher class positions, when both groups were asked to score fifteen habits according to their importance in child training. Duvall

(1946), also using interviews, described working-class and lower middle-class mothers as "traditional", stressing neatness, cleanliness and respect for adults, in contrast to the "developmental" middle-class mothers, who reported wanting children to be happy, sharing, eager to learn, and cooperative.

The second major investigation of childrearing reversed the findings of the Chicago study: middle-class mothers reported being permissive more frequently than working-class mothers (cf. Sears, Maccoby and Levin, 1957). Discrepancies between the studies led to questions about sample differences and methodologies (cf. Davis and Havighurst, 1955). Using new data, Littman, Moore and Pierce-Jones (1957) argued that class patterns could not be established with interviews. With data supporting claims of middle-class permissive habits, White (1957) failed to find similar differences in children of different classes, using projective techniques; she concluded that maternal perception of childrearing may be distorted and defensive.

In the definitive synthesis, Bronfenbrenner concluded that differences between the various childrearing studies, while reflecting genuine variations in samples and the measurement of class position, indicated historical shifts towards greater permissiveness in American parents. Bronfenbrenner attributed this shift to the impact of liberal childrearing manuals on the middle-class, since middle-class mothers' reports were consistent with manual content. Working-class mothers, he argued, were adopting these same techniques, but more gradually.

One interpretation of this position is that early socialization practices, since they are transitory, are theoretically irrelevant (cf. Lee, 1977; Inkeles, 1973). Certainly, the limited time span examined (e.g., infancy) restricts the nature of the conclusions. Also, there is good reason to suspect the validity of interview data on childrearing; the plethora of liberal manuals may have cued middle-class women as to what to report about childrearing.

On the one hand, historical change could suggest reversals in mobility patterns. For example, McKinley (1964) found correlations between the reported mildness of socialization practices and male adolescents' estimates of anticipated downward mobility. However, it may be that many of the specific changes in infant training were trivial to the overall patterning of parent-child relations in different classes (Kohn, 1969). Middle-class conceptions of the problematic nature of childbearing led mothers to experiment with techniques and seek expert advice. In other words, while goals remained stable, evaluations of what techniques were effective in meeting those goals had changed. Because specific practices were integrated into the total fabric of middle-class relations, they effected no crucial changes in the middle-class family structure.

Occupation as the Basis of Class Experience

Linkages between social structure and personality are notably difficult to establish empirically (Elder, 1973). Research has yet to relate interactional patterns of structural requirement in any systematic fashion. The one study to do so most successfully, whose

theoretical framework generates this study is Melvin Kohn's Class and Conformity (1969). Kohn reinterprets class experience as an accomodations to three dimensions of occupational experience: freedom from closer supervision, the amount of routine labor, and the complexity of labor. Occupations conditions (specifically, pressional versus working-class jobs) generate certain behavioral patterns which are incorporated into family structure. His studies found that persons of higher social class position valued self-direction for themselves and their children, while working-class persons tended to stress conformity and believe that submission to authority it the only feasible route (Kohn, 1977: xxvi). While earlier studies (e.g., Lipset, 1959; Lipsitz, 1965) had discussed "working-class authoritarianism", they had attributed it to the working-class member's lack of a sufficiently complex frame of reference. Kohn's contribution was to connect this "frame of reference" to actual conditions experienced in professional and working-class jobs. In particular, he was able to isolate three aspects of work settings that differentiated individuals' value orientations for themselves and their children: freedom from close supervision, the amount of routine labor, and the complexity of work involved. The working-class member's belief in the ultimate impossibility of defying external authority, associated with political conservatism in earlier studies) is, from Kohn's perspective, a preparation for the performance of closely supervised, routine skill work. These values are, then, functional accomodations to the demands of the occupational settings, which feed back into class mobility training (cf. Levine, 1973). Those who

are born into a disadvantaged position within the stratification system are further inhibited from upward social mobility. The worker becomes "alienated" from his labor, and experiences it as merely a burden imposed upon him by external forces, which must be abeyed -- a process termed "self-alienation" by Marx. In a complex capital economy, argues Kohn, it is control over the labor process, i.e., conditions that directly affect that worker's capacity to exercise self-direction on the job, that most powerfully distinguishes levels of social experience (rather than ownership of the means of production or hierarchical position). Kohn then links the perceived requirements of occupational life to childrearing values and practices through a largely "negative" argument: no other class-correlated factor, including variables such as race, religion, ethnicity, income, or subjective class identification, successfully explain "why class is consistently related to values and orientations" (Kohn, 1969:189-90). On the basis of interviews, he argues that behavioral patterns and orientations which are generated by occupational conditions are somehow transferred into the context of family socialization. One may assume, incidentally, that the mechanisms by which such a transference is effected are evidence of second-order effects, since it is the mother, and not the working father, who is most directly involved in the processes of childrearing (cf. Bronfenbrenner, 1977). In the middle-class family, the emphasis on self-direction typically leads the parent to employ reasons and detailed explanations in monitoring the child's behavior, while working-class parents more frequently invoke statements appealing to authority and tradition. One type of family interaction stresses

the child's capacity to develop internal systems of control and breadth of perspective, while the other elicits conformity to authority. Furthermore, the conditions under which misbehavior is punished vary along the same dimensions. Middle-class parents more frequently consider the child's intentions rather than purely objective consequences ensuing from error, while consequences alone more often determine whether working-class parents punish/reward children. Thus, the middle-class child can acquire finer distinctions between different kinds of behavior and their contextual constraints.

Support for the general relationship between childrearing and economic requirements comes from cross-cultural investigations (Barry, Child and Bacon, 1959). On the basis of a sample of 104 ethnographies, the authors argued that the possibility for food accumulation/storage determines a society's relative emphasis on compliance and assertion. Where food is easily stored, the group develops systems of interpersonal cooperation, complementary division of labor and long-range group planning with centralized authority: members of these groups tend to be conscientious, compliant and conservative (ibid: 53). Where food cannot be accumulated (e.g., in hunting/fishing societies), survival is left to individual resources; members are more assertive, autonomous and venturesome. Correlations between subsistence economy and childrearing were established, showing accumulation to be correlated with compliance (training children to be obedience/responsible), and negatively correlated with assertion (training children to be achievement-oriented, self-reliance, and independent).

Other scholars have emphasized that the organization of the working-class community stresses tightly-knit social groups and family networks, imposing an extensive pressure to conform upon the individual (Hoggart, 1957:72). While such interactional patterns are not themselves casual, this pressure tends to work against social mobility by discouraging the display of differences that might threaten general class assumptions (cf. Barber, 1975; Spinley, 1953; McKinley, 1964; LeMasters, 1975). Investigations of mobility patterns find that individuals with minimally extended ties to their social group form and sever social relationships more easily and thus adjust, with greater facility, to the requirements of social and geographic mobility than do individuals enmeshed in denser networks (cf. Birdwhistell, 1951; Bott, 1957).

Similarly, Bernstein (1971) and his associates (e.g., Cook-Gumperz, 1973) argue that working-class culture, with its subordination of the individual to shared group expectations, generates a communicational system which blurs sharp boundaries between the individual and the group. Bernstein (1971) characterizes working-class culture in terms of its collective orientation, the physical dimensions of its occupations, and the transformation of the worker's low status into increased parental/marital authority. The controversial element of his theory rests on this argument that these conditions "restrict" the working-class member's breadth of perspective and cognitive flexibility so as to produce a narrow communicational system, or code (in which meanings are presumed to be shared). On the other hand, he claims, the middle-class individual has command of yet another system in which

individual perceptions/motives are fully articulated, because sharper boundaries exist between the self and the social group. Critics (e.g., Labov, 1970) charge that Bernstein ignores the more positive functions of working-class discourse, specifically those which are aesthetic. However, Bernstein's concern is to illustrate how this communicational system, regardless of its other merits, serves to limit mobility potential.

Bernstein further, and more crucially, suggests that these varying response patterns become built into class-related family structure: the "position", which prescribes behavior in terms of formally determined status and authority, and the "personal", which encourages individual flexibility and autonomy. These family structures generate varying control mechanisms ("rational" versus "imperative"), whose underlying dimensions, reasons versus appeals to authority/tradition, resemble Kohn's (1969) argument. Importantly, these appeals can occur in both restricted and elaborated variants. Thus, the "code" argument seems less cogent an explanation for the structuring of social relations than other, clearer factors, which are the family types and the control mechanisms that they generate. An empirical exploration of maternal control (Cook-Gumperz, 1973) analyzed working-class, mixed class and middle-class mothers' responses to questions of social control (e.g., "What would you do if your son/daughter spilt tea over the tablecloth when s/he wasn't watching what s/he was doing?"). Responses were generally consistent within each social class group, with middle-class mothers using more personal strategies, and the working-class mothers using more imperative strategies. Also, middle-

class mothers displayed a greater sensitivity to contextual differences and more frequently switched strategies from question to question. Although analysis of children's responses revealed fewer differences, middle-class children provided more personal strategies and working-class children use more imperative.

An analogous model of family communication types has been offered by McLeod and his associates (1972a, 1972b, 1976), who categorize communicational patterns along two dimensions, the degree to which opposing orientations are encouraged within the family, and the emphasis on family integration at the expense of new information. Their findings indicate that socioeconomic status was positively correlated with acceptance of divergent opinions (or concept-orientation) and negatively correlated with family integration (or socio-orientation). Although McLeod and Brown (1976) note, the correlations are relatively low, the data support both Bernstein's and Kohn's work. Kohn's correlations also are low. It may be that any investigation of individual families fails to capture the full flavor of social class experience, which encompasses larger contexts.

Experimental studies support the notion that the middle-class individual has a greater variety of communicational strategies, offering a greater cognitive breadth and flexibility. Hess and Shipman (1965) required mothers to teach children to sort various objects by two characteristics simultaneously, and found that middle-class mothers used more personal appeals, provided more specific feedback on aspects of task performance, and more abstract statements. Brophy (1970) found that middle-class mothers were the only group to spend time on

orienting the child to the task, giving advance instructions and making the salient attributes of the block comprehensible. Thus, both studies found a "planning" component to the middle-class behavior, which may explain why middle-class children did substantially better on the task. Other experimentally controlled settings reveal that middle class (as defined by professional occupation) parents tend to employ verbal reinforcement, encourage independent activities, and provide rational explanations in exacting obedience from children, while working-class parents more often employ physical rewards and punishments and demand obedience without specifying reasons (cf. Hess and Shipman, 1967; Bee, Van Egerman, Streissguth, Nyman and Leckie, 1969; Streissguth and Bee, 1972; Schmidt and Hore, 1970). Similarly, studies have discovered social class differences in the reported use of corporal disciplines, with fathers who were more closely supervised on the job reporting greater use of punitive measures with their sons (McKinley, 1960). Combining story completion tests, interviews and measurements of leisure time activities of teenage boys, Miller and Swanson (1960) suggest two orientations, "motoric" and "conceptual", which were related to mothers' subsequent reports of punishment systems: mothers of the "conceptual" boys reported using psychological discipline (e.g., reasons, threats) and explained demands, while mothers of "motoric" boys reported using corporal discipline and appealed to authority alone. Systematic observations in homes suggest related nonverbal patterns emerge during the child's first year (Kagan and Tulkin, 1971).

In summary, we may extrapolate from the empirical literature, only some of which has been explicitly reviewed here, and establish the

following distinctions in class socialization patterns: (1) In the middle-class, the child is taught to master the social environment, through independent decision-making and self-reliant actions. Thus the child is trained to perceive the world in terms of his/her ability to control it, allowing progressive movement from one stage of activity to the next (or planning). The working-class child, on the other hand, is trained to respond to the environment as ruled by immoveable constraints, against which all actions are ultimately impotent. (2) In the middle class, the individual is led to differentiate him/herself from the group, and thus permitted and encouraged to seek and articulate divergent points of view. The working-class child is explicitly subordinated to collective pressures, and expected to assimilate personal experience into the framework of group assumptions. (3) The middle-class child is taught to internalize control systems, so that s/he is punished for underlying motivations and violations of shared rules. The working-class child is trained to obey and exercise authority in terms of formal status and/or physical coerciveness, and is, therefore, punished/rewarded by the objective outcomes of his/her actions.

To repeat, these patterns are, first a response to requirements of the father's work setting, which are transferred into the home via interpersonal interactions among family members. The argument is that this same relational pattern manifests itself transcontexturally at various levels of structure within the social system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Whereas the relations at one level appear relatively clear, their repetition across a variety of seemingly unrelated settings, such as family conversations about television and children's games based on

television, may seem somewhat less obvious. It should be mentioned that the availability of such patterning has been an important explanatory construct in anthropological theory (cf. Benedict, 1934), where it is claimed that diverse cultural materials will be assimilated to already existing patterns of social life. The basic assumption behind such a notion (cf. Bateson, 1972) is that early learning serves to structure subsequent learning (i.e., "learning to learn"), producing an economy in the social learning process. Thus, the new member of society is able to transfer a relational pattern across diverse contexts. With the mass media, s/he finds models which serve to reinforce these same social learning process, and thus strengthen the relational pattern. It is the audience members' uses of cultural models, then, that "tailors" them to suit social needs. If this is true, parents will steer their children's media-related behavior in ways which are congruent with class values -- in programs chosen, through varying explanations of characters/situations, as well as other interactions related to television. Thus, the child will have to respond to mediated materials in ways consistent with class position, and find within them a source of reinforcement for class-related patterns.

Family Processing of Mediated Materials

It would appear unlikely, then, that television's messages would escape the overriding patterns of social control that generally prevail in the home. More probable is an extension of parental monitoring systems into children's responses to the medium. Studies exclusively concerned with the issue of program selection and control of exposure, have not revealed consistent social-class differences (cf. Gross and

Walsh, 1972). These findings, perhaps, may be related to initial problems in the measurement of social class (e.g., use of income alone). Further, it is not clear that exposure as a variable explains much of the variance in children's learning from the media (Williams, 1981). The problems with respect to different program choices may be somewhat different, since television offers rather little in the way of a complete spectrum for the child viewer. It may be that "specials" (e.g., documentaries, science programs) play a greater role than research typically investigates. Popp (1981) suggests, on the basis of observational data, that middle-class parents may encourage children to watch informational programming. Furthermore, whereas McLeod (1976) and his associates warn against simplifying their notions, the two dimensions along which family types differed (i.e., concept-orientation and socio-orientation) do appear to be class-related and generate a similar "information" preference in adolescents' media behavior, versus an "entertainment" bias in socio-oriented teenagers. Admittedly, these findings are highly inconclusive. However, there have been public reports of concern from middle-class parents about potentially deleterious effects of television (cf. Geiger and Sokol, 1963), which may well flow into parental selection of programs.

If we limit ourselves to the issue of parental control of children's responses to, and developing interpretations of, mediated messages -- i.e., if we are concerned with meaning rather than consumption -- then, the findings of previous research appear somewhat more promising, if equally tentative. Again, McLeod et al (1972) suggest that these different types may not only affect viewing patterns, but

may have impact of their awareness of various critical dimensions of the medium's presentation of reality, and, consequently, on their disposition to identify with fictional characters. Using this theory, Lull (1980b) was able to relate "socio-orientation" to family members' use of television to illustrate experience and validate ideas, while relating "concept-orientation" to parental use of television to regulate the experience of children. Popp (1981) found evidence that poorer Mexican-American parents discourage children's questions about television programs, while middle-class (Anglo) parents used the same occasions to provide extensive information. She also suggests that, in certain cases, parents in middle-class families may take an even more active role and fill in historical and scientific information for the child while jointly viewing television programs. Messaris (1980) found evidence that parent-child interactions in higher social class families may focus on unfamiliar persons or themes (to the child).

Indirect support for these findings comes from studies (Williams, 1969; Halloran, Brown and Chaney, 1970) indicating that both lower-status children and adolescents (in this case, delinquents) displayed markedly less ability to elaborate on mediated stories than did higher-status viewers. Thus, these different family communicational patterns may have broader implications for the child's developing capacity to distinguish television's approval of reality from the "real world" as well as for other interpretational skills (cf. Messaris and Sarett, 1981). An important consequence of social class membership, in terms of media behavior, may be the differential ability to evaluate television's lessons in a sufficiently critical and complex manner. Thus, the

"rational" principles which are spelled out in the context of middle-class socialization may encourage the middle-class child to disregard many of television's harsher and more stereotyped conventions. Similarly, their absence may prompt the lower-class child to be more receptive to them (cf. Greenberg and Domenick, 1969). Furthermore, middle-class parents may be utilizing the medium in order to promote their children's breadth of perspective, and general enthusiasm for ideas.

A consequence of the above position would seem to imply that the lack of breadth and flexibility of perspective associated with lower class position renders those audience members especially "vulnerable" to the negative effects of visual media (Kniveton, 1976). According to such an argument, the richer family environment provided to the middle-class serves to "innoculate" him/her against television's many "effects" (cf. Singer and Singer, 1976). Implicitly, the less involved working-class parents, or, for that matter, any parents who are less vigilant in controlling children's media behavior, are individually responsible for whatever negative impact that the mass media have upon children.

The position taken here differs in that it denies the possibility of "effects" without prior social reinforcement, which is usually provided by families. Rather than seeing family processes as an inoculation against an all-power medium, it views family processes as a means of providing the necessary conditions for learning through visual media. The implications of this view are that parental control of children's viewing, selection of different media content, as well as family pro-

cesses in general can only be separated from the more diffuse process of television "effects" on an analytic level. Theoretically, these are interrelated processes which all contribute to the child's eventual mode of response to the mass media. The irony of the "innoculation" argument is that the very lessons which the working-class parent is "blamed" for failing to screen out, namely television aggression and violence, are precisely those which are reinforced in other aspects of childrearing - for example, in parental punishment of misbehavior as well as parental approval of children's aggressive behavior against other children (cf. Newson and Newson, 1968). For example, recent work by Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli (1980) suggests that television exposure appears to heighten environmental uncertainty more when the television message "resonates" with the environment, i.e., in high crime neighborhoods. Messaris (1981) suggests that this may be due to direct parental reinforcement of negative television stereotypes: parents draw out those aspects of television material which are, in fact, relevant to the child's future experience. Thus, working-class parents who live in dangerous neighborhoods may well extract cautionary lessons for their children, for whom crime and violence may be real, rather than fictional concerns. There is no reason to assume that it is the medium itself who "teaches" the child behavior, values or attitudes, but there is also no reason to accuse parents of transmitting the very consequences of their own class position. In other words, media behavior is one of the many vicious cycles in the working-class member's social learning (cf. Davis, 1942).

Without some system of external reinforcement, children would

encounter difficulties in selecting certain models (for play, imitation, etc.) and rejecting equally visible options. Some prior learning is required in order for a model to attract the child's attention. Further, mere attraction to, or imitation of, a model is not a sufficient basis for social learning. As I shall discuss later, some further support system is needed in order to maintain the imitative behavior. It is interactional contexts which may articulate the "lessons" of fictional materials. The child who imitates a media character, and is then reprimanded may have learned the negative consequences of the behavior in question. In this manner, we would expect class socialization patterns to exert equal influence in terms of the supports that they offer to different media-related responses of children.

Therefore, differences in critical abilities and program preferences are not the only ways in which class differences might manifest themselves in children's media-related behavior. As we have seen, the middle-class child is being trained to perceive the social and physical environment as one which can be altered by human action, while the lower-class child is conditioned to accept authority. Such differences are not only related to skill but to social power itself. We may expect that the child's extractions from television and film materials may serve to bolster these initial perspectives. Children may understand and use the same media content in different ways. Differential patterns of emphasis might result in three ways:

1. Learning processes within the family might steer the child to prefer certain content, through parents' evaluations both of media

content and of related issues. With respect to television, parents may single out aspects of programs which most resemble or match their desired goals for children (e.g., sharing, creativity, obedience). In this way, the middle-class child, being primed for achievement, may be constantly alerted to the more mastery-oriented themes and characters, while the working-class child may be impressed by authority relationships.

2. Interpretations of television/film narratives given by parents may similarly process children's understanding of motives, relationships, etc. Thus, the middle-class emphasis on rational explanation may allow the child to supply his/her own reasons for a character's acts in the absence of the parent. The working-class child may be progressively shaping the mediated world in terms of the same imperative principles of control that rule his/her home environment.

3. Children's imitations of television and film models may be received differently within the home. The middle-class parents, who is eager to broaden his/her child's perspective and encourage novel, independent behavior, may allow a greater variety of unusual imitative performances and may respond playfully to them. The working-class parent, who has a firmly established set of role models for the child to follow and equally rigid modes of behavior which are permissible, may respond only to imitations which fit preconceived notions of the child's role -- in terms of sex,

status, etc. Thus, we would expect the middle-class child to be able to perform not only a greater variety of roles, but a more unusual repertoire of types (i.e., types distant from the immediate environment).

Peer-Group Processing of Mediated Materials in Imaginative Play

So far, I have only considered class socialization patterns in the family context, but clearly, other contexts begin to shape the child with equal force -- in particular, children's peer-groups and the educational system. The present study is an investigation of the processing of mediated materials within children's imaginative play. Children's free play periods were observed in preschools which were identified by personnel as catering to children of either "professional" or "working-class" occupations. Consonant with Kohn's (1969) interpretation, working-class occupations were defined as those jobs which involved routine-skill labor and little capacity to exercise self-direction; thus, clerical occupations were considered working-class (cf. Glenn and Feldberg, 1977). Since the theoretical interest is in class mobility training and the media's role in these processes, the location of the preschool child in a given institutional context offers insight into the mobility trajectory of the child (to the extent that mobility patterns themselves determine their placement in educational systems). That is, if a working-class family is clearly training their child for upward social mobility, then, presumably, their socialization practices would vary in the "middle-class" direction and, furthermore, lead them to place their child in suitable peer-group and school settings.

My specific aim is to describe variations in children's selective treatment of the mass media, as it is manifested in social, peer-group play, and to try to account for those play variations in terms of class-related socialization patterns. The particular interest here was in the nature of social relationships which children build into these borrowings from the media, as well as the degree of purposive, mastery-oriented behavior within these play formats. I hypothesized that children's media-related play would display equivalent relational patterns as are found in socialization processes within the family. The middle-class children's play behavior would, by such a prediction, display egalitarian social' relationships, produce rational motivation for play acts, contain activities which are novel and which lead to future success, and use cooperative means to achieve goals. Working-class children's play behavior would, similarly, display class-related patterns with an emphasis on authoritarian social relationships, and an aggressive orientation to conflicts, as well as depending on imperative means of control, and developing fewer novel, future-oriented solutions.

In the next chapter, I shall explore some of the issues relating to the utilization of play behavior as evidence of children's learning. In addition, I shall review studies which lend support to the notion that the middle-class orientation leads to the development of greater novelty and flexibility within play behavior.

Chapter II

THE USE OF PLAY BEHAVIOR AS EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

The utilization of play data is examining children's learning from visual media is, typically, associated with studies based on the work of Albert Bandura, or "observational learning theory". Both the laboratory and field studies within this tradition (see Bandura, 1969 and Kniveton, 1976 for reviews) claim to condition children's play behavior through variations in exposure to media content. For example, Stein and Friedrich (1972) exposed nursery school children to varying "diets" of prosocial and antisocial media content in order to trace whether related patterns would emerge in their peer-group play. Since I make no equivalent claim about the relationship of media content to play behavior, and use play data quite differently, I will clarify, in this chapter, the differences in theory between these studies and my own. First, I reject the assumption that vicarious processes, internal states, or other mechanisms which are separate and isolated from social interaction can produce learning. I also argue that play, as well as imitation of observed models, have been inappropriately studied as terminal points in a closed learning system, rather than as parts of a more inclusive system forming interlocking chains of reinforcement. Finally, these studies have blurred play with imitation, and have consequently ignored

the "representational" or fantasy dimensions of play behavior. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a more adequate perspective on a number of interrelated issues involved in learning through media and play. Play will be discussed both as social behavior within the peer group, and as representation of social process. And, in order to support the study's broader theoretical claims, empirically established connections between childrearing practices and play behavior will be examined.

Social Learning Through Play and Media

My discussion about social development draws upon the writings of George Herbert Mead (1934), who argued that the social personality emerges through interaction with the environment. While insisting upon the active, self-determining nature of human organisms, Mead argued the specific capacities associated with human intelligence emerge from the organized behavior of social groups in which individuals are situated. Thus, the field of human through "extends as far as the social activity or apparatus of social relations which constitute it extends". (Mead, 1934:223.)

The individual begins by patterning responses to cues which are purely external, and later internalizes a dialectical pattern formed from accumulated interactions with others. Thus, the increasing internalization of these patterns of response not only becomes the primary mechanism of the individual's self-control, but also the pre-conditions for reflective thought (cf. Vygotsky, 1962). In a more contemporary formulation, Skinner (1953) argues that the organism becomes stimulated by the consequences of its own behavior: these

consequences "feedback" into the organism and alter the probability of its future occurrence (Skinner, 1953:59). Through a constant series of interactions, the individual learns what effects its behavior produces on the environment as it develops the capacity to predict the future probability of responses in the same class of behavior.

In Mead's theory, the crucial component in the process of social development consists in the individual's capacity to assume a diversity of social perspective, through an internal organization of group attitudes. First, the child integrates discrete attitudes of persons within the immediate environment, towards himself and one another, and, later, forms a more abstract pattern of relational tendencies which are inherent in the social group, as these increasingly impinge upon his/her immediate social environment. Thus, individual behavior becomes governed by the structure of social relations in which is it implicated.

For Mead, play occupies a central role in the above process because the child, in early dramatic play, can act out different roles and respond to himself and others. It is this progressive incorporation of diverse viewpoints that allows the child to be able to interact in a communicative fashion (cf. Flavell, 1968). Therefore, one of the primary values of children's early imaginative play is that it imposes demands which require the player to assume roles, which may be distant from his/her perspective, and develop complex responses to various behavior stimuli, provided by other players' performances. For Mead, as well as Piaget (1962), this early symbolic play leads naturally to conventional games, which are the fullest expression of social, rule-governed participation. Piaget claims that social rules increasingly

impinge upon the freedom of symbolic play and gradually adapt the imagination to forms which are more imitative of reality. Thus, the changing nature of the child's social relationships effects a transition from symbolic play to conventional games; to the extent that the child becomes implicated in group processes, the individualized nature of the ludic symbolic yields to collective pressures.

More recent work by Smilansky (1968) challenges developmental assumptions about imaginative play. On the basis of observations of disadvantaged groups of Israeli children, Smilansky argues that certain children may skip sociodramatic play, but readily engage themselves in conventional games. These findings suggest that play and games constitute separate psychological systems, and that learning from play may not transfer to conventional games (Smilansky, 1968:17). Part of the explanation for the absence of sociodramatic play rests on the claim that role-taking skills, i.e., the capacity to assume diverse perspectives and respond to others' cues, are stifled in certain social environments. Thus, whereas Piaget assumes that the changes in social relationships bearing upon play are universal features of child development, namely entrance into the peer group and progress through the age-grading system (Piaget, 1934), play appears to require somewhat more complex social antecedents. The implication of this is that the highly internalized control systems, which Mead (1934) argued were the full expression of the social personality, may, themselves, be restricted to certain environments.

The above realization does not merely cast light upon the nature of play experience, but allows us to reinterpret a number of concepts,

relevant to play as well as learning from visual media. The central problem in socialization theory is how precisely to explain the process by which the child internalizes the abstract relational pattern which is shared by members of his/her social group. Here, diverse bodies of literature converge in their focus on the concepts of identification and imitation. Put simply, through an internal mechanism (identification), the child develops the motivation to match the behavior, attitudes and values (imitate) of other persons or, in certain instances, fictional models. Identification is, therefore, the precondition of imitative behavior and the link between role models and social behavior. Unfortunately, despite the great importance which has been assigned to identification in socialization theory, it still remains both theoretically ambiguous and empirically unobservable (cf. Bronfenbrenner, 1960; Kagan, 1958; Gewirtz, 1969).

Loosely defined, identification involves (a) the child's capacity to perceive a similarity between himself and a role model, and (b) the child's desire to be like the model or to possess the model's rewards (cf. Kagan, 1958). If we synthesize a number of different theoretical frameworks on the subject, we may extrapolate the following highly general assumptions about the process of identification:

1. That such perceptions and desires, which form the basis of identification, stem from an initial dependency relationship with a nurturant parent, which is an unvarying feature of infancy.
2. That the perceptions of similarity, and the subsequent imitative behavior, become self-reinforcing or possess "intrinsic rewards" for the child (cf. Aronfree, 1969; Kohlberg, 1969).

3. Finally, that these perceptions and desires will lead to continued imitative behavior on the part of a child who is exposed to models which possess the qualities (e.g., warmth, power) to generate them. According to the usual explanation of identification, then, the continuity of learning systems on the individual level may be generated by an initial replication of the parental model, which is sustained by a self-reinforcing mechanism, and subsequently determines responses, and imitations of later role models. To the extent that fictional models incorporate aspects of the initial parental model, they, too, inspire "identification" on the child's part and therefore generate imitative behavior.

In this way, identification is conceptually utilized to explain not only the imitation of specific behavioral traits, such as voice inflections, but what is considered to be a more total gestalt of parentally-generated behavior. It is this more abstract incorporation that is of final interest in the study of socialization, especially in the investigation of the replication of class structure. How well does the concept of identification allow us to explain the continuity of learning mechanisms throughout socialization? Can we assume, in the face of varying empirical results with respect to different behavioral similarities between children and parents (cf. Mussen, 1969; Rothbart and Maccoby, 1966), that identification with initial role models occurs across social groups (i.e., that all children perceive similarities between themselves and parents, or desire to be like parents)? The underlying theoretical question is not whether, at certain points and in certain family types, such as "identification" between parent and

child exists; that seems to be reasonably well-established. Rather, the question becomes whether it is this internal mechanism which is the underlying tissue of learning continuity.

Freud's (1933) writing provided two separate identificatory mechanisms to explain differential sex-typing. An initial dependency relationship with the nurturant mother creates a primary identification, which develops with the gradual withdrawal of total maternal nurturance. Although it is reasonable to assume that the satisfaction of primary needs by the nurturant parent creates certain bonds, the continuation of imitative behavior in the face of increasing withdrawal is theoretically problematic. Thus, it was later added that identification and imitation of the model allow the child to reward itself, in the absence of maternal reinforcement (cf. Sears, Maccoby and Levin, 1957).

Freud recognized that the above mechanism was insufficient to explain the social development of the young boy, who spends most of his time with his mother but acquires, in early socialization, traits that are specifically masculine. In a second "defensive" identificatory mechanism, the male child's libidinal instincts towards the mother generate an anxiety about the father's punishment of these desires. In order to reduce the guilt and anxiety which have been engendered by the Oedipal hostilities (i.e., the boy loves/admires the father, but unconsciously wishes him dead), the male child internalizes the father's more punitive qualities. These, it is argued, constitute the specifically "masculine" component of the child's later personality.

By adopting aggressive paternal traits, the child then transforms his unconscious fears of retribution (for the desire to kill the father) into an active, and aggressive role.

In Anna Freud's (1946) classic interpretation of this second form of identification (identification with the aggressor"), this mechanism represents a preliminary stage in the development of the conscience (or super-ego); what happens is that the child's internalization of others' criticisms is still incomplete and is, therefore, projected back onto the external environment. The identification is a defense in that it permits the young child to shield himself from the full consequence of internalization (i.e., self criticism, which is unpleasant) while learning the appropriate behavioral standards (by criticizing others for violations). Eventually, extrinsic criticism becomes internalized, in the normal personality, as guilt, and the severity of the super ego is directed at the failures of the self.

The above explanation has assumed an important role in explanations of male development (cf. Hetherington et al, 1967). However, it rests on a particularly controversial theoretical assumption, namely the reality of Oedipal hostilities. The ambiguities in the original formulation of the theory have led to a variety of reinterpretations, among which were the "intrinsic" rewards which accompanied identification with the same-sex parent.

Bandura's (1969) observational learning theory presumably clarified processes by which children's assimilate qualities of parental models. The theory, while designed to avoid ambiguities associated with

"identification", still rests on internal motivations. The core of the theory states children can acquire novel forms of behavior by watching a model, without the benefits of social reinforcement. Specifically, this separate form of learning is made possible through "vicarious" reinforcement, in which subjects are conditioned by observing a model perform behavior that is either rewarded or punished. Theoretically, if the observed reinforcement is positive, then subjects will acquire the behavior more readily, without extrinsic reinforcement. While accepting the basic premises of social learning theory, Bandura theorizes that certain forms of behavior are acquired, not through specific tuition, but through modeling. In this way, learning mechanisms are split into extrinsic conditioning, on the one hand, and modeling, on the other; the latter are supposed to short-circuit socialization by avoiding the tedium of reinforcement (Bandura, 1969).

To explain this separate "observational" learning process, internal states, which are equivalent to identification, are hypothesized which motivate the subject to imitate the model because of perceived similarity (e.g., same sex) or a desire to possess the model's rewards (e.g., warmth, power). While the possibility that such perceptions and desires are conditioned responses is casually entertained, its implications are never totally integrated into the analytic framework. Thus, experimental data are interpreted in a piecemeal fashion. When viewers do not imitate the observed behavior, aggressive or prosocial, prior reinforcement is brought in, as an after thought, to explain why so-called observational learning did not occur. For example, Bandura

himself cites studies of childrearing (e.g., Sears, Maccoby and Levin, 1957) which indicate that parental training readily accounts for much of sex-role socialization. There is never a lucid theoretical explanation as to how these separate learning mechanisms remain isolated from the powerful constraints of prior conditioning.

When we consider the wide range of models, both real and fictional, that children observe (as opposed to the single, focused experiments which present children with one behavioral possibility), the necessity of incorporating the child's prior conditioning becomes increasingly apparent. There is no way to explain how children, via mere observation, select certain models to imitate (e.g., Marcus Welby vs. Superman) or how they choose to imitate selective aspects of the model's behavior (e.g., voice, gestures, clothing, etc.). Developmentalists (cf. Bruner and Olson, 1974) have pointed out that learning from demonstrations itself demands prior skills, which are not provided by the model. Furthermore, research suggests that children's capacity to perceive similarities between themselves and fictional models may be absent in certain family environments (cf. McLeod and Brown, 1976), and may be conditioned through specific parental comparisons (Messaris and Sarett, 1981). Thus, the "precondition" of imitative behavior, identification, does not seem to be an universal property of experience with models, and may be affected by a variety of antecedents.

To rest the case here would represent a shallow critique of Bandura's theory since it leaves the possibility that, under certain conditions, learning still occurs solely through observation. That is,

once the child has developed certain propensities to respond to fictional models and has sufficient cognitive skills to store the information, s/he may then acquire novel behavior from observing models. Quite naturally, it is this possibility that frightens parents of young children who fear that television violence will cause seemingly normal offspring to leap from buildings, beat siblings and so forth. (Neale and Davidson, 1973). Gewirtz (1969) cogently argues that most of the effects of observational learning experiments (e.g., young children beating plastic dolls after having observed an adult model do the same) can be explained in terms of basic conditioning theory. Following Millard and Dollard (1941), he claims that imitation as a class of behavior is directly reinforced by parents so that the child "learns" to imitate. More crucially, this imitative response itself is not the terminal point in the learning process, but must be maintained by intermittent reinforcements. Thus, while early learning may produce certain imitative responses, the child will not subsequently maintain them without future reinforcement. Identification, in this view, is merely an earlier stage in the learning process. In summary, the child's imitative response (or his/her perception of similarity to a model) is not the direct product of observation, nor is it the final point in a close interaction with a model. Rather, it is a conditioned response which enters into the social learning process only insofar as it receives reinforcement.

Within the above behavioral framework, cooperative group play becomes extremely relevant to the social learning process. Peer-group play generates an interactional network where children can receive

reinforcement for selective portions of their behavior. What the child has extracted (via prior family conditioning) from the environment is now dramatized and becomes a stimulus for others' responses (cf. Mead, 1934). Unlike solitary play, the child has to calibrate the specifics of his/her performance in order to accommodate group expectations. In this way, imitative behavior produced in play may be extinguished by peers. For example, the child who performs an aggressive act may be chastized by other children and thus learn the "negative" lesson about aggression. Such reinforcement can come from "teacherlike" preschool children, as well as from concerned adults (cf. Feshbach, 1975; Feshbach and Devor, 1969). Even preschoolers can moralize to their peers (e.g., "you're a bad boy"). Of course, controlled experiments exclude the opportunity to view play as a process of interlocking responses. Naturalistic observations reveal not merely children's fantasies, but the interpersonal processing of their fantasies in peer-group interaction. Thus, we are able to see how television and film materials are shaped to suit group requirements.

Play as Representation of Social Process

However, while the above "processual" aspect of children's play is important, it does not close the issue of play. For if our only interest were in the child's present interactional patterns, then many everyday, naturalistic settings would lend themselves to the task. The problem in studying the development of social relationships is that many of them have no literal counterpart in the child's current situation. For example, the child bullied by his/her parents

has, perhaps, incorporated aspects of dominant parental behavior which are suppressed in the context of family life. In short, observations of certain settings become less appropriate for studying portions of children's learning that pertain to adult performance. It is here that the use of fantasy material becomes useful to the researcher. Specifically, the developmental literature (e.g., Piaget, 1962) suggests that imaginative play provides an insulated learning context where children can practice portions of future behavior that they have already learned, but which are inappropriate for their position within the age-grading system. Research also indicates that complex communicational patterns, such as role reversal, which emerge early in play, appear to anticipate later interactional skills (cf. Garvey, 1977).

Whereas children's conventional games prestructure relationships between players and generate game-specific models, fantasy play requires children to use rules which they have already assimilated in other contexts. Since there are few predetermined rules, the child must use other available modes of relationships in order to generate play (Smilansky, 1968). Games with conventional rules (e.g., baseball), on the other hand, give the child a communicational context that exists independently of the child's involvement. The child learns, by playing the game, rules which are arbitrary and context-specific. Thus, the game itself structures the child's understanding of whatever relationships are within it. Gump and Sutton-Smith (1955) vividly demonstrate this "prestructuring" process in boys' central authority games. In a study which involved intensive, systematic

observations of these games, they discovered that the peer group more frequently taunted an authority figure when he was in a low-power role, regardless of his actual skill in game performance. Interviews with unskilled boys revealed that they perceived themselves as more skilled in the higher-power roles, although their performance were observed to be uniform by the investigators. It appears, then, that conventional games generate models of relationships which possess an independent psychological reality for their players (Gump and Sutton-Smith, 1955). Imaginative play differs from conventional games in both the origin and type of rules, as well as the manner in which the child is able to elaborate rules. First, the rules are not arbitrary, but are borrowed from "real life" or, perhaps, fictional, models of social relationships. Through this constant borrowing process, the child can practice and refine aspects of social relationships which are of present or future salience; in this way, two sisters can "play" at being sisters (Vygotsky, 1979).

Furthermore, in order to render play comprehensible, the group must share sets of rules about relationships; lacking an immediately recognizable role performance, the play relationship collapses (Garvey, 1977). In conventional games, players have recourse to rules which exist over and above specific performance. Imaginative play sustains a more delicate communicational balance among children whose initial perspectives may diverge. In social play, each child must be able to represent role behavior in a manner which is recognized by peers, in order to elicit the appropriate group response. Whereas chases in baseball do not require this explicitly "representational" element,

i.e., the dramatic display of cowardice or bravery, pursuits that are imaginary necessarily do: it is the representation of behavior that must fir the communicational environment and is subsequently modified by it. Because of this constant incorporation of group expectations into individual role performances, play behavior offers us rather unique insights into children's structuring of social relationships. Moreover, given the pressures of organizing group interaction, it is easy to understand why the highly conventionalized models of experience which are provided by the mass media offer so potent a source of imagery for children's imaginative play (cf. Gomberg, 1960; Singer and Singer, 1976). In the stylized world of television and film, children have at their disposal an abundance of shared experience that provides ready fuel for escapades into fantasy. Furthermore, the mass media illustrate adult roles in ways that the child's own encounters with parents and teachers cannot, and thus may chart future social expectations for the child. By incorporating these fantasy-based models into their imaginative play, children are manipulating the resources of cultural imagery to structure their own social relationships.

Interpretation of Play Data

Even if we grant the above position with respect to expressive media, the interpretation of imaginative play behavior is rather complex. Since I am using naturalistic contexts, I have a dual perspective on the processes in question. First, I have the opportunity to examine the variety of personnel responses to children's play. The patterns of behavior here are relatively easy to distinguish from one

other and more importantly, to interpret. Since these everyday interactions are not representational, their implications are relatively clear-cut: the staff member discouraging a violent game by rationally elaborating the appropriate moral principles is, clearly, inculcating certain complex views within the child and, perhaps, discouraging the aggressive behavior in question. However, the bulk of the data are not "ordinary" social processes, but representations of social process in expressive models. Here, interactions occur between figures, such as witches and monsters, and the matter of interpretation becomes far more ambiguous. As represented models themselves become increasingly far removed from normal social processes, the interpretation of potential linkages between play behavior and future social performance becomes more difficult.

As previously mentioned, research with children may always contain the risk that many of the interactional patterns, which have been observed, are not later incorporated into adult behavior but are extinguished in the processes of socialization. An obvious advantage of observational data that are collected in naturalistic contexts, without intrusive measures and over longer time spans, is that they can tap more persistent, aggregate behavioral patterns. The dangers of constructing one's case upon purely transient, unique responses are somewhat diminished, although still tentative in the absence of longitudinal data. Even longitudinal studies, however, cannot fully validate hypothesized linkages between representations of fictional models and future adult behavior. Congruities between individual life

history data and play products may always be an "artifact of the stability of the concepts", rather than a "true congruency of the data" (Radke, 1946). Thus, this study is subject to the same kinds of charges that psychoanalytically motivated investigations of play data have received, since the use of the material is essentially projective, using play as a magnifying glass to scrutinize latent aspects of social experience. The more the analysis of play data concentrates on patterns which are latent, and uses them to support the broader theoretical claims, the more tenuous, and metaphorical, connections which are posited become. Like projective techniques, this study is subject to a number of charges (see Radke, 1946): (1) that the validity of basic assumptions cannot be established; (2) that no scientific safeguards have been placed on the investigator's particular theoretical biases in the interpretation of the data; (3) that the analytic techniques themselves are highly unreliable; (4) that the very form of the results makes systematic comparisons between observed groups difficult, and (5) that the degree of internal consistency in the data is undetermined.

The researcher of play behavior, insofar as s/he is not merely interested in the child's present peer-group interactions, but in the patterns of social development, becomes progressively committed to a metaphorical interpretation of the data. Clearly, no available tests can finally verify the validity of any particular interpretation of the data.

With respect to the above points, the study is not a complete ethnography of children's play behavior. Observational work in

naturalistic settings, to some extent, yields a general picture of group structure, along with individual roles. However, the unit of analysis was the "represented" interaction and not the interpersonal peer-group dynamics. Undeniably, as Schwartzman's (1978) research illustrates, these two interactional levels are interdependent: the group bully appears as a play monster. A more detailed analysis along these lines would reveal more complex and subtle interrelationships to emerge. However, while the peer-group positions of individual children certainly produce variations in their individual role performances, these variations are largely irrelevant to the structural patterns which are of interest here (cf. Barker, 1968:9). Rather than tapping individual play interactions, the present study considers the entire "game" to be the central unit: what matters is the totality of roles and relationships embedded in this unit. Thus, whether or not a group member actually performs a given role, it may become available to him/her as part of a potential social relationship (cf. Bateson, 1956). Children may be learning how to respond to roles which they themselves never perform. Of course, as I have previously mentioned, the specific meaning of any of these play roles, such as Superman and Darth Vader, remains necessarily metaphorical.

Impact of Childrearing Practices on Specific Features of Children's Play Behavior

While the linkages between play and future social behavior may remain tenuous, play research indicates the presence of more direct connections between childrearing practices and specific features of

children's play. This section will review relevant studies in this area -- both on conventional games and imaginative play.

The major stream of studies in this area stemmed from the work of Roberts, Arth and Bush (1959) in which games were defined as competitive activity with a definite outcome. The classification of game types was refined in order to distinguish between different competitive forms: games of physical skill were separated from games of strategy, where rational choice determine the outcome. Hypothesizing that games were models of cultural activity, the investigators were able to correlate the game types with cultures reflecting similar concerns.

Later, this developed into the "conflict enculturation hypothesis" which stated that games represent an insulating area where tensions induced by antecedent child training are resolved, leading to further learning about requirements of social power (Roberts and Sutton-Smith, 1962). This model was influenced by psychoanalytic theory, which sees play as an anxiety-reducing mechanism in response to initial family traumas (e.g., separation from the parent) (cf. Roheim, 1943). Whereas the Freudians took a "safety-value" view, Roberts and Sutton-Smith claimed play was a primary context for social learning, allowing the player to develop greater competence in handling the real-life equivalents of game situations (e.g., environmental uncertainty). They proceeded to relate game types to socialization practices, as well as other cultural factors in cross-cultural studies, using the Human Relations Area File (see Sutton-Smith, 1972, for a summary of these studies). Cultures possessing only games of physical skill had relaxed

methods of childrearing, along with simple technology, and subsistence economy. Games of chance, on the other hand, prevailed in cultures with varying degrees of environmental uncertainty. The more complex strategy games appeared in cultures displaying similar complexity in technology, political integration, and child-training emphasizing self-reliance and achievement. Further study (Roberts, Sutton-Smith and Kendon, 1963) revealed cultures possessing games of strategy also contained folktales with similar emphasis. Hypotheses about social class preferences were also supported: (1) lower strata persons preferred games of chance, and (2) high strata persons preferred games of strategy (Roberts and Sutton-Smith, 1962).

Eifermann (1971) extended the conflict-enculturation model to investigate social class differences in a large scale observational study. Eifermann studied children's games over a year, using disadvantaged children (from North African/Mediterranean background) and advantaged children (European background) in Israel. She further refined the game classification system by adding a fourth type, memory game, to account for the large number of games which depend on rote material (e.g., jump rope rhymes). The Roberts-Sutton-Smith hypotheses were borne out, although physical skill turned out to be ubiquitous in games to be used. Games of pure physical skill were played by more boys than girls, whereas memory games were played by low status children (especially girls). Eifermann attributes social class and sex differences to prior cultural reinforcement in the exercise of certain skills (1971:86). Skills that are exercised within the expressive model are

consistent with those generally emphasized in child socialization. Further support for this hypothesis is provided by Brown's study of Pennsylvania German children's games (Brown, 1974).

Riddling, too, turns out to have specific childrearing antecedents. Roberts and Forman (1971), again using cross-cultural methods, found that riddling persists in cultures where children are interrogated orally by adult authority, and where rote learning is emphasized (cf. McDowell, 1975).

In brief, a formidable number of studies demonstrate impressive correlations between childrearing antecedents and play forms cross-culturally and inter-culturally. Other studies, not working from the cross-cultural method, have also provided evidence that differences in play may be determined by prior socialization. A number of investigators have focused on aggressive elements in play. Data from experimentally induced play situations supported a hypothesis that competitive behavior appears earlier and is more aggressive among lower-class children (McKee and Leader, 1955). Observational work by Murphy (1937) of children's doll play episodes indicated that the lower class child used greater amounts of physical reinforcement, both nurturant and aggressive. Klonsky (1980), in systematic observations of children's baseball games, found that lower class children used more physical reinforcement and gave less specific feedback to other children.

Attempts to extend socialization patterns into the complex domain of children's imaginative are rare. The major work is undoubtedly that of Sara Smilansky (1968), who not only observed children's social play

but also interviewed parents , and could thus suggest links between socialization patterns and play. As mentioned, Smilansky found that disadvantaged groups of children rarely played imaginatively and lacked many role-playing skills utilized by middle-class children. She argues that these play variations are not only related to differences in childrearing, but to parents' direct conditioning of play behavior. Middle-class parents attach great importance to play, supply their children with roles, encourage fantasy excursions, and play actively with their children; lower-class parents felt play was intrusive and sometimes forbade their children to play. Even when lower-class children were encouraged by teachers, they lacked the relevant skills and were crippled in their ability to play. When these same disadvantaged children were taught, by teachers, how to play, they did eventually learn. On this basis, Smilansky argues that all play behavior may be conditioned within the family. Systematic observations of English working-class and middle-class children have similarly found differences in amounts of symbolic play (Tizard, Philips, and Plewis, 1976), as well as in the ability to develop toy-related interests and complex, involved toy play (Kniveton and Stephenson, 1972). More direct support for Smilansky's hypothesis comes from Singer and Singer's (1976) study showing that middle-class mothers who fostered make-believe and storytelling, as well as rating themselves high on self-reliance, had children who produced more spontaneous play. It is worth mentioning that this last study was concerned with television-related play, although not with issues

related to socialization patterns per se. Work with television-related family interactions suggests that parents may be particularly active in conditioning children's play based upon fictional characters, as well as assuming complementary roles in television-related play (Messaris and Sarett, 1981). Thus, Smilansky's argument about the initial conditioning of play behavior may have particular relevance for the present study. First, it suggests, albeit tentatively, that certain of the connections drawn to class socialization may be the product of active parental involvement with prior play experiences. With respect to the hypothesis about parental "mastery" training, Hattwick (1936) found a positive relationship between active parental involvement in children's play and school-rated self-reliant behavior. Smilansky identified distinctive differences in play behavior or the groups in terms of authoritarian patterns, breadth of role behavior, and novelty and complexity of play. (It should be noted that she was not concerned with "represented" roles, but children's actual handling of conflicts in managing play, such as distribution of toys, etc.). She found workingclass children demonstrated authoritarian leader behavior, acting in an order-giving aggressive fashion, while middle-class children acted more cooperatively and, when leaders were present, used egalitarian methods of decision-making. The group's play behavior differed not in terms of themes, since both groups chose "real life" scenarios, but in degree of novelty and complexity: the middle-class children displayed a greater diversity and variety of roles and relationships, and incorporated novel possibilities into the original

thematic framework.

Importantly, Smilansky again related the above patterns to parent-child interactions. Consistent with other studies (see Chapter 1), she found that the middle-class family environment encourages independent action, broader knowledge of behavioral roles (i.e., different fathers act differently), and consciously help the child progress from one stage of independent activity to the next. Lower-class families, on the other hand, present the child with more global demands, and limit the understanding of adult behavior (since their behavior is presented as the only acceptable position). More directly, the middle-class parents conceptualize their roles as "teachers" and constantly stimulate children with new vocabulary, didactic games, etc. As previously mentioned, this extends directly to play where they actively demonstrate the potentialities of imitative behavior for the child (e.g., asking the little girl of her baby doll is "crying" or "giving you trouble", etc).

Working out of a similar theoretical framework, Ariel and Sever's (1980) observational studies in Israel found that urbanized Bedouin Arab children's imaginative play differed from that of middle-class kibbutz children in the use of rules which pertained to rights and duties controlling play objects and territories, and the resolution of conflict: the middle-class group was more flexible and sophisticated in their use of "unwritten laws" that control play interaction (Ariel and Sever, 1980:166). Congruent with other studies, the middle-class group typically resolved conflicts by appealing to shared rules, while the Bedouin group (whose parents were construction workers, truck

drivers, etc) resolved conflicts through physical force. Similarly, they discovered variations in the flexibility and novelty of play behavior (or "color"). Particularly relevant to this study is their finding that the middle-class children displayed a greater ability to generate imaginative play from secondary sources (television, fairy tales, etc.); they suggest that these themes, such as spaceships, are too distant from the Arab child's perspective to be integrated fully into imaginative life. Eifermann (1970) hypothesized that kibbutz children's games would be less competitive and contain more symmetrical social relationships. She devised a classification scheme for games based on (1) competitiveness, (2) organization of the group, and (3) symmetrical or asymmetrical relationships. She found that group games calling for cooperation toward the achievement of a common aim within a competitive framework were more popular among kibbutz children than among children raised in a family-basis cooperative settlement (Moshav). Ariel and Sever also suggest relevant differences in parent-child interactions between groups, again supporting both Smilansky's (1968) claims as well as Kohn's (1969), stressing an information orientation on the part of middle-class parents in the kibbutz: parents actively encourage children to ask questions, provide detailed explanations on a variety of topics, etc., while the Arab parents expect children to glean information passively (by observing adults).

I have reviewed the above studies in detail in order to make the theoretical expectations of the present study clearer. Taken together,

Smilansky's (1968) and Ariel and Sever's (1980) research suggests a strong interrelationship between family socialization practices and specific features of children's imaginative play behavior, some of which become highly relevant to the present study. First, it would appear to be arguable that imaginative play is not a general underlying feature of child development, but may be linked to early learning systems which are generated in family contexts. (On the other hand, there does seem to be some tendency for all children to develop play under the proper conditions).

Considering the degree of importance which has been placed on the diversification of social perspectives, cognitive breadth, and social sensitivity which are learned by children in their play (cf. Pitcher and Prelinger, 1963: 159), the differences with respect to social class may have extremely important implications. Introducing the perspective of social class effects a reinterpretation of the development of children's role-taking skills. Second, it appears to be equally plausible that elements of structural complexity and thematic elaboration are not in any way coincidentally related to role behavior which is either authoritarian or egalitarian. In short, we find that diversification of social perspectives, and greater degrees of innovation, emerge within those play contexts whose own relational structure resembles that of the egalitarian "middle-class" family type. Both Singer and Singer's (1976) and Ariel and Sever's (1980) research suggest that one consequence of the middle-class family

environment, in terms of imaginative play in general (as well as television and film-related play) is to encourage the child to draw upon themes which are more alien to the child, and to elaborate them in ways which are themselves more flexible, detailed and imaginative. Thus, we can see at least one way in which family socialization practices become more concrete "translated" into the make-believe world of children, which may not have been as directly implied by the studies on family training.

Schwartzman's Critique of Play Research

Helen Schwartzman has recently taken issue with the above position on imaginative play and the research addressing social class differences. In Transformations (1978), Schwartzman argues that Smilansky (op cit) and other play researchers (e.g., Freyburg, 1973; Feitelson and Ross, 1978) have neglected important activities in the lives of lower-class children, and have thus presented a rather distorted picture of play. She suggests that the middle-class bias of most play researchers has implicitly placed a higher value on the middle-class style of play; hence, they have presumably "discovered" various cognitive, verbal and social deficiencies in the play experience of lower-class children (Schwartzman, 1978: 120). The result has been to create a deprivation in the play experiences of these children, which it is the task of educators and play researchers to remedy (in the style of Smilansky's project). Unfortunately, by doing so, these

investigators have devalued the activities of lower-class children which are indeed creative and imaginative (only not in the ways valued by the middle-class). Schwartzman (1978) cogently argues that any training in imaginative play is essentially misguided because it ignores the fact that play experience is specific to the social context of the group.

How does Schwartzman's critique modify the claims of the present study? Obviously, I cannot defend myself against the obvious charges of middle-class bias. However, it is important to see that I am not investigating, in this study, the respective degrees of creativity and imaginativeness in preschool children's play in general. That would be an altogether different task. Rather, here, I am concerned to describe preschool children's transformations and elaborations of the stories, themes, and characters of film and television within their peer-group imaginative play, and to discover whether these imaginative renderings are consistent with other aspects of childhood socialization. Terms such as novelty, creativity, etc., whenever they are used, are not meant to evaluate the play in general: they are descriptive indicators of the narrative patterns which are embedded in children's television and film-related play behavior.

Furthermore, I do not discuss any peer-group play which was not explicitly related to television and film. This limits the nature of the conclusions which can be drawn from the study.

It could be argued that one of the major forms of creative and innovative play that exists for black working-class children, i.e., the games of singing and dancing, has been eliminated here and that my analysis is accordingly biased. It is also worth mentioning that many of these games are derived from another mass medium -- radio -- which may have greater importance in the social lives of working-class children than the narratives of television and film. In any event, because these games of singing and dancing could not be related to either television or film, they were not included in the present analysis of children's games. In other words, I am making no broader claims about the social play of either middle-class or working-class children on the basis of these data. I chose to examine children's peer-group play as a way of studying the interpersonal processing of television and film materials. It may well be that different forms of play experience become more or less relevant to the development of innovative and complex repertoires of children's behavior. Also, my analysis is necessarily biased in the direction of play behavior that is narrative and lexical, because, as I discuss in Chapter III, this type of play was easier for me to relate to television and film. Thus, the analysis may have omitted key elements of play experience. A more comprehensive investigation of children's play would have to include nonverbal and paralinguistic behavior in order to understand the data more completely. For example, elements of satire might easily be

coded paralinguistically; in terms of children's attitudes towards the media, this would be equally important.

Most crucially, Schwartzman reminds us that it would be inappropriate, as well as theoretically wrongheaded, to think of the play of working-class children as leading up to or evolving into the middle-class style of play, as if the latter represented a more perfect version of play. There should be no inference, from this study, that working-class children are attempting, or should be attempting, to play like middle-class children but failing to do so. Clearly, the play of different social groups varies according to the demands of peer-group organization and experience. Certain types of social relationships and behavioral responses occur more frequently in play because they possess greater salience within a given social context. There is no reason to expect that the working-class child would perform actions within play that have little significance in his/her ordinary social life. And, the skills which are stressed within play bear obvious relevance to different social arenas. Working-class children engage in many play forms which involve complex social and aesthetic skills, involving greater group collaboration and organization than middle-class play.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY FOR STUDY

A naturalistic study does not provide certain controls that are taken for granted in experimental work, but must contend with the irregularities of real life. I cannot pretend to have solved many of the methodological problems which are inherent in observational work. In this section, I describe the actual procedures involved, and identify potential problems and sources of bias. I should emphasize that this was an exploratory study in the area of imaginative play.

Preparatory Fieldwork for Project

In my initial fieldwork, I observed a working-class daycare center in Philadelphia for three months. My intent was to immerse myself totally in the setting and to glean as many contextual details as possible. During these observations, I did not sample different groups or take notes systematically while on the premises. Instead, I familiarized myself with the group and examined how different individuals within it utilized television and film themes within their peer-group. Out of these initial observations, I was able to derive more general categories of media-related games types.

The intensive nature of these preliminary observations was made possible by an unusually cooperative staff, who expressed interest in

this specific project. It was the director who initially suggested that I observe her group at play. She had produced a television program for children (using children from her daycare center) and had understandable enthusiasm for this project.

The daycare facility differed from others that I later observed in that it received no government aid, but was still geared for low-income parents and operated on a sliding-scale fee. Because of the unusual nature of the program, the group was mixed and it contained some children from slightly higher income families whose parents were interested in the preschool curriculum. My observations were conducted during summer session, in which children's activities were more or less unstructured. I visited the group three times a week, for about two hours each morning, a time slot which could contain both curricular activities and a free play period. Curricular activities consisted in storytelling, dressup, drawing projects, dancing and singing.

The group was composed of about forty children, ranging from three to six years old, and was racially and ethnically mixed, with children of Philadelphia Italian, Northeast blue collar and black families from South Philadelphia. Most of the children were Catholic; the preschool itself was associated with a nearby Catholic church although it was not parochial. The emphasis of the school was on developing "free" expression for children, and free play periods were non-directed and lengthy. The director stressed to me that she felt that free play was important and that she wanted children to feel uninhibited at school. She also informed me that she had successfully placed several of the children in one of Philadelphia's better elementary schools, which

appeared to be the concern of several of the parents. In this respect, the institution differed from other working class preschools that I observed, where I was not informed of any equivalent expectations about educational success.

I was introduced to the children during ordinary indoors activities. I had requested that I be introduced simply as "Carla" (rather than as Miss Carla) so that the children would not confuse me with staff. The teacher told the group that I was interested in how children play, and that I would be observing their games. After a short period of shyness, children quickly grew familiar with me. I encouraged them by sitting on the ground, rather than in chairs. Soon, when I entered the playground, children shouted for me to watch them perform tricks, girls asked to comb my hair and search my purse, etc. The staff were young women, usually high school graduates or college students working during summers, who acted as "helpers" to the director (a trained Montessori teacher). While I had felt initially awkward, both the staff and the children put me at ease.

The children clearly appreciated the benefits of a summer program. They felt that they were lucky to be able to attend a school with a swimming pool during the hot summer in Philadelphia. Many of the children had attended the preschool for years and were as comfortable in the institutional surrounds as they might have been in their own neighborhood. The children seemed genuinely fond of the staff, sitting on their laps and often telling teachers that they loved them.

The ratio of staff to children was about two staff members to 35 children, but the number of children varied from week to week because

of parent's vacations. Staff members sat and watched the children, but did not circle the playground or organized play activities. I was the only adult on the playground itself.

When I knew the children well, I was able to elicit stories from them about television and film plots, and ask them questions about media behavior. Most of the children were devoted television viewers, and could recite details from film which they themselves had not viewed. For example, one girl (age 5) described rather explicitly a scene from a movie, Halloween, which her mother had described to her. Not only did she provide concrete visual details (e.g., it was very dark and scary) in her telling, but she actually screamed in terror at a climatic moment. When I asked her about this film, it turned out her mother (a young divorcee) frequently narrated spooky film plots to entertain her daughter.

Not all of the children gleaned their knowledge of television and films second-hand. Most had attended various "spooky" and violent films with their parents; these films included Jaws, Dracula, Phantasm, Alien, and Star Wars. Children would tell me before the weekend when their parents had promised to take them to see certain movies. Favorite television programs, gauging from children's conversations, were Starsky and Hutch, Emergency Patrol, The Six Million Dollar Man, The Bionic Woman and Wonder Woman. Girls' conjectures about potential marriages inevitably focused on the virtues of Steve Austin (The Six Million Dollar Man) because "He's good," although sorrowfully noted that he would probably marry the Bionic Woman. Many children reported wanting to grow up to be superheroes, such as Batman and Wonder Woman;

policemen were a close second.

Frequently, children discussed programs, which they had viewed the previous evening, with me. Furthermore, after playing television and film-related games, they sometimes discussed mediated plots with each other and with me. I often questioned them about certain play characters (e.g., Who's Steve? What does Superman do? Do you like the Incredible Hulk?) In this way, I was able to obtain a clearer picture of the relationship of conversational and play materials to television and film sources. For example, I learned that the children's frequent references to "Nicholas" derived from a popular family television program, Eight is Enough. Despite the plethora of available characters, the children used few names in their own interactions, perhaps because these select few were characters which were all known by the entire group.

During this time, and throughout the project, I watched portions of children's programming every week: Saturday morning cartoons, Sesame Street, Electric Company, Zoom, as well as programs which had been mentioned by the children or which were likely to appeal to children (e.g., The Bionic Woman, The Six Million Dollar Man, The Brady Bunch, Happy Days). My purpose was to acquire general familiarity with media characters and themes, rather than to isolate specific stories or perform any systematic analysis of content. I also became familiar with sound effects, musical themes and production techniques (e.g., slow motion) that are used in these programs. Although this group did not utilize these effects in play, others did and my knowledge proved useful. I understood most of the references to film because I

had seen all the films which children mentioned. At that time, Star Wars, Alien, Jaws, and Dracula were great favorites among the children. Often, a child approached me to tell me stories which were based upon films, and imitate a tv/film character for me. The children were not only fascinated by television and film material, but extremely gratified to have someone else interested in it. Of course, children who wanted to engage my attention may have volunteered these stories in order to engage my attention. I was more receptive, perhaps, to television and film stories than to others. In any event, I heard many of these media-related stories and asked questions about children's understanding of the plots as well as about family interactions related to television and film ("Do you talk with your mommy about that?" "Did your parents like that movie?"). I also asked questions during semi-structured classroom activities. For example, during arts and crafts, I would ask children if certain faces/images referred to any one thing in particular.

In connection with a separate, but related project, I visited two of the families of children -- one a black family living in South Philadelphia, the other a white family from Northeast Philadelphia. Both families lived in separate houses. Although the purpose of the visits was to conduct an interview on television-related parent-child interactions, I also was able to see the children more informally in the home setting. I was fortunate in that both families contained two children, who were among the more enthusiastic players of television games. In the black family, the childrens' bedroom had its own television set, and the parents allowed unlimited television. ms.

Following this, observations were done in an upper middle-class preschool in Moorestown, New Jersey, with a similar attempt to impose no preconceived categories on the observed play. From both studies, as well as theoretical and empirical literature of differential class socialization, specific expectation in terms of game types were developed.

Selection of Preschools

Data for the study were obtained from four preschool facilities, two in each social class group, in Philadelphia and in Santa Barbara, California. Philadelphia preschools were observed fifteen times each, in free play periods ranging from 45 minutes to 90 minutes; Santa Barbara preschools allowed ten observations each. Observations were performed twice a week in each case, during free play periods. The age group was the four year old section in each school. In analyzing data the working-class preschool in Santa Barbara turned out to be too difficult to interpret due to the large amount of Spanish. Because the working-class preschool in Philadelphia had allowed long free play periods, there were already more working-class games at that point anyway.

Schools were selected on the basis of teachers' attitudes about television, their willingness to permit a media-oriented investigation as well as the nature of the free play periods. Several facilities were inadequate because play periods were too strictly supervised, stifling imaginative play in general.

Further, care was taken to insure relative homogeneity of the populations within each preschool. Personnel were interviewed as to

the occupations of children's parents. Schools containing what were considered atypical populations (such as artists), mixed populations (in which it was difficult to assign a trend to the occupations), or populations composed of shopkeepers were excluded. In all schools, occupations of parents were typically professional (e.g., doctors, lawyers, architects, etc.) or working-class (e.g., secretaries, factory workers, construction workers, etc.). Despite what I had thought would be distinct regional differences, the children's play behavior within each social class group was quite consistent. (Only the language barrier prevented the Santa Barbara situation from revealing remarkable similarities).

Free play periods are times when teachers do not plan any specific activities for the children, but allow children to direct themselves. While these periods are generally held out of doors, they can be held indoors as well. The children are given anywhere from forty-five minutes to an hour and a half to run around, etc. Teachers help them to construct various play structures (e.g., blocks) and will suggest play activity; the degree of teacher involvement varies from day to day, depending upon shifts in group behavior. Teachers' involvement with, or responses to, play which the children themselves generated was considered relevant. Teacher-directed activity, on the other hand, was not relevant.

My initial observation for each group, as well as for the many others which were not used in the study, consisted of an entire morning's activities, in order to obtain a sense of the staff's relationship to the children and the place of free play within the program. I

was introduced to the group in a similar fashion in all cases, during "circle" time. I took notes while observing groups using a time log, the details and problems of which shall be discussed now.

Sampling Procedure within the Play Period

To be done properly, an observational study of this sort would have necessarily demanded the presence of several coders per period. Lacking that, the possibility of bias in the actual play observed becomes great. For a number of reasons, a precise time-sampling procedure was not really possible: (1) Working-class children enjoyed talking to me, sitting on my lap, and otherwise interacting with me. This obviously caused problems in the notetaking process. In the middle-class groups, this freedom is totally absent and children regarded me as a stranger, rarely looking at me directly, and never asking me personal questions. Therefore, these observations were not conducted under the same sets of conditions. Furthermore, in the working-class groups, systematic time-sampling was almost impossible. (2) Games themselves are not of equal length nor are they stationary. Any attempt to code on a purely, for example, five-minute basis would have caused difficulties with more intricate games. Since I quickly became familiar with the children, I was careful not to observe the same group/individual for too long. (3) Because of the fact that children tend to run around the playground, an ecological sampling procedure would have left the possibility that I was, in fact, observing the same group circling around the playground.

Thus, given the above complications, I had to arrive at a compromise between various methods of avoiding sampling bias. I decided

to pick, on an arbitrary basis, one group and observe them for a ten minute period. This group would be chosen if it appeared to be engaged in make-believe play. When games ended, and ten minutes was too long, I moved to the next (adjacent) group, who appeared to be playing. All observations were recorded in a time-log, and examples appear in the Appendix. Names of children were not included, although special cases (e.g., problem children, foreigners) were in order to make subsequent analysis simpler.

Drawing upon Smilansky's (1968) criteria for sociodramatic play, I chose the following elements to defined imaginative play:

1. Imitative role play. The child performs an imaginary role, expressing it through imitative actions and/or verbalization.
2. Use of imaginary objects/actions/events. Movements and/or physical descriptions are utilized in order to create objects/actions/events.
3. Persistence. Play continued for at least 3 minutes.
4. Social Interaction. Two or more players are involved in the play episode.

Although verbal communication is highly associated with the creation and elaboration of imaginary contexts, there are potential forms of imaginative play which rely more heavily on gestural communication (e.g., charades, mime).

Since the purpose of the study is to illuminate children's structuring of social relationships, play which contained references to television and film, but which did not involve explicitly social dimensions, was not analyzed. I did not, then, code the many cases in

which children pretend to fly about the playground as "Superman", since there was no social interaction among players. I also eliminated play which utilized media-related toys, but focused only on their motor functions. The following is an example of this latter type:

Two boys sit in the middle of the playroom, holding toy bugs. One of them announces, "pretend I'm a Star Trek bug." The other boys announce that his bug is a "Star Wars Walker". They then proceed to move their toys about in a circular fashion as they sit, making noises.

Both flying games and the above example lack an explicit social dimension (i.e., a mutual orientation on the part of the players that determines the outcomes).

The other factor eliminating many games was time. I used only games which involved a piece of sustained interaction between players, rather than coding sporadic outbursts ("I'll get you, Batman") which appeared to generate no story, relationship, or theme. Theoretically, since the focus is on group behavior, short games in which roles break down quickly can hardly be argued to reveal shared rules, and it is those rules which are of interest here. On the other hand, this was not intended as a study in role-taking skills, and therefore the ability to prolong play interactions was less crucial. Choosing any specific cutoff point is arbitrary, and the play literature varies on the issue. Smilansky (1968) used a ten minute limit. Because of the myriad of interruptions that occurred (e.g., teacher's punishments, children's own interruptions), a shorter minimum was chosen: interactions less than three minutes were not used in the quantitative analysis. This, incidentally, eliminated most flying games and shorter chases.

Where this study differs very definitely from the work of Smilansky (1968) and Ariel and Sever (1980) is that the unit of analysis is the represented act and the literal component of play. These authors discuss the handling of conflict in terms of player's abilities to sustain play, where I confine "conflict" to its fantasy element. Interactions which manage roles, or negotiations involved in sustaining play, are not of interest. Arguments about toys become relevant only when they occur between fictional characters (e.g., a policeman and a prisoner). In this way, the emphasis shifts from skills, i.e., abilities involved in negotiating play, to more projective aspects of play.

Defining Television and Film-Related Play

After games were collected, the problem remained as to which of them were related to television and film. First, my interest was in media content and not in media behavior. Games which involved "viewing tv" or "going to movies" were excluded.

The analysis is crude because it had to rely too much on lexical content. Any verbal labelling of characters/situations which were derived from television and film was considered, of course, to qualify. Games which might have drawn upon media themes, but which lacked such explicit reference were lost. In housekeeping games, references of "bright and shiny laundry" might have come from tv ads. There is a good chance of a type two error. Insofar as these more subtle uses of television/film themes may be concentrated in one type of play, the analysis may be distorted accordingly.

For several reasons, the coding may be biased towards boys' games.

As mentioned, many domestic games played by girls may have been related to television, but in ways too subtle to detect. The games did not appear to contain plots which were exotic (e.g., lost children, single parents) which are common in television programs. And the representation of housework is rare on television. In any event, the relationship seems difficult to establish.

Others markers also indicated television and film-related play: (1) musical accompaniment, (2) "slow motion" techniques in play, and (3) "sound effects", such as "pow" or car screeches. Musical cues could signal a relationship to films, when children fighting with sticks sang the Star Wars theme.

Sometimes, I related play to the media on the basis of my prior observations of similar patterns, which had been explicitly linked to television and film. Or, I might make the connection on the basis of contiguity of play to an explicit reference. In one case, a boy "lassoed" his teacher and then asked his friends if they liked Wonder Woman. Or, two boys duelled and said afterwards, "Isn't Ben Knobi neat?" These, I think, are uncontroversial assumptions. However, other links which I drew from prior observations may be more difficult to support without multicoder reliability. One theme could occupy groups of children for long periods, so that the explicit reference to television/film would occur at the beginning and become more subtle over time. Further research might investigate the way that children add bits over time. For the present, it will suffice to say that prior observations of media-related play allowed further inferences. The analytic methods are discussed in Chapter V.

Chapter IV

THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

It is impossible to ignore the dissimilarity in the educational settings in which preschool children of different social classes are placed. While I initially attempted to match groups in terms of educational formats. I soon discovered that a multiplicity of contextual factors made this impossible. In this chapter, I will clarify the different settings, the role of the free play period, and the varying social relationships which teachers and children formed with one another. Obviously, any single contextual factor might form the basis for a separate study altogether. Therefore, these contextual descriptions are necessarily distillations from the observational data. Only those institutional factors which could be argued to have some impact upon the substance of children's television and film-related play were examined, so that a variety of other institutional differences were probably ignored. In addition, because this was an observational study, I shall describe more personal factors which may have influenced the research, relating to my own behavior with both the staff and the children.

To begin, I shall provide thumbnail sketches of a typical morning, merely to flesh out the more obvious differences in setting. Following these, the varying responses to media-related play behavior will be

examined in detail.

Basic Format Differences

1. Time Period

In the middle-class, children arrive at the preschool at 9:00, accompanied by a parent. Typically, the child will attend the school on a part-time, or half-day basis, although this varies with the child. Although full days are certainly permitted, the schools tend to advise the mothers to keep the children at home, if possible, or at a neighbor's home. For example, children with working-mothers may have a full-time housekeeper, babysitter, etc., when the mother is not present. The school itself is not a full-time, daily environment.

The working-class institutions, whether or not they label themselves "daycare" or "preschool", are full-time childcare facilities. The children here may be brought to school as early as 7:30 in the morning. They then have breakfast at school, and may take an early morning nap; if they wish, they may engage in free play during the early hours.

Mothers occasionally stay with the child after arriving at the school, and talk to the teachers, with the child on their lap. At nine, the official program begins.

2. Structured Activities

Children's activities in both the working-class and the middle-class settings are structured during the early morning in order to develop motor, social interactional and cognitive skills in accordance with the educational goals of the school. Often, schools develop monthly projects, in which the entire class participates, which are

connected to science (e.g., magnetism). In accordance with these themes, teachers plan different activities in order to stimulate children's interests, and disseminate factual information about them. Both preschool types displayed equal concern about the organization of these projects, but the middle-class children were more responsive to them. These themes carried over into their imaginative play -- with preschool boys organizing armies of dinosaurs and happily reciting scientific nomenclature. During more informal conversations in the classroom and on the playground, teachers refer to information given in class (e.g., "Do you remember what was different about this dinosaur?"). In fact, the teachers were so enthusiastic about these projects that they would draw me aside and provide me with information tidbits about prehistoric discoveries and the like. There is noticeably less reference to class projects during informal interactions between teachers and children in the working-class groups. Teachers and staff praise children for being obedient, participating in group activities enthusiastically, etc., but rarely single out children for knowing specific information on a topic. One teacher told me that she simply couldn't "keep up with" a child in the group who constantly brought in an assortment of facts about current events and science.

In both groups, there is a storytelling period, which is termed "magic circle." Children sit and listen to the teacher read a story, sing a song talk about a picture, etc. This period either follows or precedes the free play period. I was able to observe many of these magic circle times because of this. In the Santa Barbara middle-class preschool, I witnessed a variety of activities in which the teacher

attempted to elicit comments from the children about how someone else might feel in a particular situation. For example, one magic circle showed the children a photograph of a black child sitting on a bed, with a man nearby, in what might have been a hospital. The children were asked what the child was doing, and how he might feel: each child was asked (in circle fashion) to describe the child's feelings. One other session involved the reading of fairy tale involving "stone soup", after which the children actually made a version of the fictional concoction. This sort of connection, perhaps, encourages the child to become more sympathetic to novel viewpoints. At many times, the teacher attempted to connect story material to other class activities (e.g., "We learned about the ocean, didn't we?")

Working-class children enjoyed the storytelling sessions also. However, the sessions themselves appeared to be more separated from other class activities, with no coordinated activities or references outside of class to the stories and information.

3. Class Size

In order to accommodate parents, the working-class preschool typically provides sliding-scale fees and, therefore, accepts more children in order to increase revenue. The director of one of the schools, in Philadelphia, told me that the school was funded under Title 20, which subsidized education for parents earning under \$12,000 a year. Her school accepted about forty children within each class. Other working-class schools had classes as large as thirty children, while the middle-class groups were typically fifteen or fewer children per class. Thus, teachers in working class groups were faced with

larger classes of children who are, possibly, more rowdy to begin with than the middle-class children. Even when there were proportionately more staff members, as there were in one of the Philadelphia schools, the effect is that the working-class environment, and the free play period, is denser. The playground is more crowded, and teachers are observing greater numbers of children at any given moment. Also when there are more teachers, they tend to congregate themselves in groups, rather than dealing with children individually.

4. Free Play Periods

In both the middle-class and working-class groups, free play is separated from normal classroom interaction. While free play periods generally occur outdoors, they can be held indoors as well. Generally, the free play periods last about forty-five minutes to an hour. The degree of teacher involvement varies from day to day, depending upon the needs of the group. Both groups of children have access to play materials, such as blocks and bicycles, as well as general playground facilities. However, due to the larger number of children, there are fewer of these, in proportion to the group, in the working class pre-schools. Fights about toys occurred with relatively equal frequency in both groups. After free-play period, the children eat lunch and, if staying for an entire day, nap.

Differences in Teachers' Attitudes about the Mass Media

The differences in the teachers' attitudes towards television, as well as film, vary radically from middle-class to working-class groups. These attitudes have rather obvious consequences for children's play behavior related to television and film, which shall be discussed here.

The working-class attitude is generally quite enthusiastic towards mediated themes and characters. Teachers enjoy children's television-related play. The director of one school asked me if the children were still playing Batman and Robin games, which had been their favorite last summer, and told me happily that "to understand these kids, you have to understand tv." Children wear clothes which are embossed with pictures of television characters, and bring in various media-related toys. The teachers respond to play materials with interest, asking questions about the items ("Oh, is that a Batman hat?"). No particular concern about television watching, its effects on children, or about potential connections between play aggression and television is voiced.

The middle-class environment, predictably, is saturated with fears about children and television. Teachers are terribly concerned that children not become overly involved with television-related themes. One teacher in a middle-class preschool told me that she forbade children to bring up television stories during show and tell. When children make references to programs which they have viewed, teachers listen politely but are careful not to respond with too much enthusiasm. Furthermore, teachers make pointed comments to one another about television, which children can hear (e.g., "They've got enough tv in their lives already").

Thus, there is a general condescension towards materials of popular culture, which leads the teachers to inhibit activities connected to the mass media and direct children to outlets which are, presumably, more creative (e.g., finger painting). Not only do they discourage

play related to television (when within their immediate jurisdiction), but they provide some "better" alternative. In doing so, children are alerted to the fact that media themes are not considered desirable, appropriate for school performance, etc. Incidentally, this may help explain the middle-class girls' lesser involvement with media-related games -- at least to the extent that the girls appear to be more concerned with teacher approval.

Also, middle-class teachers are convinced that television-based play becomes uncontrollably aggressive. In one preschool in Philadelphia, personnel told me that they had banned "Star Wars Games" altogether, because they led to violent activity. The staff told me that the young boys had taken to fighting with toy swords in order to protect various imaginary zones within the playroom, and that the game had become progressively more "intense" over time. Eventually, the director of the school met with staff and agreed that the game should be banned altogether. Obviously the preschools which I eventually observed were not this radical in their approach, but television was the object of concern and genuine fear.

Given this antagonism towards the mass media, and television in particular, the middle-class teacher faces a difficult task in the playroom because children bring in many toys that are media-inspired. Here, too, children wear tee-shirts with media pictures. Therefore, teachers have to provide a delicate balance between absolute disapproval and a desire to be warm to the child. They are not always successful in their efforts, especially when other adults are present.

For example, in the Santa Barbara middle-class playroom, a new

staff member inquired about an ongoing game which employed Star Wars toys. He commented upon the fact that the boys appeared to be very involved in the details of the space epic. The two regular staff members explained, in voices loud enough for all of the children to hear, that while they could not forbid such play outright, they tried to do away with it as much as possible. One teacher shook her head solemnly and said, "But they really like it, so we can't forbid it entirely." Unless they were totally absorbed in their own activities, children must have heard these comments. Of course, adult disapproval does not appear to diminish children's delight in certain games. Indeed, many children's fascination is probably stimulated by adult disapproval: play can represent a form of forbidden fruit within the classroom. The middle-class child who regularly hears these disparaging comments, and the working-class child, hearing no similar criticism, may well be equally attracted to television and film-related play. However, it could be that the middle-class child faces greater conflicts with respect to it. The working-class children encounter staff members who share, more or less, attitudes towards the mass media that are consistent with the group. Teachers respond warmly and vicaciously to play interactions based on mediated characters and may even initiate these interactions themselves. The middle-class environment makes a sharper division between subjects that are appropriate for the class-room and the materials of television and film. Folktales and storybooks are labelled desirable, while visual media are continuously denigrated. When television and film characters appear in children's play, they do so "undercover". Children quickly appreciate

the fact that their teachers criticize these games. Such criticism, and its degree of explicitness, not only varies on the institutional level, but on the individual level as well. Some teachers are obviously more receptive to play as a phenomenon than are others; they delight in whatever imaginative activities exist within their groups, fetching play materials and suggesting inventive scenarios. For this type of teacher, intervention violates creative activity and is, therefore, avoided. Other teachers are more concerned with cultivating productive and harmonious behavior within the group by suggesting socially appropriate games and monitoring play more intensively. Frequently intervention, for this teacher, is a necessary part of the educational process and play is no exception. These attitudes can co-exist within one classroom when two teachers differ. The impact of these attitudes towards play itself, and especially towards media-related play, is difficult to gauge without having non-institutional play contexts as points of comparison. Play outside the school, for the middle-class child, may be much more elaborate as well as more aggressive than play which is confined by institutional constraints.

This sort of conflict can occur in working-class schools as well, especially when a teacher is herself middle-class. A poignant instance of this occurred when, during magic circle time, a Philadelphia preschooler volunteered information from the film Jaws in response to her teacher's query about the story she was reading. The story, which was from the teacher's private collection, consisted in a description of the "seashore" and its many pleasures. It was obvious, from the reactions of children in the group, that many of them

had only seen the shore from television and films. One girl enthusiastically began to recount her knowledge of the sharks in Jaws, and other children happily joined her (e.g., "The sharks got the people and made them bloody"). While the teacher had no desire to be unkind, she consistently ignored all of the comments related to the film until she received the answer she was seeking. The children who had given the film-related responses were clearly confused by her reaction, and lost interest completely in the storytelling session. Eventually, they grew rowdy enough to be reprimanded, but still whispered to one another about how exciting the film had been. What was strange, in this case, is that the film had elicited precisely the sort of verbal response which the story material had failed to do, but the teacher's negative evaluation of the film itself spread into her reaction to the children's responses. Children, who might have been encouraged to participate in verbal activities, were discouraged because their own interests were not in accord with those of the teacher.

Attitudes Towards Free Play

There was a built-in bias in this study towards preschools which valued free play for the preschool child. Many initial observations in other facilities proved to me that many preschools do not value spontaneous play in their curriculum. Staff members' desires for orderly behavior could pretty much eliminate any signs of imaginative free play. For example, one preschool which had banned "aggressive" film-related play produced free play periods in which children sat listlessly, occasionally playing with building blocks or playing hiding games. For obvious reasons, this environment would have

hindered this study. Therefore, all of the preschools, which were observed for longer time periods monitored play periods more loosely. Staff members were present while the children played, but did not interfere with their games frequently.

The main differences in the staff's treatment of the free play period were time allotment and whether children were confined to indoors or outdoors. In one of the middle-class schools, the free play periods were only forty-five minutes and were held indoors. In all likelihood, the extreme heat of Philadelphia that summer made the air-conditioned playroom more enjoyable than the concrete playground. However, the children's play was also restricted in terms of mobility and noise. Rather unsurprisingly, these children tended to use toys for some of their more dramatic scenarios -- Bateman getting wound in car crashes etc. This is not to say that toy-related play was a direct substitute for more active play involvement, but only to suggest that the more restrictive environment of the playroom may encourage the child to employ toys for his/her livelier themes and concerns. Since television and film-related toys voice many of their concerns, it is only natural that much of this group's play with toys was related to television and film. However, the dimension of indoors/outdoors play does not affect the structural dimensions of the games. Children can easily construct games of chase with dolls, and fantastic acts are more facilely executed with toys than with actual players.

With the exception of the Philadelphia middle-class preschool, the other schools generally conducted free play out of doors except on rainy days, or times when certain children were involved in special

projects and others were allowed free play. The policy for indoors play was similar to that for outdoors: teachers avoided interferences, but were supportive when children solicited their attention.

Staff-Child Relationships

One difference in the working-class and middle-class environments was in the nature of the staff-child relationships. In all the pre-schools, children were genuinely fond of teachers and other staff members, and the staff was warm and responsive to the children. However, the children in working-class groups were more openly affectionate with their teachers. The girls especially like to hug and kiss teachers, and often prefer to spend free play periods on the teacher's lap. Teachers frequently pick up children and swing them about, play mock chase and tickling games, and kiss children. The girls are affectionate with one another, swinging arms, and hugging each other. It was not unusual to see a child hug another who had been hurt, in a motherly fashion. The staff in the middle-class preschools was also affectionate, but in a more restrained fashion. Physical affection was more limited: teachers did not seat children on their laps during class projects. And, although certain girls prefer the company of the teachers, they were not likely to spend the play period with teachers. This varied among the middle-class facilities also, with the Philadelphia group being somewhat more teacher oriented than the Santa Barbara group. Middle-class children were also less affectionate with one another.

Relationships with Staff

Maintaining good relationship with staff members is an integral

part of a study of this sort. I was fortunate in being able to work with exceptionally cooperative and interested personnel. In all instances, staff members were friendly and supportive women. The interests in the project itself varied from school to school. In the middle-class Santa Barbara school, I was asked to give a presentation of my dissertation to the director and her staff. At least one of the five staff members was doing graduate work in developmental psychology and the interest in the project was high. Rather than attempting to disguise the media orientation of the project, I presented my aims to the staff as clearly, and as coherently as possible. I explained that I would not be interviewing the children in any formal manner and outlined by general background with children, and with television-related play. I emphasized that I was not intent upon proving any of the popular claims about television violence and children's aggression. When asked further about this, I presented the group with alternative positions on this issue, and stressed how little is actually known about children's involvement with television and film. This group discussion helped to give the staff a sense of what information might be useful to me. I did request that the children not be informed that my special interest was in television and film, since I felt that this might bias their play. In middle-class groups, where children already perceive a definite prejudice against television, such an interest might itself have seemed suspicious. As it was, interest in play is common enough and the children seemed undisturbed by an adult observer. In other schools, I merely submitted a written statement about the project and discussed the study with the direction. Although staff

members were cooperative, they rarely asked me questions about the project. The only comment was "Are you finding what you were looking for?" Is this helpful?" I asked teachers, at times, to provide additional information about the history of certain recurrent games as well as to elaborate upon disciplinary practices. For example, it was clear that one of the games in the Santa Barbara middle-class groups (Jail) would have been more popular had the staff not intervened. The staff explained that the game had become overly aggressive ("frightening") and had taken up increasingly large portions of the play period. The staff members had become genuinely concerned that the game was not healthy for the children, and had constructed ways to deflect children's attention from it, and also had made it clear that it was an undesirable game. They were also able to pinpoint for me which particular groups of children were the most active participants in television and film-related play, as well as highlight general features of peer-group structure. Since I conducted the observations over a limited time span, insights into group interaction would have been much more difficult had this information not been provided. I tried to ask teachers about particular games and interactions, as well as about specific children rather than to ask about more abstract matters; staff members would volunteer valuable background information on their own classroom, but were much less confident in generalizing about these (e.g., stating how children ought to be treated in general). Again, this varies from individual to individual. It is rather difficult to gauge the effects which arise from individual staff qualities. I did have the opportunity to observe "switch" in the middle class

Philadelphia group. The "regular" teacher was replaced by a substitute who was considerably more buoyant and relaxed with the children. The transformation in the children's play was immediately, and dramatically, evident. Whereas the group had produced relatively little imaginative play and few television and film-related games, the new teacher seemed to stimulate more imaginative play. The same children, who had been unusually quiet, acted out elaborate media-related episodes, complete with sound effects. They even began to involve the new teacher in their play, capturing and chasing her as superheroes. Children freely discussed their media habits with her and she responded by probing them further (e.g., "Do you like Wonder Woman?") and acting out roles with them. The change in the quality of play was noticeable even after one play period. This change points to the fact that many variables, whose impact was not taken into account here, exert subtle influence on the substance of children's peer-group play. I had not noticed any qualities in the "first" teacher which explained the children's lesser participation in imaginative play: only by comparison did she seem a restrained, or constraining, personality. Children, on the other hand, were sensitive to these personality differences.

While switches in staff may have affected the amount of play in general, they did not exert equal influence on the structural patterns of the games themselves.

Children's Attitudes towards the Study

There are no preformulated rules about observational work with children. The researcher must necessarily accommodate to the specific nuances of the institutional context and the personalities of the

children themselves. Certain preschools clearly generate a greater amount of physical interaction between the staff and the children, as well as a freer, louder spirit among the children. In one school I was informed that shorts were inappropriate attire for the staff, and therefore, for me, while in other schools, no similar rules were enforced. My basic rule-of-thumb was to make as many inquiries beforehand about the school, and to adjust my behavior in response to the demands to the situation as it presented itself to me. My other "rule", which was the more important, was to act as warmly as possible to the children, regardless of teacher policy. I made a special effort to smile whenever a child came over to me, and always spoke in an even, friendly tone to children. I wrote down children's names and used them whenever they spoke to me. Children delighted in this and would occasionally come over to "test" my knowledge, asking me to write down their names for them. I also allowed children to sit with me, if they asked, while I was notetaking and was physically affectionate in all cases. And, because I had a genuine interest in play, as well as stories, I experienced no problem in listening to their accounts with enthusiasm. When I observed "dirty" (i.e., erotic) or violent games, I tried not to change my manner although I did not feign complete neutrality. I certainly could not pretend to be blind, deaf, or invisible. Children know that adults watch their play, and accept such observation as a fact of school life. They are, however, exceedingly sensitive to adult disapproval. Neutrality, at least in its adult form, can easily be construed as unfriendly or threatening to the preschool child. I found that I could collect more data when I assumed

the attitude of an interested peer, rather than that of a neutral observer. Thus, I often sat on the ground, "crept" about, and acted "kid-like" when I was at the preschools. Of course, I kept an appropriate physical distance and modified my actions as the children themselves required.

What is important about the above is that any observational work is itself determined by the social context. The children themselves, along with the institutional context, shape the quality of the observations and, implicitly, the depth of the analysis. It would require data from a number of other observational sites in order for me to be able to determine precisely what balance of factors creates a productive research site. Obviously, a good introduction to the children, and an easy working relationship with the staff contribute to this, but there are other, perhaps less tangible, factors which create a fruitful observational context.

As much as possible, I tried to remain unobtrusive while recording games, but I succeeded according to the specific context of the observations. In working-class groups, no stranger remains "unknown" for long, and I was constantly approached by curious children. I was often treated as a surrogate mother in the working-class environments. In an extreme case, a girl approached me and lay her head upon my lap, thumb in mouth, and said to me, "You're my mommy." She continued to lie there in this fashion until the end of the play period (about ten minutes). Both boys and girls in the working-class groups frequently announced they liked me or that they loved me, commented upon the choices in my hairstyles asked to comb my hair, and inquired about

various aspects of my personal life (e.g., whether I had parents, husbands, children, etc). Similarly, they provided me with vivid personal anecdotes, which they assumed would be of interest to me; in groups, they told me about their school activities, lunches, etc.

By contrast, the middle-class children were extremely timid with me. Not once was I physically approached by a child; in fact, these children seemed to avoid looking directly at me and giggled if I saw them doing so. Whereas the working-class children felt perfectly comfortable when I sat next to them while they were playing, the middle-class children found this intrusive. They tended to gravitate, in much of their play, towards corners, tents, and other places where they could be private. Of course, individual children vary in their needs for absolute privacy; there were certain children who were visibly disturbed by another adult present in the group. Naturally, the longer I remained with any particular group, the more comfortable the children became with my presence. The difference was that the working-class children required less time in order to be able to do this, and were generally more receptive to my questions. What this meant in terms of the study is that I was faced with very different research conditions. It is rather difficult to assess the impact of the children's attitudes upon the observational process, which is delicate in any case. With the working-class groups, I was able to gather information about television and film habits, as well as receive verbal elaborations on the games themselves, because the children were eager to supply it; almost any conversation which they had with me was considered an attraction in itself. With middle-class children, I had to remain distant from

the children and was given almost no clues with which to decipher game material. Thus, in the working-class context, I was immersed in an obviously dense interactional network, where play experience is public and accessible. Here, children do not expect or demand privacy and do not perceive the necessity for privacy in others. Not only was I questioned, but I was allowed to question on almost any topic imaginable. These children did not think it rude to ask me why I was not married, or whether I liked them. The middle-class children already had a defined sense of the private, both with respect to their possessions and social interaction. Therefore, I had to be cautious not to intrude upon games that were guarded from others. These children already possessed a defensive attitude towards adult questions, and, perhaps, realized that they might be judged by their responses: Such knowledge is obviously shaped by the school context; children are becoming aware that they are expected to perform successfully. Any question that I might direct at them was answered carefully and politely. These children did not volunteer stories about their lives or their games, nor did they attempt to draw me into their play. I was, in the middle-class context, a clear "outsider". In the middle-class groups, teachers spoke freely to me and obviously did not object to my presence inside or outside of the classroom. Given this, there was no "built-in" rationale for the children's totally different response to me. In most cases, middle-class children never approached me and never addressed me by name. While certain children were clearly more comfortable with my presence than others, the groups' overall tone was one of apprehension. Sometimes, games went "underground" when

children realized that I was taking notes on their activities. In such cases, children either began to conduct their games in whispered tones or hid behind the walls of the playhouse to avoid me, giggling. In fact, one game developed where I became the culprit: a group of girls hid in playhouse, circling around it when I was not observing, and whispering. With giggles, they ran to the teacher and told her that I was a kidnapper who was out to capture them. The teacher, naturally concerned, came over with them and explained the purpose of my study. Later, I asked one of the girls whether she had actually believed that I was a kidnapper, to which she replied, "Of course not, silly!" The game, however, demonstrated aspects of my general relationship to the group -- an unidentified adult stranger, who was somehow intruding on the private sphere of the children. Therefore, children were careful not to approach me too closely and never initiated interactions with me. It was quite easy, of course, to take notes without interruptions by the children. In the working-class groups, this was almost impossible. If I had observed children for longer time spans, this problem would have become more pronounced because working-class children would begin to leave their games in order to talk to me, or would interrupt other observations in order to gain my attention. Increasingly, I found it difficult to take notes while doing observations, although I gained valuable insights into play interactions from the children. Furthermore, while I was not an authority figure, I found it difficult not to stop games which involved potentially dangerous objects -- sticks, glass, stones, etc. Such situations were especially precarious because I was aiming to establish trust with the children.

I was forced to adopt the attitude of an ignorant, but concerned, peer ("Are you really allowed to do that? Will I get in trouble if I let you?")

Participants in Peer-Group Play

I did not obtain extensive personal information about individual children and their parents. The Philadelphia and Santa Barbara middle-class groups seemed to be from stable, two-parent families, where the fathers were doctors, lawyers, and in a few cases in Santa Barbara, University professors. Both groups were reported as upper-middle-class, with parents who were extremely concerned about their children's preschool education. In both preschools, fathers were frequently responsible for bringing the children to the preschool, and displayed keen interest in the child's activities, talking with teachers and arranging schedules. Both groups were predominantly white, with a few Oriental children, and were mostly Protestant.

The working-class groups were racially mixed. As mentioned, the first group in Philadelphia that had been observed was racially heterogeneous, as well as containing families of transitional class status. The Philadelphia group whose games are represented here was predominantly black, while the Santa Barbara group was Chicano and black. The effect of group composition is difficult to estimate in the absence of comparable play data. When I began observing the Philadelphia working-class centers, I expected differences to emerge in children's play. While there were differences on the gestural and sociolinguistic levels which were immediately apparent, certain "superhero" gestures and taunts were obviously specific to black children. What was more

striking were the similarities among racially distinct groups, both in their imaginative play and other peer-group interactions. Regardless of race, working-class children were more comfortable with me, and behaved more affectionally towards each other. Many of the same games appeared in groups of the same social class, despite racial, ethnic and regional differences. In working-class groups, boys arrested me as policeman, girls frequently pretended that I was their mother, and children engaged in explicitly sexual play (e.g., mock copulation or voyeurism). Black children did not seem more interested in characters who were themselves black, but this may be due to the narrow range of types available to the child viewer; the black child is immersed in the models of white culture. Of course, there are transformation of television's language into the discourse of the child; black children employed their own stylized lingo, along with musical accompaniments, more than white children. The black boys, in particular, focused on actual sensations of fight scenes in their play--to the extent that play fights were timed and choreographed, even when it was more violent. However, the structural dimensions of the game of the working-class black and white children were remarkably similar.

Not all of the children who were observed participated in media-related games. On the most general level, there was a sex bias, since girls' play was less frequently related to television and film in an explicit fashion. There were also individual differences in children's interests and participation in media-related play. Thus, I cannot claim that the sample of game presented here represents all of the children.

First, not all of the preschoolers enjoy playing imaginative games. Some prefer purely physical activities, such as tree-climbing. It is conceivable that institutional constraints (i.e., having to remain indoors all morning) made these activities especially enticing for children.

Even with preschoolers who were enthusiastic participants in imaginative play, some were more inclined to select characters and themes from the media in their play. The initial period of participant-observation had revealed certain patterns of interaction in children's play related to television and film. Without a doubt, the most popular form of play was "The Incredible Hulk" game which appeared constantly. Since the group was both age and sex-mixed, certain patterns related to age and gender distinctions: the role of the Hulk was generally assumed by an older male child. The child who most frequently initiated this game was an obvious "problem" child and, according to the teachers, had siblings who had also been problems for the school. The game often consisted either in an older Hulk chasing younger victims, or a male Hulk chasing female victims. Although girls were generally less active in this game, they too became the Hulk and chased both one another as well as the boys. While the dominant children more frequently assumed the Hulk role, they did not occupy it exclusively. An interesting case was that of an Indian boy for not understanding any English and, in particular, any television characters. Children taunted him and his sister by asking him to say "superman". In the early part of the summer, the boy avoided the hulk game and stood, looking confused and frightened, as the children ran around the

playground. Eventually, he began to recognize and say television names. By the summer's end, he regularly participated in the game, playing the hulk role; the teacher also complained to me that the child had become generally more aggressive, although she was pleased that he was becoming integrated into the group and that he was learning to speak English in the process.

In this particular group, there was little imaginative peer-group play that was not related to television and film. Furthermore, it was clear that groups of children focused on certain types of play. Certain girls almost never strayed from the monkey bars, where they performed tricks, calling me over to observe them; certain boys preferred more vigorous running and chasing games (the most popular of which was the Incredible Hulk game).

I found no evidence to support the claims that working-class preschool children are any less involved in imaginative peer-group play. In fact, the black working-class children of Philadelphia were almost constantly immersed in imaginary worlds--with girls pretending to dress up for dates, using sheets and towels for costumes, visiting discoteques, and witnessing a variety of romantic and sexual scenes with one another; boys constantly changing from real-life heroes, e.g., Reggis Jackson, to Batman. Even among the very youngest children (three year olds), games of Taximan and Postman were quite popular; children used blocks to create miniature play settings and a variety of objects to represent persons. Often these games were accompanied by lively speech play. Children created their own rhythming chants and, occasionally invented songs for their games. In terms of their gestural

behavior, the dramatic play performances of the working-class children were extremely vivid and precise. Wonder Woman wiggled and strutted, while victims swooned realistically. Clearly, the act of make believe is not only accessible to these children; it is an integral part of play experience and one which is very much enjoyed. Similarly, storytelling seemed to be an important feature of peer-group interactions, with children often recounting personal anecdotes in a lively manner.

Teachers were able to identify certain children as being particularly interested in television and film-related games. From their information, as well as my own observations in the playground, it was apparent that play roles bore a relationship to peer-group organization. For example, in my initial fieldwork, I found that an overweight girl who was a constant bully but well-liked by other children, chose the role of the "shark" in a swimming pool game which was related to the film Jaws. The girl bit other children, usually other girls, in her "shark" role and dominated most of the space in the swimming pool. In many senses, her actions in this play role did not differ from her usual participation in the group; she often hit and dominated other children, who continued to try and win her affections. This child, the teacher informed me, came from a home where corporal discipline was common, and was considered a disciplinary problem. Thus, in this case, the play role served to highlight aspects of her real-life relationship to the group. Other boys who had been labelled (by teachers) as leaders, became, in play, captains of space ships and directed other children in their play activities, creating

the scenario and labelling play objects and territories. Another instance of this real-life extension involved a girl, in a working-class facility, who was slightly older than the other children, who had begun to adopt a nurturant attitude towards the group, tying shoes and hugging the youngest child in the group: In her play role, she frequently became Wonder Woman and rescued helpless victims from various dangers, such as being "frozen" by villainesses. She would organize the players, assign roles, and give narrative shape to the game, carrying out her general function with the peer-group. The teacher praised the child for her contribution to the group's play activities, telling me that her Wonder Woman play was "positive like everything else she does." In all of these cases, then, the children's play performance elaborated their normal peer-group position.

Other peer-group play interactions are somewhat more complex than these. Play may serve to invert or transform ordinary social relationships, and comment upon normal hierarchies in a more subtle fashion (cf. Schwartzman, 1978). There were the many examples of children attacking teachers as law enforcers, or as The Incredible Hulk, in which children inverted their normal relationship to the teacher. The most unusual example of this type involved a handicapped boy, in a middle-class preschool, who was unable to participate in most of the playground games. His main contribution to these games was to pretend that he was an unusual version of the Hulk, whose arms were metal "clutches" (a play on his own crutches). In his play interactions, he would frighten girls, who would climb the monkey bars and scream mock terror. The girls would even manage ways to let him appear more power-

ful, although they eventually tired of the game and asserted their own superiority. However, it is noteworthy that he was the only child in this particular group who was allowed to assume the Hulk role; clearly, his own physical "powerlessness" made him the prime candidate for it.

It would probably be misleading, however, to extrapolate from these data that only certain "types" of preschoolers are involved in play related to television and film. While it certainly may be true that the play which was observed in this study may represent only a portion of the children within each group, it may be that this concentration of select individuals stems from the limited time spans of my observations. Children's imaginative play appears to occur in thematic spurts: one idea occupies children for stretches of time. Games do not literally continue throughout an entire play period, but there is a steady structural development on one theme (e.g., building a rocket) over time. In this way, certain roles become incorporated into the group's behavior, and all an individual need do is perform some action associated with the role to instigate the game. Film and television music, poses, names, and so forth, signal the game type. Thus, these games are not isolated units of behavior but portions of larger interactional units which may continue throughout the year. No limited time span can represent all the children's responses; certain extended imaginative experiences are necessarily separated into units on the basis of temporal discontinuity. To the extent that certain children were preoccupied with other play themes during the time that I observed them, they were excluded from the television and film-related names collected.

CHAPTER V

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S TELEVISION AND FILM-RELATED GAMES

Introduction

This chapter presents the key empirical findings of the study, which are the actual games that preschool children develop from television and film stories and characters. The purpose of the chapter is two-fold: (1) to provide an adequate classification system for the entire corpus of television and film-related games, and (2) to examine the distribution of game types within each social class group.

Each separate game was classified according to structural dimensions: the game "types" that emerged from this are discussed without referring to their appearance in different class groups. These types are examined for their television and film-related imagery, as well as for the models of social relationships that they imply. The second part of the analysis examines the distribution of the game types within the working-class and middle-class groups. In addition, the entire game sample was further analyzed for evidence of other patterns which were related to differential class socialization. Here, the point is to demonstrate an isomorphism of pattern between features of family socialization which are related to social class and

the television and film-related play behavior of preschool children. The analytic methods will be discussed in greater detail along with the findings.

Discussion of Game Classification System

Children's television and film-related games were analyzed in terms of abstract structural dimensions which corresponded to the differential class socialization patterns which had been established by earlier empirical investigations (see Chapter I). I chose this method over a thematic analysis because the latter failed to reveal theoretically significant features of the data. A thematic category such as "rescue" subsumes games where helpless individuals obtain the assistance of a dominant figure, as well as games in which organized groups grapple with crises without suggesting status or power differences among participants. In terms of my concern with social relationships, similarities of these two games merely obfuscate genuine differences. Therefore, games were analyzed along more abstractly conceived dimensions, which could, at least in theory, occur independently of any specific theme. In this manner, a theoretically pertinent game typology was established and all games were classified accordingly. After the basic game types had been established, the entire corpus was further examined in order to identify clusters of narrative and thematic elements within game types. In addition, other structural dimensions were analyzed. These thematic and structural elements were used to generate subtypes within each category. The refining of the classification system,

then, relied on a variety of analytic techniques; since no particular sub-dimension illuminated all of the variations of each structural type .

Two structural dimensions were utilized in order to generate four basic game types. These were based on the central relational patterns identified in Kohn's (1969) work on differential class socialization. The two superordinate dimensions involved (1) the structure of social relationships, and (2) whether or not the activity is goal-directed. As previously discussed, these dimensions refer solely to the representation of action within games and not nonplay interactions among children (e.g., fights about toys). These dimensions were defined in in the following ways:

1. Social Relationships

(a) The relationship between game participants is marked by clear differences in their status, power, or authority. The relationship is thus asymmetrical and nonreciprocal. Any such differentiation within the game is relevant; a master leading a group of slaves is of this type.

(b) The relationship between game participants is egalitarian, symmetrical, and reciprocal. Although there may be a figure who is marked as the leader, s/he does not order the others about or direct their actions.

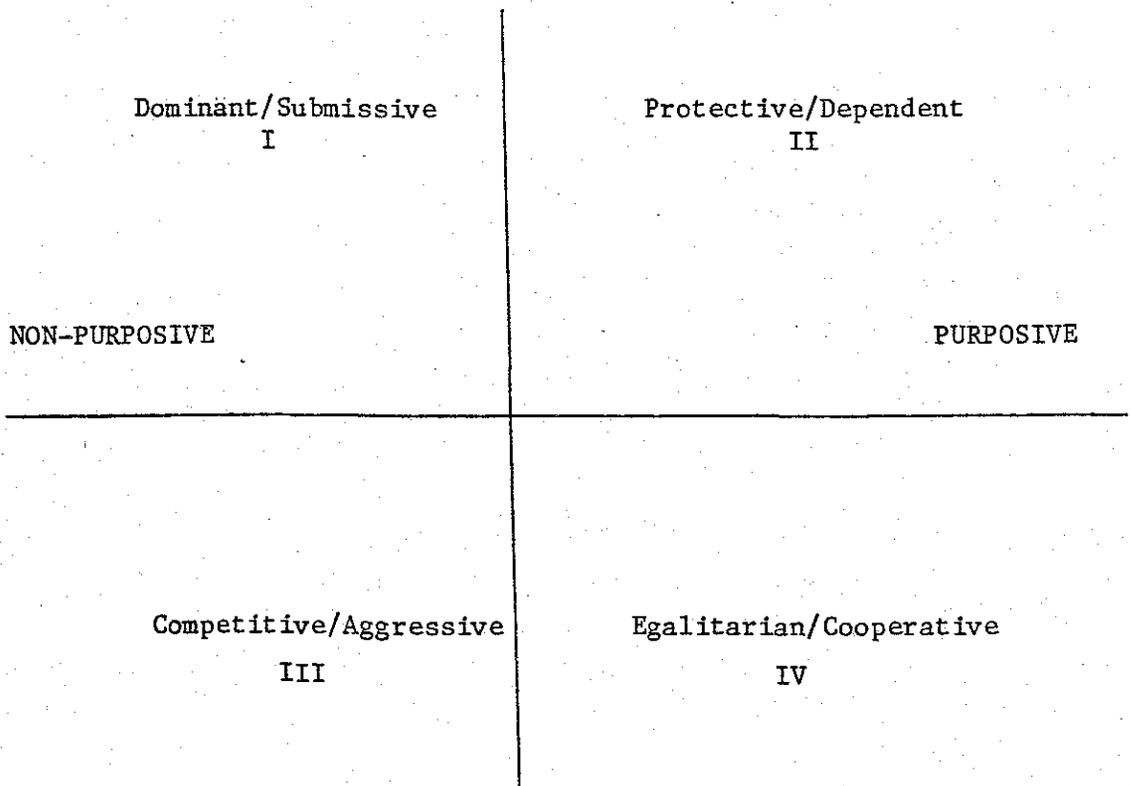
2. Goal of Activity

(a) The response to the conflict or the situation

STRUCTURAL TYPOLOGY OF CHILDREN'S TELEVISION AND FILM-RELATED GAMES

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Differences in Status/Power



Equality of Status/Power

encountered in the game is non-purposive, hostile and aggressive.

(b) Players work to achieve shared goals in a supportive fashion.

These two dimensions generated four game types: (1) dominant/submissive; (2) protective/dependent; (3) competitive/aggressive, and (4) egalitarian/cooperative. These were further differentiated by various degrees of elaboration of elements also derived from work on class socialization patterns:

1. Motivation of Activity

(a) Rational. Some reason is supplied for the actions within the game. For example, if a player hits another, he tells his opponent why (e.g., You are a bad guy). The reason need not itself be rational.

(b) Imperative. No reason is supplied for actions within the game. Players are ordered about or are hit by others, without being supplied with a reason.

2. Role Differentiation

(a) Differentiated. Many roles exist within the game for the participants, and each is allowed to act independently of the others.

(b) Dichotomous. One central figure performs the dominant role, while all others are forced into a uniform mass.

3. Nature of Solution

(a) Novel. The players introduce some element of novelty in their response to the situation. For example, if they are confronted with a natural disaster, they can call upon some new machine or concoct a new plan.

(b) Non-novel. The players react according to the standard response in the situation. They may call upon a superhero to solve the crisis, fight among themselves using conventional means of combat, etc.

4. Planning Activity

(a) Present. The players organize their actions in terms of ultimate and non-immediate goals. They may "store" food for the future, build machines which they do not need for the present, plan a future voyage, etc.

(b) Absent. Players' actions are directed towards the immediate exigencies of the situation, and do not make reference to future circumstances. A superhero who saves a group, for example, would not be acting in terms of a future goal, but resolving an immediate crisis.

Although the games which were collected more or less fit the basic categories, games clearly could combine structural dimensions and open up a variety of other possibilities. We could have

competing armies aggressively, combining dimensions three and four. Also, each army could be led by an authoritarian commander, adding dimension one. Certain of the egalitarian/cooperative games which were collected possess such increased complexity, establishing organized groups to carry out defensive strategies or rescue operations, with implicit enemies. Similarly, certain competitive/aggressive games contained competing teams in an organized war, but with no coordination of players on teams to make the game cooperative. In brief, the game typology presented here does not exhaust the total range of structural possibilities nor was it meant to do so. Rather, it provides a framework by which to classify the present body of data, which utilizes relatively few of the available combinatorial possibilities. Instead, these media-related games focus on specific relational patterns. Perhaps, as these patterns are increasingly internalized, and children can more easily communicate role behavior, the structural complexity of the games increases.

Expectations Concerning the Logic of the Distribution

Since these game types emerged from dimensions which were explicitly linked to class socialization patterns, they should be distributed differently within each social class group. Of these four types, the first, dominant/submissive, represents the polar extreme in terms of the socialization patterns. It is a distinctively "working-class" type: the individual is situated in a social relationship which is based on status and power differences, and exhibits a negative relationship to the environment. In the four type, patterns are in the

"middle-class" direction, with an egalitarian relationship between players and a purposive, goal-directed relationship towards the environment. We could expect that working-class groups will play more games of type 1 (dominant/submissive) and middle-class groups will play more of type 4 (egalitarian/cooperative).

The second and third types represent less extreme forms in the sense that they include a mixture of class-related structural dimensions. In the second, a goal-directed activity is achieved through a nurturant social relationship, where one individual protects the lower status player. The third type inverts this situation by establishing a relatively egalitarian relationship between players, but one which is non-purposive and hostile. Since these two types are less extreme cases, they should be more equally distributed among social class groups than types 1 and 4.

The differences between internal systems of control, in the form of reasoned explanations provided by parents, and external systems of control, in the form of verbal commands and corporal punishment should manifest itself in games similarly; middle-class children should more frequently make use of reasons than working-class children. I also felt that the greater emphasis on personal autonomy and the encouraging attitude of the family towards new ideas in the middle-class family would lead these children to develop novel solutions in their games, where the working-class child would be less inclined to try these. Finally, the evidence on middle-class values suggests that the middle-class child is trained to conceptualized tasks more abstractly, and thus organize specific actions towards future goals.

The working-class child, who is punished by specific consequences of misbehavior, is not encouraged to develop this planning orientation. Therefore, middle-class children should include planning activities in their games more frequently than working-class children.

I shall now discuss the different games that emerged from the observational study.

I. GAMES OF DOMINANCE/SUBMISSION

These games are characterized by an emphasis on differences in power and status between components of the relationships, and the exercise of coercive control by the higher status component. The nature of this control is both physical and aggressive, but can involve verbal control as well. In certain cases, verbal behavior alone signals the possibility of physical coercion.

Two basic subtypes emerged from this category, relating to the availability of different roles within the relational pattern: (1) dichotomous roles/dominance/submission games, in which one central figure performs the dominant role while others are forced to act uniformly, and (2) differentiated roles/dominance/submission games, where a greater number of behavioral responses become available, so that different roles emerge. In the second subtype, within each separate component of the relationship, different social types and behavior can be represented. A band of generals may invade a family, with each member of the two groups assigned to different roles within the framework of the dominant/submissive relationship.

Obviously, a game with more highly differentiated roles requires

more elaborate role performance, with distinctive gestural and lexical content. As the number and types of roles increases, we could expect corresponding increases in behavioral complexity. A more complete examination of issues involved in children's play might include a precise index of number of roles performed, and types of roles within the game. For the present, the more general distinction between dichotomous and differentiated role structure serves to contrast these particular games. These differences will become clearer as each subtype is discussed separately.

1. Dichotomous Role Structure/ Dominant/Submissive Games

In this subtype, the social relationship is represented in its most absolute form. One authoritarian figure terrorizes and pursues an entire group in a manner displaying obvious formal similarity to more conventional "central authority" games, such as Tag or It (cf. Sutton-Smith, 1972). The behavior of the victimized role is totally uniform and allows little or no variation on the part of specific players. Not only is the nature of the response to the conflict inflexible, but the group behavior is equally rigid.

Thematically, the game suggests pursuit, but there is no strong narrative element. Rather, the central figure aggressively threatens an undifferentiated mass of similarly "victimized" individual. The mass/individual attempts to escape, i.e., runs away or hides in fear, but makes no active protest or more organized resistance. Given this lack of counteraction, the game becomes quite repetitive and routine, allowing little variation. The movement is also repetitive, with chases occurring in a circular fashion. Unlike many conventional

games, there is no "safe" spot or role-switching.

Games can be true "group" pursuits or dyadic chases. In the latter, obviously only two roles are available to begin with, but what maintains the dichotomous structure of the play is the extension of undifferentiated victimized behavior into an individual's response. Thus, single victimz also behave in a helpless manner.

In the pusuit, the dominant figure gives no explanations for his/her behavior. No acts of wrongdoing have been committed by the group. It is merely differences in power or status that justify the behavior. The dominant role is announced (e.g., "I am the Incredible Hulk!") and children immediately flee in terror. The respective role performances are vividly elaborated -- with children screaming and clutching one another as victims, and the dominant figure, if s/he is monster-like, roaring, grimacing and stretching out his/her arms to reach the poor victims. Typically, these games involve very little lexical content except for cries of fear and occasional verbal threats (e.g., "I'll kill you!"),

The television model which is most frequently borrowed for this role is the Incredible Hulk, whose monster-like appearance and overwhelming physical strength make him an obvious candidate. In the television story, the Hulk is a good character who is unfortunately driven by uncontrollable forces. In children's play, only blatantly threatening and irrational qualities of the Hulk's behavior are represented. Of course, there is no evidence here that any children viewed the television series. After the central character's name was announced, the actions of the game consisted in chases with victims

screaming, running and displaying other signs of fear.

Among the monsters that were popular choices for the game was the shark of the film, Jaws. As might be predicted, one child assumes the shark role, often accompanied by music, and proceeds to chase and even bite other children. Fears of drowning and being attacked recur throughout these games. The following gives an idea of the structure of the game:

Three boys sit on wooden bars. One announces, "I am the Shark!" The other two begin screaming, "The Shark! The Shark!" The "shark" boy forms his hands like fins, and chases the others, who scream and jump up and down. One victim says to the other, "You in shark water! You in shark water!" The shark then pushes them both and yells, "I don't like you!" One boy falls down and hurts himself. (Here, the game ended because of staff intervention).

Girls also played shark, monster, and Hulk roles, but preferred to play "wicked witches". The utilization of these threatening models in children's play appears, on one level, to be a relatively simple matter. After all, witches and monsters are undoubtedly frightening figures who do chase and harm helpless victims in many television and film stories. In a certain sense, the play behavior "models" the observed narrative. However, aside from the highly ambiguous figure of the Incredible Hulk, there are instances in which the relational pattern in games tailors fictional materials which present far more variegated sets of possibilities to the child viewer. In these instances, the game type (or the relational pattern which inheres in the game type) has the effect of selecting out of these various possibilities those aspects which are most congruent with the pattern, or actually re-defining the depicted material so as to render it

isomorphic with the game. In this way, two expressive media are brought into a parallel relationship (Sutton-Smith, 1972).

We can see many instances of this "tailoring" process in these rather simple games. For example, out of the myriad narrative strands of the film, Star Wars, this game type represents the villain's (Darth Vader) pursuit of the innocents. Or, after a lengthy procedure in which children assigned roles for The Wizard of Oz, the game that evolved virtually eradicated all of the differences between roles, and most narrative elements. The game became the witch's pursuit of Dorothy and her gang. What is interesting, in this case, is that the children did display accurate knowledge of the plot in their own storytelling and had identified all of the roles when they drew in coloring books based on the story. However, after a short period of time, it was the cowardly lion, and not the witch, who chased the group, without any concomitant change in behavior; both witches and lions chased an undifferentiated group.

In the above example, the relational patterns selectively ignores many complex, subtle elements and tends to reduce the narrative to an elementary unit. As the examples of storytelling and role-assignment demonstrate, this simplification is not purely a function of lesser interpretational skills or developmental constraints. In ordinary interactions, children quite capably told the story and identified roles. But, under the pressures of peer-group play, these details were ironed out.

In the other tailoring case, the pattern reinterprets materials so that heroes who are usually beneficent (e.g. Superman) become

villains. Superheroes pursue and abuse groups as if they were villains. Here, raw power replaces virtue and the protective qualities of the television/film model are eliminated.

1a. Dichotomous Roles with Verbal Imperatives/
Dominant/Submissive Games

All of the above games involved interactions where dominance was obtained through physical means primarily. There are more subtle forms of social dominance, where the threat of physical abuse is implicit in the verbal behavior. Purely verbal measures can signify the potential for more serious forms of control in the face of subordination. Such imperatives typify many housekeeping games, where "mothers" first threaten baby dolls and then "beat" them.

Rather few of children's television and film-related games rely on verbal control exclusively. In those that do, one child orders another to perform tasks for him/her. The media figures that children chose to represent this hierarchical pattern were Batman and Robin. In these games, Batman continually orders Robin, as a subordinate, to obey various commands. One boys, after donning a pair of Batman goggles, commanded his partner in the following way, "I'm Batman. I'm taller. You Robin. Robin, go get the Batmobile. Hurry up, go get it." The Robin character meekly complied and continued to follow orders during play, awaiting Batman's words for higher decisions and walking behind him. When the duo approached me, in their play roles, Batman forbade Robin to speak and hit him when he disobeyed him; Robin explained that his partner was, after all, Batman. Judging from the fact that the boy playing Robin was not normally timid, it

is arguable that the social relationship was built into the play behavior. I should mention, however, that there were clear physical differences in the boys' abilities that, perhaps, determined the assignment of roles.

2. Differentiated Role Structure/Dominant/Submissive Games

In this subtype, individual responses become more differentiated from one another and a whole range of behavioral variations becomes possible within each role. Relational components are antagonistic and asymmetrical, but within each, there is no longer uniform behavior.

This increased freedom from group constraints affects the game in several ways. Most obviously, the game no longer follows the repetitive drama of flight, although there are still elements of it. Within the pattern of dominance and submission, individuals articulate divergent sets of responses -- mockery, aggression, hostility, and so on. One individual can be totally defeated, while others escape. Still, there is no active protest, e.g., chasing the dominant figure. The following provides an example:

Transcription

Boy: I'm the captain.

Boy 2: (roars) Incredible Hulk!
Incredible Hulk! Get down!
Get down!

Boy 2: Incredible Hulk!

Description

Three boys play. Two take a ladder and attach it to a tree, which is the typical beginning of a space game.

One boy begins to roar at others. He chases them across the yard, and back to the tree.

The Hulk takes the ladder away from them, and threatens another group of boys, who run.

A girl, standing nearby, falls down.

Boy 2: Come up here! The Hulk screams and climbs onto playhouse. He goes down and takes a tire from a girl. He tries to capture her, but she escapes.

Two other boys become hulks and chase the girls to the back of the yard.

Girl: Oh! I'm not afraid.

The Hulk chases another girl and then runs over to a new portion of the playground, screaming at the girls. He makes faces at them. girls run away and giggle.

Although this is still a flight game, there are differences in the fates of the victims. Roles, however, are quite rigid.

2a. Rational Control/Differentiated Roles/
Dominant/Submissive Games

Another subtype involves control mechanisms which are rational, spelling out of the conflict in terms of crimes on the part of the victim. The thematic variant most often used in the police game. The police are pitted against an unruly criminal. In a sense, this is more properly regarded as an inversion of the relational pattern, rather than a subtype. The group now is an organized team which acts against a single individual. Again, the game utilizes basic elements of pursuit, but adding new modes of control: imprisonment, surveillance, interrogation, and, occasionally, physical abuse. Although the prisoner may attempt an escape, he invariably returns to jail.

Typically, several children become guards and the offender tries to avoid them. In certain games, a portion of the playground becomes prison, and children block it with heavy metal objects. The game can stimulate genuinely aggressive behavior, with children attacking the single criminal en masse. Superheroes may team up with law enforcers

to capture and subdue the criminal. The following game emerged from a middle-class group of boys who had been circling the playground as policemen and supermen.

Transcription

Prisoner: I want dinner!

Policeman: We'll give you some.

Policeman: He ran out of jail! We've gotta get him!

Policeman: (to girl who is standing nearby) Wanna be a policeman?

Girl: O.K.

Boy: We gotta go get Superman!

Girl: Superman, we gotta put the bad guy in jail.

Prisoner: Give me a ladder for dinner.

Policeman: You want it, you got it.

Description

Two boys as policemen lock up another boy in a cage ordinarily used for the animals. They bar the entrance with metal objects.

The boys open the door to feed the prisoner grass, whereupon he flees.

The policemen chase the boy around the yard.

New girl and boy join the game.

Policeman pretends that he has a walkie-talkie radio and calls for Superman.

Everyone runs and captures the prisoner.

The boys and girls get on bicycles ("cars") and make siren noises.

Two boys pin down the prisoner, and lead him back to jail. He goes back, defeated.

The boys put dinner in the house and lock the door.

The addition of different roles complicates the game, since dominant roles are now coordinated. Furthermore, the prisoner is devious, although his strategies ultimately fail: he stays locked up for an

entire play period. What is stressed is the control of deviance. The accused may proclaim innocence, with ensuing legalistic debates among law enforcers. What any transcript misses is the animal-like behavior of the criminal, who was frequently unruly and biting.

These jail games invite the use of an adult as prisoner/criminal/victim. A teacher can be arrested for wrongdoing, jailed and pinned down and, perhaps, released by beneficent superheroes. I, too, was occasionally captured and released by boys who told me that I had hit or even killed someone. The following example, from a working-class group, evolved out of a "car chase" game, in which children had pretended that large balls were cars and had chased one another, with screeching and music.

Transcription

Description

Boy: I gonna crash you.
Mish your legs all up!
Here I come!

One boy comes over to me. He makes music and shoves a large red ball at me.

Boy 2: I gonna run you over.
You legs gonna go, skin and all.

Boy 1: Here we go again. We
gonna crash you down. Now you
stay there. You in jail!

Carla: Me?

Boy 1: We the police. You
hit someone.

Boy 2: Now you locked up. A girl joins them.

Girl: You locked up!

Boy 1: Police! Police! Police!
We better hurry up!

They pretend to open a door.

Boy 1: We gonna get you out
of jail.

II. PROTECTIVE/DEPENDENT GAMES

In this relational pattern, the lower status figure(s) benefits from the strength and nurturant behavior of a higher status figure(s). Children emphasize the rational motivation of the fictional model's behavior in this game type. The model's powerful qualities (e.g., physical prowess, magical powers, legal authority) serve to protect more vulnerable members of the social group from dangerous aspects of the environment. The narrative elements may be formed in two different ways, each placing slightly different emphasis on the relationship: (1) In the first subtype, the protector voluntarily enters a situation requiring his/her special talents, and (2) In the second, victims request the assistance of a higher power figure. The first subtype stresses the model's control over the environment, whereas the second stresses dependency elements in the relationship between players. In both, however, there is always the contrast between stronger and weaker members of the relationship. A game in which there was a rescue operation carried out by superheroes without any helpless victims would not be of this game type. Unlike games of the first type, the model exercises power virtuously for the benefit of the weaker.

Roles within this game type are typically differentiated, but there are instances where "helpless" masses cry for the assistance of a protective figure. These undifferentiated games seem a natural extension of the dominance/submission pattern, only adding a potential for counteraction (cf. Sutton-Smith and Botvin, 1977 on children's narratives).

Since the model's powers are usually magical, solutions to game

conflicts are predictable. Elements of novelty and strategic planning are typically absent: since the solution is predetermined by the rules of the relationship, there is no need to develop new responses. Girls like to assume this protective, all-powerful role as Wonder Woman or Supergirl, rescuing victims but rarely battling aggressors if villains are present:

<u>Transcription</u>	<u>Description</u>
Girl 1: You better get out. It's a magic fire.	Four children are in the playhouse, putting sand in muffin tins.
Girl 2: We'll go find Wonder Woman and Superman.	Girl and boy run out of house, and spin around nearby.
Girl 2: I am Supergirl!	
Boy: I am Batman!	The girl and boy climb through the window of the playhouse. The other two children cry.
Girl 2: O.K. Cool it! This is alright.	The girl climbs through the window of the playhouse again, and spins around.
Girl 2: (whispers) I'm normal.	
Girl 2: Is the fire over?	The girl (Supergirl) comes through the door of the playhouse.
Children: Supergirl came!	
Girl 2: That's good.	The game becomes "house" and the children watch Mickey Mouse on tv.

III. COMPETITIVE/AGGRESSIVE GAMES

This game type is probably the most widely discussed of all children's media-related behavior. Fights, duels, and mock shoot-outs conform to this type, as do games of "cowboys and Indians" and "cops and robbers". The game contains a symmetrical social relation-

ship, i.e., one with no apparent differences in the power or status of the components, and activity which is non-purposive and aggressive. It displays a similarity to games of dominance/submission in its emphasis on coercive, physical power, but has no equivalent elements of fear, anxiety and victimization. Here, threats are counteracted by competitive action.

Since there is a relatively weak narrative dimension to the play confrontation, the range of behavioral options is narrow. A symmetrical relational pattern is achieved at the expense of any clear-cut individuation of specific roles. In effect, both components strive for the dominant role. Whereas the first game type denies the possibility of transforming the hierarchy, here a contest of power and strength establishes it (cf. Aldis, 1975; Lippit, Polansky and Rosen, 1952).

This game type contains various subtypes. Games were first distinguished on the basis of group organization: (1) individual conflicts, where competition occurs between two or more individuals, and (2) team fights, where the confrontation occurs between organized groups. The latter is more complex and combines elements of egalitarian social relationships, since teams may be supportive. Since the level of structure within each team was low, the games were categorized as competitive, rather than as a hybrid type.

Although these games lacked specific reasons for confrontations, some minimal distinctions were made on the basis of whether sides or individuals were labelled "good" or "bad". When games were labelled, they were considered rational, while others were termed imperative.

(I have drawn upon Bernstein's terms here).

Finally, certain games utilized solutions and methods of battle which were more innovative. Some games were routine, with children merely hitting and punching one another, while in others, children devised weapons and imaginative ways to cope with the enemy-- changing themselves into robots, inventing new weapons, etc.

1. Imperative/Individual Conflict/Competitive/Aggressive Games

These are pure contests of power, with no rationale to justify fights. The typical figures appearing in this game are powerful superheroes. Whereas Batman and Superman may never fight in television and film stories, they often engage in battle in children's games, as do Spiderman and Supergirl, etc. As in dominant/submissive games, only the powerful and aggressive qualities of the model are extracted and all suggestions of virtue are eliminated. Magical powers are used for domination and combat. Frequently, children generate battles by blocking the path of another individual(s), without explaining their territorial rights:

Transcription

Boy: I'm Superman. Get out of my way.

Girl: I'm Supergirl.

Boy: Kick her!

Girl: Look at my hands!
I'm Super!

Boy: I'm Batman. C'mon, Robin, let's get in the car.

Description

Two boys, wearing capes, try to enter the monkey bars. A girl blocks their path.

She refuses to move. The children fight, kicking and punching one another.

The boys push her, but she remains.

The boys, defeated, return to another part of the playground, and pretend to drive blocks. The girl

remains on the bars.

Not all of the conflicts in this category are as genuinely aggressive as this, but many often involve literal beating.

1a. Imperative Control/Individual Conflicts with Stylized Activity/Competitive/Aggressive Games

Occasionally, games involve physical activity which is totally representational and stylized, much like dance. Here, fights occur in slow motion, as if choreographed and may be accompanied by music. The conflict does not harm participants but is more playful. Common examples are the gunmen games, where cowboys, policemen, etc., "shoot" one another with their fingers fashioned like guns. A new type has emerged from martial arts films; now children perform scenes from the "kung fu" movies. Compared to more typical shooting/hitting games, the martial arts games are more complex and demanding for children. They can involve behavioral elements which are novel for the players (e.g., unusual poses).

Children, in these stylized fights, become absorbed with many imitative components of fighting. They employ cartoon sounds (e.g., "pow") and assume poses gleaned from television and film. As opposed to games of the previously mentioned subtype, these are purely playful activities and not actually aggressive. Fighting in the previous subtype, moreover, is not imitative, but part of children's ordinary fighting (e.g., hitting, punching)

1b. Imperative/Individual/Innovative Conflicts/Competitive/Aggressive Games

In this variant, solutions are more innovative. Children again battle with no specific justification and, again, blocking frequently

instigates battles. During combat, new ideas are brought in in order handle enemies more effectively:

Transcription

Description

Boy: Pretend we're underwater people.

Two boys place coffee cans on their backs in order to go "underwater".

Boy 2: I found something! Let's go!

The boys march around the playroom, and go over to a girl who is pretending to lead a "dog" (actually, another child) around. She forms her fingers like a gun and points her hand at the boys.

Girl: Watch where you're going.

Girl: I'll turn into Spider-girl and spin a web on you.

The boys return to their original area as the girl shoots at them. She pursues them.

Boy: We'll turn into robots. (to his friend) Pretend you're a robot and I'm a people.

The boys run away.

Although in the above example, the innovative solution is quasi-magical transformation, other solutions involve more strategy, such as inventing weapons. Such play requires lexical elaboration in order to accomplish the task, but it is generally limited. Star Wars imagery again dominates the games. Boosted by the proliferation of "R2-D2" toys in the playroom, boys frequently battle with robots, either pretending to invent more perfect robots or, as in the above instance, pretending to turn into robots. These magical transformations are probably derived from superheroes who change from ordinary mortals to powerful creatures. In games not related to Star Wars, children enjoy spinning themselves around and shouting that they are becoming super. Turning into robots may be an extension of this, since both cases allow children to assume all-powerful roles through magical acts.

These are common play confrontations, between "good" and "bad" opponents (cf. Schwartzman, 1978). As previously mentioned, children rarely elaborate reasons for conflicts within their games. However, these games do not pit equally virtuous (or evil) heroes against one another, but involve morally opposed sides.

Thus, in Star Wars duels, two adult powerful figures fight: one (Ben Knobi) represents the film's "good" persona, the other (Darth Vader), the evil. Luke, the film's boy hero, rarely appears in these play duels, although he is the major film character. Children fashion "laser swords" from sticks for their battles, or stand at a distance and merely pretend to hold swords. These duels are brief because concerned staff members inevitably intervene. My informal observations of older boys indicates that these play duels are popular with nine-year old boys as well.

Westerns also contribute regularly to these games, with deputies and sheriffs still shooting at outlaws. These games are highly stylized; children form their fingers like guns and make shooting sounds. They feign death by dropping to the floor limply, clutching their chests. At this age, children's elaborations of separate roles is minimal. Villains very much resemble heroes in their behavior.

2. Rational Team Fights/Competitive/Aggressive Games

Here, children separate into competing teams or armies. The games focuses on the combat itself, though, and not on supportive interactions among team members. Discussions about roles can be prolonged, since the assignment of individual children to the "good" and "bad" teams is important. Since I collected only two of these

games, and both were toy-related, I cannot generalize about them.

Both games were based on Star Wars themes. Children crashed dolls and robots into one another in order to display combat. The major portion of play time was devoted to discussions about the roles (e.g., "Yoda's so neat. The trash monster spit him out. They don't like robots", or "No, this is a good guy. It doesn't shoot"). In their conversations about good and bad characters, children can refine their understanding of moral categories as well as the qualities of particular social types.

IV. EGALITARIAN/COOPERATIVE GAMES

This game type is characterized by symmetrical and reciprocal social relationships, in which components are coordinated in order to deal more effectively with the external environment. Game activities are purposive, and the focus of the game shifts from control of other individuals to mastery of the environment.

In this context, the individual can act autonomously, but within a supportive group (cf. Eifermann, 1970). Therefore, television and film's models of armies, ship crews, and other cooperative teams assume greater importance in play. These interdependent units then explore the more highly exotic and unusual regions presented in films and television-- the moon, outer space, the ocean, and prehistoric caves. Children construct complex scientific inventions in order to conquer environmental dangers (e.g., fires, sharks, invasions). Both thematically and structurally, the games are innovative.

Although these games also involve superheroes, they draw more

from science fiction imagery. Again, it is evident that the Star Wars films, and Star Trek series, have captured children's imaginations. Other scientific programs contribute to these games. For example, Nova and the specials of Jacques Cousteau stimulate vivid play. From all of these sources, children extract a more technological orientation towards social control. And, while sophisticated weapons eventually destroy enemies, children emphasize their own ability to construct weapons in their games and not the act of combat. Even in the context of war, the child searches for more innovative solutions in the media's more futuristic devices (e.g., robots, laser guns). The child's actual strength decreases in importance as more symbolic elements are foregrounded. Although not all of these games are innovative or thematically unusual, they are much more so than the other game types.

These games divide themselves thematically into (1) purely exploratory activities, and (2) defensive strategies.

1. Exploratory/Egalitarian/Cooperative Games

In this subtype, there is a relatively weak narrative dimension. Players are "in flight", as in games of the first type, but without the suggestion of a dominant, threatening figure. Instead, play actions lead to a journey. Children pretend that they are "blasting off" to the moon or going on an "underwater mission". Films of outer space and adventure, along with television documentaries, provide the play imagery.

Since the narrative dimension is weak, the game is potentially minimal. Children climb onto elevated objects (e.g., trees, monkey

bars) and declare that they are journeying to the moon, outer space, etc. They may refer to one another as "Captain Kirk", but continue to act independently without any clear leader. Roles are weakly differentiated since the group is uniformly absorbed in the flight.

In the excerpt below, children give a purpose for the flight, but often they do not. Like games of the first type, these games generate high arousal levels in players, who scream excitedly as the rocket "blasts". In the following example, the mission is formulated in terms of military strategy:

Transcription

Description

Boy 1: War!

Three boys and two girls go over to the monkey bars.

Boy 2: On the rocket! On the rocketship!

The boys climb up and down the bars and run around the playhouse behind the bars. The girls run into the house.

Girl: It's gonna rain.

Boy 1: I don't care.

The boys get a sheet and spread it over the bars like a tent. They huddle under it.

Boy 1: Get in the rocket-ship!

Boy 2: We need things for our rocket.

The boys run to a shed to get "things". They bring back two chairs.

Boy 1: Blastoff!

Boy 2: Alright, we got our rocket chairs.

Boy 1: Let's go on.

Boy makes "blastoff" noises. The boys place chairs in center of monkey bars, sit on the chairs, and whisper.

Boy 2: You have to get on your bed. Pretend there are waves! In the seats! In the seats!

The boys sing the Star Wars theme. They climb on top of the bars.

(The game is interrupted by other children).

Superheroes also go on trips. In a simple version, superheroes decide to fly off together (e.g., to Sesame Street). In such play journeys, children do not devote similar amounts of time to preparing for the journey.

2. Defensive Strategies/Egalitarian/Cooperative Games

This subtype is the most structurally complex of the games which were collected in this study. Here, elements of novelty, planning, and rational motivation are present. Children add a new relationship to imaginary others, not immediately present in the game itself.

In this game, children develop strategies which assist them in handling crisis. Not only is independent action stressed, it is connected to the capacity to invent new solutions. Mere combat no longer suffices. While most of the game do involve military themes, they focus on players' collective efforts.

Another feature of play emerges within this game: zoning. Children invent imaginary zones to which they ascribe specific functions: hiding stations, enemy territory, fortresses and spaceships. They exercise territorial rights over these zones with rigorous control, fighting to protect them.

The enemy in these games is unseen and part of the game's "pretend" framework. While play activities may be aggressive, the relationships between players remains egalitarian and cooperative. In the following doll play episode, two boys escape from villains through mutually supportive action:

Transcription

Boy: I saw Batman at my

Description

Two boys sit on the floor of the

grandmother's. And he was playroom with dolls.
dead. He was frozen, Mike.

Boy 2: I know. I saw him.

Boy: Then he escaped from the baddie, right? He takes a Batman doll.

Boy: Oh no! Batman's in trouble! Robin has to break in!

Boy 2 smashes dollhouse and puts Batman doll in a box. The two boys sit on the box and cover it with blocks.

Boy 2: The baddie can't see him. Cover him up so they can hide.

Boy: Now they trapped!

Boy 2: No, Batman and Robin are hiding from the bad guys. The bad guys are very small, so we only need two ?

Boys take monster dolls and place them near the box.

Boy: Pretend the bad guys has a gun.

The boys take the blocks off and run across the room.

Boy: Now, pretend we have guns to get the bad guys. No, pretend this is poisonous and we can freeze them! These are antenna and they think we're robots.

Boys return to original blocks.

Boy 2: I am a robot!

Boy: (takes doll) Pretend you thought this guy was a robot and he wasn't.

Boy: Pretend they don't know this is poison, and they think it's medicine. They dead.

Boy 2: The monsters are dead!
The monsters are dead!

The boys take the blocks and drop them on monster dolls.

Boy: This is a spaceship, ok? One boy takes a block.

This game combines mediated themes in interesting ways. The play borrows the plot from Batman and incorporates space imagery (from Star Wars) as it progresses.

Although the theme is aggressive, it is retaliatory and the aggression is never aimed at anyone who is playing the game. Players maintain a supportive camaraderie, which is directed towards solving the problem.

These games also contain planning activities. The boys cover up the Batcave box with blocks in order to hide, and devise a strategy to defeat the villains. Other games make this component more explicit and focus on constructing weapons, etc.

Discussion of Quantitative Analysis

Since the classification system was not tested for reliability, any quantitative analysis presented here should be seen as tentative in the absence of a more precise instrument. With a larger collection of games and trained coders, I might have been able to tap the ordinal quality of the data. In this way, a more subtle and precise analysis of social class differences in children's games might emerge.

For purposes of simplicity, subtypes and variants within each major game category were clustered together. A total of 136 games which could be explicitly related to television and film content were used for the quantitative analysis, with 66 working-class and 70 middle-class games. The games were all coded for novelty of solution, presence of planning activity, differentiation of roles, and the use of rational motivation.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the four major games types for both the middle-class and working-class groups. As can be seen, the logic of the distribution conforms to the theoretical expectations of the study. Of the total sample of middle-class games, 41% were of the egalitarian/cooperative type, while only 11% of the working-class games were of this type. The pattern is reversed for the other "crucial" game type, with over half of the working-class games fitting this type, and only 17% of the middle-class games.

In both groups, the protective/dependent games were the least frequently performed. This was an especially atypical game for the working-class groups, with only 6% of the total media-related games conforming to this type. Since other non-play aspects of the working-class girls' behavior indicates nurturant patterns, the absence of television and film-related play corresponding to this type is somewhat surprising. This may be a consequence of the girls' lesser interest in television and film-related games, which shall be discussed at greater length in the next chapter.

With respect to competitive/aggressive games, the difference between groups was not great -- 26% of the middle-class games, and 30% of the working-class games. These games did differ in other ways between the groups, and additional laminations on the basic type (e.g., novelty of solution) illuminates the class differences. Also, middle-class games of this type were more likely to use make-believe weapons, while the working-class games were more literally aggressive.

To test the null hypothesis that game types do not depend on social class, the chi-square goodness-of-fit test was performed, with

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF GAMES IN WORKING-CLASS AND MIDDLE-CLASS CHILDREN'S
PLAY RELATED TO TELEVISION AND FILM

	Dominant/ Submissive I	Protective/ Dependent II	Competitive/ Aggressive III	Egalitarian/ Cooperative IV	TOTAL
Middle- Class	12 (17%)	11 (16%)	18 (26%)	29 (41%)	70
Working- Class	35 (53%)	4 (6%)	20 (30%)	7 (11%)	66
N=	47	15	38	36	136

$\chi^2 = 27.98$ and $p < .001$.

In addition, all games had been coded for underlying structural dimensions, independent of game type. These differences illuminate what behavioral components enter into children's differential treatment of mediated materials:

1. Rational Motivation of Game (Table 2). Differences were in the predicted direction, with 57% of the middle-class games containing some reason for the game activity. Only 15% of the working-class games contained similar rational motivation.
2. Role Differentiation (Table 2). Both groups performed more games with differentiated roles. Differences are again consistent with theoretical expectations. Working-class children performed 24% of their total games with dichotomous role structure, while middle-class children performed only 6% dichotomous games.
3. Novelty of Solution (Table 2). This category is especially relevant in the competitive/aggressive games, where the middle class children used noticeably more innovative solutions. The middle-class groups' games contained 46% examples of novelty, whereas the working-class had only 11% of their total games containing novelty.
4. Presence of Planning (Table 2). The last game type accounts for the strength of the middle-class group on this dimension. Middle-class games were 55% planning-oriented, while working-class games were 15%.

The exclusive focus on play which was both sustained and social

TABLE 2
 SOCIAL CLASS DIFFERENCES IN PATTERNS RELATED TO
 CLASS SOCIALIZATION IN GAMES

Category	Proportion of Total Number of Children's Games Related to Television and Film	
	Middle-Class	Working-Class
1. MOTIVATION		
Rational	.57	.15
Imperative	.43	.85
2. ROLE DIFFERENTIATION		
Differentiated	.94	.76
Dichotomous	.06	.24
3. SOLUTION TO CONFLICT		
Novel	.46	.11
Non-novel	.54	.89
4. PLANNING ACTIVITY		
Present	.55	.15
Absent	.45	.85
	n=70	n=66

produced more extreme differences than would have emerged had purely individual play, as well as sporadic interaction, been recorded. Brief solitary interactions often contained atypical behavioral elements. By analyzing only group play, individual variations from more persistent, aggregate patterns are ignored. Consequently, the group differences are widened. For example, outbursts of "hulk-like" behavior, which occurred in the middle-class groups, often failed to stimulate peer-group play. The omission of solitary, or incomplete, play interactions thus has the effect of simplifying the picture of group processes at work, as well as exaggerating group differences. Early socialization certainly has not produced a totally differentiated personality by the preschool age. If that were true, no such outbursts would occur. Many do, but are discouraged by peers and teachers. In short, the number of games which were performed cannot be taken to represent individual tendencies on the part of children to perform certain types of play behavior. These "tendencies" were frequently not actualized in peer-group play or were defeated by other children and teachers. Had individual actions been counted, the group differences would appear much weaker. But this really points once again to the strong contribution of peer-group play to children's social learning. The fact that each individual child has to accommodate his/her actions to the consensus of the group shows how children are being molded, as well as molding, in their play.

Theoretical Explanation for the Observed Differences in Children's Television and Film-Related Play Behavior

Since I did not investigate family mechanisms related to

television and film, I have no relevant data explaining specific links between the general socialization patterns in families of different social classes and the observed differences in the television and film-related play behavior of working-class and middle-class children. This section will be speculative, then, and offer two alternative perspectives on the issue. One perspective sees the differences between social classes as the result of differential family conditioning. The other view, associated with the writings of Bernstein (1971) explains working-class behavior as a baseline upon which the middle-class system is an overlay. I shall consider each position briefly. Again, there are no data to support either view and further research on the family and television is needed to bridge the gap on this issue.

(1) Differential Reinforcement Systems

Up to this point, I have been suggesting, at least implicitly, that social class differences are the consequences of qualitatively different, but equally conditioned, learning systems imposed upon the child from early infancy. In other words, I have assumed that working-class behavior is not less "natural" than middle-class behavior, but represent an opposing social orientation which is appropriate to the material circumstances of working-class life.

How well does this view explain the fact that the working-class child more often plays a submissive role. Presumably, according to this perspective, the working-class child's greater participation in this role is the result of having been reinforced for performance in that role. Similarly, the greater amount of aggressive behavior would stem from parental training (e.g., encouraging the child to act like

a man"). The authoritarian family environment steers the child's thought towards group consensus and therefore stamps out potentially innovative solutions to problems which the child encounters. The middle-class family builds up opposite behavioral responses through conditioning systems which encourage different patterns (e.g., mastery, personal autonomy).

The obvious theoretical advantage to this position, in its more elaborated form, is that since learning systems are built into the child's life at a very early stage of social development, it is almost impossible to identify "universal" responses to unvarying environmental circumstances. By quite an early age, differences in features of the environment are already perceived quite differently. Still, while being submissive in play behavior might be ascribed to prior family conditioning, the obvious glee and excitement that accompanies flight seems less so. After all, many conditioned responses evoke no such reaction. Why, of all responses, is the flight pattern so thrilling to children across social class groups? One has to wonder also why the first three game types have recurrent folkloric parallels in games of chase, rescue and fighting, while games of the fourth type have no direct, identifiable precursor conventional games. The very fact that certain game patterns appear cross-culturally and frequently suggests that some game patterns may stem from unvarying circumstances faced by all children. It is relatively uncontroversial to suggest that all children experience fear as a result of the fact that they are small, helpless and dependent on the power of stronger adults for their survival. Children do become anxious about frightening aspects of the

environment -- strange animals, darkness, fears about losing parents, etc. In particular, the threatening parent may terrorize the young child whose capacity to comprehend situations is limited. In other words, helplessness, as an early behavioral response, may not have to be learned; it seems a prominent aspect of early childhood.

It may therefore be rash to discard totally the psychoanalytic explanation of the anxiety-reducing function of play behavior. Many of children's anxieties, which stem from early parent-child interactions, may be transferred onto the media's more threatening figures (e.g., monsters and witches); play based upon such figures may help the child to deal with the "real life" sources of his/her anxiety. Observations of a working-class girl crying at a picture of the Witch in a coloring book, and later revelling in a game where she was chased by the "witch" lend some support to this "anxiety-reducing" view.

(2) Middle-Class Play Behavior as an Overlay on Baseline Responses

If we momentarily accept the validity of universal childhood fears, the middle-class pattern of mastery seems surprising. This pattern, at least in game form, exists alongside of more submissive behavior. Thus, middle-class children appear to have at their command a greater variety of behavioral responses. They are not merely qualitatively, but quantitatively different; there are more of them. This suggests that middle-class family socialization may not be merely a different type of conditioning, but one which offers a more intensive parental involvement with the child.

Thus, the richness and abundance of scientific imagery in the imaginative play of upper middle-class children can hardly be ascribed

to children's infatuation with Star Wars. The precision of scientific vocabulary suggests other sources of information. And, children's references to educational programs indicates that they view these programs with delight. The variety of unusual vocabulary acquired by these children suggests that parents must fill in missing information for the child as they view science programs together (Popp, 1981). Recent data on parent-child viewing (Messaris, 1981) provides evidence that upper middle-class parents encourage viewing educational programs as part of a general information orientation, and may also provide historical and scientific background in conjunction with television material. Interviews with teachers of these children revealed that parental control of commercial television was quite rigorous, with special hours for viewing on censorship on inappropriate material.

What we may have, then, in these play forms of upper middle-class children is a translation of conditioned exploratory behavior into the processing of television and film materials, via the imagery of science fiction. Parental reinforcement of independent and innovative behavior takes shape in fantasy as children explore and conquer distant lands and master crises. The materials provided by television and film lend themselves to the most crystalline formation of this relational pattern. Precisely how these mediated materials become intertwined in social fantasy is an issue that still remains unclear.

CHAPTER VI

GENDER RELATIONS IN CHILDREN'S PLAY BEHAVIOR

Introduction

The preceding chapter has provided tentative empirical support for the thesis that class-related family socialization practices tailor children's processing of television and film materials in their peer-group play. Although many of the studies which were concerned with class socialization did not address the issue of gender relations, certain extrapolations seem supportable. Theoretically, the greater flexibility of role behavior which was characteristic of the middle-class family should flow naturally into the arena of gender relations. Kohn (1969) found that gender distinctions (e.g., expectations of cleanliness, good manners, and happiness for girls versus expectations of ambition and success for boys) were more likely to be relevant for working-class families. Since roles within the middle-class family are not as rigidly defined, the specific requirements of "masculine" and "feminine" behavior ought to be more flexibly interpreted and enforced by parents. For example, tasks within the middle-class family might be assigned on a more egalitarian basis, rather than in the strictly traditional and sex-stereotyped manner: sons might help with domestic chores, and girls might pursue more "masculine" hobbies (e.g.,

collecting rocks). With respect to television-related family interactions, working-class parents might restrict children's imitations of characters according to conventional gender-related categories, while middle-class parents might equally reinforce a variety of imitations (e.g., girls' imitations of male superheroes). These expectations lead to the further hypotheses that (1) class differences observed with respect to the overall distribution of game types would apply across sexes, and (2) gender relations in middle-class groups should be less stereotyped than those within the working-class group. A more specific expectation with respect to (2) would be that children would imitate role which are traditionally associated with the opposite sex.

This chapter examines the above position in terms of the play behavior observed in this study. Specifically, two puzzling issues are addressed. First, in both groups, television and film-related play behavior conforms to traditional gender distinctions and is therefore stereotyped. Second, sex differences are more pronounced in the play of middle-class children. If the study had focused exclusively upon girls, the differences between groups would appear much weaker. Most of the innovative/scientific imagery which almost defined the "middle-class pattern" would disappear altogether.

Children's Involvement in Television and Film-Related Play

In both groups, girls were less involved with television and film themes and stories in their play. It may be true that more subtle uses of mediated material may have been lost in the study and therefore any quantitative differences in the amount of media-related play may be due to the crudity of the coding system. However, it is also true that

the girls' games which potentially contained mediated themes were virtually indistinguishable from ordinary games of house and were quite different from the boys' games. Television and film present offer children a spicy variety of female models who are powerful, exotic, and beautiful. Star Wars/The Empire Strikes Back contain a teenage princess who commands entire armies while she attracts space heroes of many ages. But, while preschool boys, especially those in the middle-class, are totally enthralled with themes of interplanetary travel and conquest, girls hardly mention the space epics. In general, girls do not utilize the more fantastic elements of television and film. Themes of housekeeping, primping and courtship possess stronger appeal for the preschool girl. Since sex-role socialization begins early (Mussen, 1969), this is not surprising in of itself. More intriguing is the fact that sex differences are more pronounced in middle-class groups. I was confronted here by the depressing spectacle of preschool boys conquering the planets and attacking foes, while their girl peers rehearsed the preparation of endless dinners and bathed baby dolls. In fact, girls often discouraged television-related play in favor of games of house:

Boy: I'll be Batman!

Girl: I don't want to play.

Boy: What about Spiderman?

Girl: No, house. And we live in there.

Boy: Let's say that you're the teenager, and we're Mom and Dad, and we live over there, and I come back from work.

More domestic "reality-based" themes are stressed, even when other

alternatives are suggested.

This does not mean that girls do not assume powerful roles in their own play. On the contrary, the domestic world of the preschooler presents a somewhat overwhelming picture of motherhood. "Mothers" chase the harbingers of dirt out of homes with scorn, punish rebellious infants, conduct meals with military precision, and regulate tv viewing. The domestic orientation in play is, at best, indirectly tied to traditional virtues of nurturing. In these games, egalitarian social relationships are rare. While the girl can be said to master the home environment, she still remains limited to it. She does not venture forth into more distant territory.

As mentioned, games of housekeeping appear more frequently in the middle-class groups. My earlier observations in a working-class preschool erroneously led me to conclude that domestic play had vanished. Even though later observations contradicted this, working-class girls played games of housekeeping less frequently.

One tentative explanation for this class difference is, perhaps, explained by the specific composition of the observed preschools. Most of the working-class children came from families with two parents who worked, or single-parent families. In these situations, both male and female children had less opportunity to interact with mothers in the domestic role. In the middle-class preschool, the full-time working mother was the exception. Most children had mothers who either did not work at all, or who had flexible jobs allowing them to spend more time with their children (e.g., university professors, social workers). The middle-class preschools also had a half-day option which

mothers were encouraged to exercise. Therefore, middle-class children spent more time with their mothers; many children were with mothers whose primary concern was the running of a household. In these situations, mothers and children probably perform domestic tasks, e.g., shopping, together, and mothers may encourage children to help with errands.

Role of Toys in Socializing Children

Even if the above is true, it is not easy to explain why middle-class boys, raised in similar conditions (i.e., with nonworking mothers) prefer the exotic imagery provided by science fiction and adventure stories. Girls played just as many imaginative games, many of which were fairly elaborate -- attending birthday parties and going on vacations to Hawaii. It is not merely that preschool boys display greater independence in play, but that they extend their horizons into imaginative domains which are distant and unusual. If the difference were only one of autonomy, boys might play more games in which "daddy goes to work" or "daddy drives the kids to school". While these themes crop up, they are not the boys' usual choices but are brought in through girls' suggestions.

While I have no firm answers as to why these differences exist, certain of my observations offer clues. It appeared that middle-class boys owned, and brought to the preschool, toys which evolved out of the recent crop of space films, as well as toy weapons, cars, etc. Boys also own models of dinosaurs and rocketships. Perhaps, these more unusual play materials stimulate boys to develop play themes which are appropriate to them. More importantly, the plethora of models suggests

that an involved parents assists the child in play; children of four probably cannot build kits like these alone. Comments which the boys made suggests that fathers help sons build these models. They may also tell sons various adventure stories and encourage novel uses of play materials when they assist them. When mothers came into the playroom, and found boys playing with Star Wars toys, they responded in a warm and playful fashion, referring to specific characters from the film ("Is that for Luke?").

Girl did not own rocketships and robots, but more conventional toys -- dolls, toy food, etc. It is certainly easy to imagine that similar maternal involvement with domestic toys serves to stimulate the housekeeping games observed in the playroom. Rheingold and Cook (1975) also found that boys are provided with more machines and military toys than girls. Certainly, toys alone cannot explain basic behavioral differences, but they may point to larger issues in child socialization (cf. Sutton-Smith, 1979). The need for further research is evident.

It may be that the paternal influence is more important in the study of family socialization. In Kohn's study (1969), it was father's values, about jobs and childrearing, that distinguished family socialization practices. While studies (e.g., Hess and Shipman, 1965) show that mothers behave in ways consonant with class-related goals, attempts to correlate aspects of maternal control with children's behavior have produced weak associations (cf. Cook-Gumperz, 1973; Sturm White, 1957). Cook-Gumperz argues that these weak associations may point to the relatively greater influence of the father in processes of

childrearing. The middle-class father's more active involvement with their sons may "explain" class-related differences in children's behavior as well as sex-related differences in the middle-class.

Another theoretical perspective on sex differences is provided by psychoanalytic theory. According to the psychoanalytic model of development, female sex-role learning is a continuous process which is based on an initial dependency relationship to a nurturant mother. It can be further assumed that this learning continues, in certain cases, into the dependent/nurturant role of wife/mother. On the other hand, male development is discontinuous, switching from an initial, relatively undifferentiated attachment to a nurturant mother, to a more complex and ambivalent allegiance to the father. Since the actual father is often absent from the boy's immediate environment, the boy requires masculine "models" which express the appropriate relations in fantasy form, allowing the boy to play out the powerful, aggressive role before he possesses characteristics associated with it. Thus, boys would have greater needs to immerse themselves in fictional material and fantasy roles. This position receives indirect support from media studies in which children were asked to name tv characters which they would like to be like, finding boys more likely to name any tv model than girls (Miller and Reeves, 1976).

In any event, cultural imagery is still apportioned differently to the sexes. Preschool girls, regardless of social class, do not engage in military play with guns or laser swords. Although girls may play in packs (e.g., cheerleaders), they do not conquer imaginary territory; they only play exploratory games that boys have started.

Girls utilize domestic imagery even in their fantasy play; they bake poison muffins to kill witches, and sleep on beds in rocketships. Boys enjoy games of housekeeping also, but prefer equally sex-stereotyped play: army games, conquests, exploration and fights. Thus, children's television and film-related play behavior reveals regularities which have been demonstrated in other studies: men typically display more aggressive, dominant behavior, and perform tasks that require travel, while women perform routine, nurturing activities (cf. d'Andrade, 1966). Put simply, regardless of class, girls are less aggressive, competitive and fantasy-oriented than boys.

Sex-Role Differentiation

Although boys occasionally want to play with girls, the tendency is for girls to want to join boys' games and pursue them in a quasi-romantic fashion. These efforts lead to different results. In the working-class groups, they end up in aggressive pursuits where male superheroes chase and capture the girls; middle-class boys reject girls on grounds of property (e.g., "This is our spaceship"). Occasionally, boys disturbed girls' games in the role of thieves or "bad" guys and chased girls away. In mixed-sex play, sexes are not necessarily pitted against each other.

In the middle-class, girls often teamed up in a romantic way with a male "super" counterpart. Often, the girl "super" heroine was coy, giggling and acting prudishly (e.g., "I'm Diana (who is Wonder Woman's real life alias) You can't kiss me today"). In one instance, a girl promised her cohort, "Someday, we're gonna be Batgirl and Batman and have a little baby guinea pig and a little baby rat."

In contrast, the working-class environment seems erotically charged. Girls stuff their tee-shirts, wiggle their hips suggestively, and make disco dresses out of sheets, while boys pursue girls in an aggressive/erotic style. Children reported instances of sexual activity (e.g., "Oh we did it.") and announced their intentions to marry. Declarations of love, accompanied by kisses and embraces, were frequent. Boys often declared to me, somberly, that they loved me, and closed their eyes as they said "darling". Girls' erotic fantasies were especially vivid. They marched around the playground and whispered that strange men were pursuing them. In one game, they pretended to peek through a window and witness lovemaking ("They gettin' down!"). Similarly, Wonder Woman can be quite sexy: one girl, rescuing a group of children, stood defiantly and wiggled her hips at male villains and crooned, "Wonder Woman is here."

While there are difference between the coy romantic teams of the middle-class and the erotic relations in the working-class, they do not seem especially interesting from the point of view of social implications. Both groups exhibit sex-stereotyped role behavior and gender relations, albeit differently. In neither group do girls develop fantasies which are independent of men (except in housekeeping). In one play form, the girl attaches herself prudishly to a male hero, while in the other, she flaunts herself. Both games are ultimately geared to win the admiration and approval of males. Even when boys are absent, girls concern themselves with male approval. One middle-class girl mused, in a meeting of supergirls, "What if a real Superman comes and flies with me?"

The similarities appear greater among the girls. Both groups enjoyed introducing media characters into their normal interactions, playing hopscotch or talking while calling themselves "Charlies Angels" or otherwise pretending to be tv and film characters. Both liked games of dancing and singing which had a representational element (e.g., dancing on blocks resembling Soul Train's stage).

Working-class play behavior is less differentiated with respect to sex roles because there is generally less role differentiation. There is the great number of games in which one person pursues a mass, where both sexes perform together as the mass. Girls pretended that they were the Hulk, as well as witches, and boys ran from female monsters with equal terror. In individual chases, girls rarely chased boys. Had teachers not intervened, more boy-girl chases would have prevailed in middle-class groups as well. Both middle-class and working class boys tried to capture their teachers as either policemen or superheroes (although only working-class boys tried to chase me).

In the working-class, many fighting games contain roles which were virtually indistinguishable from one another, and what counted was the player's physical strength. Within these games, girls freely competed with boys if they were equally strong. Since preschoolers are not yet physically differentiated, girls can easily beat up boys and did in working-class groups.

Thus, a mixed picture emerges. While it is true that gender relations in the working-class group were more "male dominated", girls also could compete physically with boys. While chases occurred less frequently in middle-class groups, competition between boys and girls

was even less frequent. And, while there was more mixed-sex play in working-class groups, this stemmed from the predominance of chase games in which roles were not differentiated.

In neither group was there evidence of role reversal. In terms of imitation of other-sex models, only one boy in a middle-class group displayed such imitative behavior. He pretended that he was Wonder Woman and lassoed his teacher, who laughed and commented on the lasso. None of his friends seemed to think that his play was strange and they all discussed Wonder Woman happily. Such imitations were thus not treated as deviant, although this was the sole example. It would appear that surface changes in sex-roles which were evident in Santa Barbara did not have much impact; seeing many women police and bus drivers did not encourage these preschool girls to leap into the male fantasy world.

Finally, it should be stressed that this study did not attempt to analyze sex differences in children's television and film-related play. The analytic scheme did not focus on dynamics of gender relations in children's play. The observational data do suggest that earlier differences in children's identificatory mechanisms (cf. Maccoby and Wilson, 1957) persist despite historical shifts in women's status. Girls are less likely to play games of fantasy and instead focus on constructions of ordinary social interaction in play (cf. Lever, 1976). Similarly, girls are not typically members of packs or competitive teams in their play (cf. Sutton-Smith, 1972). The more complex games (egalitarian/cooperative) games of the middle-class children are probably due to the middle-class boy's greater internal-

ization of parental training of self-reliance. It may be arguable that middle-class parents discriminate and differentiate more between boys and girls than do working-class parents as Cook-Gumperz (1973:123) suggests. These, however, are not issues which the present discussion can resolve, but which merit further investigation.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

This study compared the television and film-related imaginative play behavior of working-class and upper middle-class preschool children in an attempt to demonstrate patterns of congruency between media-related play and class socialization patterns. Extracting from the literature on differential class socialization within the family, the analysis focused on the structuring of social relationships and the purposiveness of the activity. It was predicted that working-class children's play behavior related to television and film would contain social relationships which were defined by power and status, along with a negative, aggressive activity, while middle-class play would generate egalitarian social relationships, and purposive, cooperative activity.

The observations were performed using naturalistic methods in free-play periods, in preschools which catered to children of professional and working-class parents. Only play that was social was examined.

In all, a total of 136 of the children's games could be related to television and film. These were analyzed in terms of the two superordinate dimensions (i.e., social relationships/ goal-

directedness of activity), which yielded four basic game types: (1) dominant/submissive; (2) protective/dependent; (3) competitive/aggressive, and (4) egalitarian/cooperative. The 70 middle-class and the 66 working-class games were classified according to these game types, so that a quantitative analysis of the distribution of game types within each social class group was made possible. The logic of this distribution conformed to the theoretical expectations of the study. The majority of the working-class games were of Type 1, being both aggressive and defined by status/power relationships, while the majority of the middle-class games were of Type 4, displaying egalitarian social relationships and a purposive relation to the environment. Analysis of the games which was performed across these game types revealed similar patterns of congruency between children's television and film-related play and socialization practices. The middle-class children's games related to television and film contained more rational motivation, novelty of solution, role differentiation and planning than did the working-class children's games. Since the game classification system may be highly unreliable, it is best to consider these findings as hypotheses for further research, which would use more systematic methods of analysis. However, the social class differences which emerged with respect to television and film-related games do support other findings within the general play literature (e.g., Smilansky, 1968; Ariel and Sever, 1980) as well as studies of participation in conventional sports (cf. Watson, 1974; 1977; Luschen, 1969). From a different theoretical perspective, one might also cite the findings of the "achievement motivation" studies

of McClelland and his associates (1961).

Two separate theoretical explanations were offered to explain the differences in the television and film-related play behavior between the two groups. The first explanation discussed class orientations as equally conditioned learning systems which have evolved as an accommodation to different material circumstances which are experienced by class members. The second explanation, while accepting the notion of differential conditioning, suggests that the major patterns observed in the play behavior of working-class children may represent baseline responses to unvarying environmental circumstances which all children face (e.g., lack of physical strength and helplessness), upon which the middle-class child's more "mastery-oriented" play behavior should be regarded as an overlay. Since there were no data on family practices, the issue remains unresolved and open to further research in the area.

The expectation that the greater flexibility of role behavior within the middle-class family would naturally carry over into the area of gender relations was not met. Instead, gender relations within both groups was relatively stereotyped, with little or no reversal of roles. Furthermore, sex differences were more pronounced within the middle-class groups. Middle-class girls preferred domestic games to fantasy-based play. It was speculated that the greater number of non-working and part-time working mothers within middle-class groups accounted for the girls' interest in domestic play. The middle-class boys' innovative and scientific play may be linked to their different toys (e.g., robots). Also, there was the possibility

that middle-class fathers are more involved with, and have different expectations for, their sons. This greater paternal involvement may also explain social class differences in general (cf. Cook-Gumperz, 1973).

In the examination of the institutional context of children's television and film-related play, differences emerged with respect to teachers responses to play. Working-class teachers tended to punish specific consequences of children's misbehavior, while the middle-class teachers used more abstract principles in explaining misbehavior to children. Furthermore, middle-class teachers carefully separated punishment from corporal or threatening associations and instead present alternative and novel forms of behavior to the child. From children's own "teaching" comments to one another, it would seem that the middle-class preschooler has already begun to internalize a more rational system of control.

Discussion

This was an attempt to examine the processing of television and film materials within the context of differential class socialization experience. In taking such a route, it has touched upon few of the more typical concerns in the literature addressing children and television. As saturated as children's play may be with television and film imagery, it still retains the shape and substance of broader learning contexts. What we have, then, in these games are the interpersonal mechanisms by which expressive models provided by the mass media are woven into the fabric of class socialization.

However, we do have recurrent television and film images that

fuel different imaginative experiences for preschool children: The Incredible Hulk, Batman and Robin, Superman, Wonder Woman, Policemen, Sharks, as well as the Star Trek and Star Wars crews. How are these images selective transformed within peer-group play? First, in working-class groups, any of these models of power may be employed to build a dominant social relationship, in which a powerful figure terrorizes other children. These models can also compete for a dominant position in play: the Hulk fights Superman. Thus, sharks within working-class children's games always render entire groups helpless, while even superheroes brutalize their victims and attack one another aggressively. The upper middle-class child uses these images quite differently. While the Incredible Hulk can attack groups of children, he is ultimately rejected and mocked by knowing children. Superheroes can be cast in a competitive/aggressive role, but they use their strength to conquer villains. Also, middle-class children's play has more teams of superheroes, who coordinate their efforts in order to defeat the forces of evil. These teams can be a mixed-sex pair (e.g., Superman and Wonder Woman).

We may again note the same tailoring processes in the treatment of the popular duo, Batman and Robin. In working-class children's play, the duo was differentiated in terms of status: Batman ordered Robin to perform tasks. Robin followed behind Batman, even in games where this hierarchical structure was not explicit. This relational pattern, in a certain sense, is inherent in the television model. Batman is the larger, more "paternal" of the two. It is predictable that the preschooler would interpret the story as a father/son type.

However, this does not occur in a communicational environment in which authoritarian relationships themselves are absent, i.e., in middle-class children's play. Here, Batman/Robin act as a self-sufficient team, conquering dangers and foes. Batman is equally prone to danger, and may be assisted by Robin. Or, a new, more egalitarian pair may be formed -- Superman and Batman, for example. In this instances, the communicational system weeds out elements in the television model which are not congruent with its own patterns.

This is especially noticeable in children's treatment of the shark in the film Jaws. In the film, the shark is indeed a mysterious and terrorizing figure. Whereas the working-class children emphasize these qualities, and flee from an all-powerful shark, the middle-class children devise rescue operations to conquer it. In these rescue games the focus shifts from the shark to the coordination of players' efforts and the construction of weapons for the task. Again, what might have been an image which disturbed the young child is converted into an expression of his/her increasing sense of control and mastery over the environment.

Legal authority figures, in both groups, are dominant and coercive, acting violently. In both groups, police rescue victims or attack criminals; in the middle-class, police are assisted by groups of "concerned citizens". The middle-class police roles are filled with details of rational obligations to the prisoner and his/her welfare, while they use more violence in order to obtain these goals.

Neither group utilized television and film models which represent family life in their play. Considering the popularity of

family programs (e.g., The Brady Bunch, Eight is Enough, Happy Days), this is surprising. Children delight in discussing stories from these shows and often refer to them in their informal interactions. It is possible that these family programs are used in play which is too similar to ordinary "housekeeping" games for me to have detected the media influence. Or, the games based on family programs may be more suited to the quieter atmosphere of play within the home; maybe siblings act out fictional equivalents of their own relationship in play of this sort. However, my intuition, totally unsupported by any data from this study, is that these fictional forms are less interesting to the preschooler because the relationships represented within them are generally available within the child's family. In other words, children have clear models at their disposal by which to generate representations of family process. Of course, children do not utilize models derived from "real life" in what is necessarily an imitative manner (cf. Garvey and Bendt, 1975), but polarize roles and exaggerate behavior. Nevertheless, the baseline or "normal" family interaction is well understood by children. There may be no need to draw upon televised versions of family life in order to play successfully. On the other hand, the media's more fantasy-based models may chart future expectations for those roles which are not present in the child's immediate social environment (e.g., work roles).

Granting this, we may now examine the major currents in children's imaginative play related to television and film in terms of the access they offer to social mobility. At the core of cognitive and social flexibility is the capacity to incorporate multiple

perspectives into the understanding of the social environment, and the ability to respond to novel situations with the same degree of variability. Lacking such breadth of perspective, the individual's range of alternatives becomes severely limited and his/her behavior may be restricted accordingly (Smilansky, 1968). Play behavior may be one of the key learning contexts in which these more complex repertoires of responses to environmental difficulties are mastered (cf. Aldis, 1975). However, play does not supply innovative responses within and across all social contexts. As Sutton-Smith (1979:316) points out, play behavior has both integrative and innovative functions in the process of socialization: it may either alert children to their necessary roles, or may train them into innovative and variable behavior.

It should be clear that play can only encourage variability if children perform and encounter a variety of different roles and situations within play. Conversely, if role performance is itself routine and repetitive, and the number of different social types which are represented is limited, play may serve to reinforce a more general adherence to established norms. Much of what the working-class children's dominant/submissive games represent, at least when viewed this way, is a highly restricted learning context in which only one mode of response is permitted within the boundaries of imaginative experience. The very structure of the learning context appears to preclude the formation and exploration of more novel, complex behavioral possibilities: the individual child becomes locked into the overriding group behavior. Thus, the same patterns which prohibit the child from understanding fully the materials of

television and film maintains itself further in the interpersonal processing of these materials in peer-group play. Because the authoritarian relationships depicted in television and film have salience in the working-class child's family and peer-group, they are foregrounded in play.

The more innovative and mastery-oriented aspects of television and film imagery are stressed and elaborated in a communicational environment which already contains egalitarian social relationships and a purposive orientation. In this context, role differentiation is encouraged as is the use of new information for task-solving. The child may assume a variety of unusual roles, and develop a greater variability of responses to distant possibilities through them. In play, the child builds television and film-related games by using socially shared concepts (e.g., protection of property). Planning activity is a natural extension of the child's internalization of these sorts of social controls (cf. Hess and Shipman, 1965). Players frame activity in terms of goals and develop complex strategies for dealing with imaginary pressures.

Thus, it appears arguable that the lessons of television and film are interpreted and processed in ways that can be ascribed to class-related socialization patterns. The middle-class child's sense of mastery focuses increasingly not on power over other individuals, but on control of technical and material aspects of the environment. This relational patterns finds its most crystalline expression in games utilizing the imagery of space invasion and conquest. On the other hand, the working-class orientation is on the control of social inter-

action through coercive, external authority: this pattern spins out games of submission and aggression. I have argued that these class orientations are determined by productive relations and generate patterns of response to the exercise of social authority which mirror and hold together the inequities of the class stratification system. In this sense, children's television and film-related play creates a double-rehearsal for their future social performance: one, it elaborates social relations which are embedded in work contexts, and two, it justifies their position within the larger stratification system. Thus, in working-class children's play, we have the beginnings of the acceptance of external authority which is imposed from above, and in the middle-class, the sense of well-earned rewards for achievement and mastery.

Implications for Media Research

Although there has been some evidence presented here that children's responses to television and film may be differentiated according to class-related patterns, the study cannot be taken to prove that equally heavy viewers of similar media content would produce similarly differentiated responses. For one thing, there were no measures of media exposure, so that the "direct" contribution of television and film is impossible to gauge. Second, although there were thematic convergences, emphases clearly varied. Working-class children preferred action and adventure programs, while middle-class children preferred scientific and space stories. The working-class children's greater utilization of television conventions such as slow motion and music suggests that they enjoy television's more

sensational fare (cf. Greenberg and Domenick, 1968). Similarly, middle-class conversations and play revealed an enthusiasm for educational television programming (e.g., Nova, Sesame Street). Again, this provides no evidence for the position that heavy viewers of similar television content respond differently.

Having said this, I would still argue that children's more general experience with television and film shows how strongly class-related family socialization practices have influenced their social learning from the media. In fact, what I suggest is that parental concern with and involvement in children's media behavior is part of a broader social orientation, which itself is linked to class position (cf. Messaris, 1981). The implications of this view are that parental control of viewing, selection of content, as well as family processes that are both television-related and independent of the media, can only be teased out of the total "effects" process analytically. Theoretically, these are interrelated processes which produce distinctive modes of response to media content. Of course, I am assuming these interrelationships here and they must be fully demonstrated elsewhere. In further research, causal models should be utilized in order to make the various links in the process clear. Thus, we would require data on parents' specific occupations, values related to work, attitudes related to childrearing, parental control of behavior related to television, as well as a variety of media-related family interactions. These data would allow a more precise and systematic investigation of children's responses to television and film content in a variety of interactional contexts -- storytelling, play, classroom interactions,

and so forth.

In this way, we would be able to identify what specific family mechanisms may account for the patterns observed in television and film related play. Of course, some lessons may not be verbally transmitted and therefore difficult to examine. For example, Schmidt and Hore (1971) found that mothers of higher socioeconomic status spent more time looking at their children during storytelling with the result that children's responses were more intensively monitored and reciprocated. These more delicate interactional patterns are also relevant and may require extended research in families.

Further, longitudinal studies are generally absent in research dealing with children and television. Even if we are able to establish clear differences between groups of children, we have no idea how these differences change over time. How well do preschool children's responses predict subsequent media-related behavior, or, adult mobility orientation? A longitudinal study, for example, would allow us to assess the effect of parents' mobility expectations on children's media behavior, as well as their future behavior (cf. Elder, 1973). Also, varying placements in educational contexts might well affect children's responses to television and film. A variety of other social factors, such as peer-group cohesiveness, should make a difference as well (cf. Riley and Riley, 1949).

Finally, the study points to a potential difference in the socialization experience of middle-class girls and boys. Consistent with other studies (e.g., Tuma and Livson, 1960), the association between higher class position and independence holds for boys only.

Given the already large, and growing body of media research which demonstrates sex differences in girls' responses to aggressive television and film models (e.g., Maccoby and Wilson, 1957), data are needed in order to explain these variations.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF CHILDREN'S TELEVISION AND FILM-RELATED GAMES

WORKING-CLASS GAMES

<u>Description of Game</u>	<u>Game Type #</u>
1. Mickey Mouse orders others around	1
2. Wicked Witch scares Toto	1
3. Wicked Witch chases group	1
4. Group caught by the Fog	1
5. Wicked Witch chases children.	1
6. Hulk chases and frightens children	1
7. Wicked Witch chases girl	1
8. Superman rescues boy from sprinkler; they hide	2
9. Batman orders Robin around	1
10. Clowns collect stones, fight, turn into superheroes	3
11. Batman and Superman fight	3
12. Wonder Woman rescues children, fights Superman	2
13. Darth Vader chases boy	1
14. Superheroes carry out mission to get blanket; steal it from girl	3
15. Wicked Witch chases girl and scares group	1
16. Superheroes chase girl	1
17. Superheroes mock fight	3
18. Monster scares group	1
19. Superheroes sneak and steal toys	3
20. Police capture girl	1
21. Shark pushes group	1
22. Monster/Hulk chases group	1
23. Supergirl fights Batman & Robin	3
24. Batman & Robin fight, capture monster	3
25. Batman chases girls	1
26. Superman and Chocolateman take a trip	4
27. Batman intervenes in a car fight	
28. Police jail me	1
29. Superheroes mock fight	3
30. Batman & Robin ride in Batmobile with walkie-talkie, and hit children who try to enter	3
31. Spaceship game	4
32. Sharks crash objects in water	1
33. Boy asks Batman's assistance	2
34. Star Wars Duel	3
35. Monster/Hulk chases group	1
36. Hulk attacks me	1
37. Superman climbs pole and chases boy	1
38. Jail Game	1
39. Spiderman chases group	1
40. Car chase/fight	3
41. Superfly and Spiderman compete	3

Working-Class Games (continued)

<u>Description of Game</u>	<u>Game Type #</u>
42. Superhero chases group	1
43. Police jail me	1
44. Superman and Batman pursue thief	1
45. Superheroes look for villains and rescue each other	4
46. Hulk and Superman fight (mock)	3
47. Superman fights others and knocks down blocks	1
48. Batman & Robin pursue foe in Batmobile; foe uses cannot to fire back at them	3
49. Batman chases boy	1
50. Wicked Witch chases and captures girl	1
51. Superman kills boy	1
52. Supermen go flying to Sesame Street	4
53. Batman and Robin plot against Joker, then Batman scares and chases girl	1
54. Batman & Robin chase and hit children	1
55. Enemy chases and fights with Batman and Robin	3
56. Superheroes mock fight	3
57. Hulk scares me and chases boy	1
58. Robin attacks Hulk and calls for Batman	3
59. Batman and Hulk fight	3
60. Batman chases Disco girls	1
61. Batman and Robin steal towels and kick boy	1
62. Batman and Robin spot danger and get weapons	4
63. Superman and the Hulk fight	3
64. Batman and Robin escape from the Shark	4
65. Girl and Superman fight over towel	3
66. Football Huddle: boy excluded/pushed	1

MIDDLE-CLASS GAMES

<u>Description of Game</u>	<u>Game Type #</u>
School 1 (Santa Barbara)	
1. Invasion of haunted castle; war between the enemies	3
2. Blastoff to Moon	4
3. Wonder Woman rescues children and takes prisoner	2
4. Fight between Ben Knobi and Darth Vader	3
5. Invasion by Sundar the Barbarian	3
6. Jail Game with Superman helping	1
7. Superheroes go to the hideout to acquire powers	4
8. Wonder Woman and Superman defeat Wicked Witch	2
9. War between Luke Skywalker and enemies	3
10. Mock fight between Wonder Woman and Superman (kiss)	3
11. Earthquake Game: children balance on blocks	4
12. Spiderman and Superman called in to rescue	2

Middle-Class Games (continued)

<u>Description of Game</u>	<u>Game Type #</u>
13. Blastoff to Moon	4
14. Superman and "Star Trek" go on underground mission, and call for Spiderman's help	2
15. Hulk attacks boy	1
16. Hulk frightens girls	1
17. Blastoff to Moon	4
18. Girls prepare poison for the Wicked Witch	4
19. Star Wars boy takes prisoner	1
20. Robbers scare girls out of playhouse	1
21. Blastoff to Moon	4
22. Preparation for War: Space Invasion	4
23. Police rescue helicopters in snow	2
24. Wonder Woman rescues victim	2
25. Boys trap hot lava creatures	4
26. Escape Mission in rocketship	4
27. Superheroines hide and are attacked by Batman	1
28. Superheroines avoid murder, follow the leader	2
29. Helicopter rescue mission from Abominable Snowman	4
30. Hulk threatens group and kills victim	1
31. Aliens protect rocketship	4
32. Supergirl rescues victims from fire	2
33. Boys dig for hot lava creatures	4
34. Girls prepare poison for the Wicked Witch	4
 School 2 (Philadelphia)	
35. Children escape from the Martian	1
36. Rocketship journey; construction of ship	4
37. Construction of fortress/hiding	4
38. Defense against invading aliens	4
39. Attack with lasers	3
40. Kung Fu fight	3
41. Batman saves Robin from danger zone	2
42. Gunfight; boy dies and others fight	3
43. Batman and Robin wounded in earthquake	4
44. Rescue Operation	4
45. Batcave construction	4
46. Robin rescues Batman; they hide and kill monsters with freezing poison	4
47. Darth Vader attacks; children escape	1
48. Robin tries to rescue Batman, who dies	4
49. War game with underwater submarine	3
50. Deputy helps wounded victim	2
51. Space Invasion with robots	3
52. Batman subdues wild dog for group	2
53. Rocket Invasion	4

Middle Class Games (continued)

<u>Description of Game</u>	<u>Game Type #</u>
54. Emergency Helicopter Operation	4
55. Preparation for War	4
56. Spidergirl shoots at Underwater people who turn into robots	3
57. Enemy rock attacks; children build spaceship station	4
58. Batgirl hits teachers and has fight with boy	3
59. Boys shoot at each other with lasers	3
60. Construction of weapons for Mr. Spock	4
61. Capture of teacher	1
62. Gunfight	3
63. Spacement shoot at the enemy	3
64. Operation to capture shark	4
65. Operation to capture shark	4
66. Monster/Hulk chases group	1
67. Bad guy "dinoman"/dinosaur shoot out	3
68. Cookie-Monster attacks teacher	1
69. Gunman shotts dragon	3
70. R2-D2 crashes into planes	3

APPENDIX B

SAMPLES OF THE GAMES

WC= working-class

MC= middle-class

I. Dominant/Submissive

Children have agreed to play "Wizard of Oz" and have assigned role -- the witch, Toto, Dorothy. Once the game starts, one girl announces herself as the Witch and grimaces, holds her hands out in front of her and chases the group. The children scream, "Run, run, the Witch!" They run in a circle around the playground screaming, then disperse. (WC)

A handicapped boy pretends that he is the Hulk and tries to catch three girls, who climb up on the monkey bars to avoid him. One girl scream, "Michael, get me. You can't get me!" Michael replies, "I'm the Hulk. I'll scare you down." He stands beneath the bars and grimaces at the girls, who climb down and run, screaming, "My goodness!" Michael screams, forms his hands like claws and hisses. The girls scream, "Monster, get me!" Michael says in a high-pitched voice, "Come into my arms and I'll close the door." Girl, standing near him, says, "No way! I won't let you." Michael shouts, "I'm in charge of all the girls!" Girl, "Well, I'm in charge of all the boys!" The girls whisper to one another and run away giggling and screaming. (MC)

Several girls stand near the sandbox. One says, "Pretend I'm Dorothy, O.K.?" The three girls then march, with their arms around one another, towards a cement wall on the other side of the playground. They put a fourth girl in an imaginary cage, pinned down to the wall, and yell at her, jumping in front of her. She screams. They all run away. (WC)

A girl stands at a toy wheel. She makes a monster face, grimacing and making noises, while she turns the wheel. A second girl begins to cry at the monster noises. The monster girl calls herself "The Spider", twists her body, contorts her face, and all the children who had been standing around her run away and scream. She then pretends that she is sleeping. A boy touches her lightly to test her and she turns into a monster again, screaming and stretching her arms out. The children run away, cowering. She feigns sleep again for a few seconds, until another child touches her, and then turns back into a monster. A boy screams, "Snakeman!" All of the children run out of the room, screaming. (WC)

A girl calling herself The Wicked Witch chases the group until they reach one side of the playground. When they reach the wall, a boy

calls himself "the lion" and chases them to the other side. Children scream loudly as they are chased and run into the teachers' laps. (WC)

Four girls are on the monkey bars. One girl says, "I'm Batgirl. Wanna be Supergirl? She can fly!" The other girl replies, "I'll be Batgirl. We'll be sisters." A third girl says, "It's my turn to talk. What if a real Superman comes and he flies with me?" Another says, "What if a real Batman comes and he takes me?" A boy approaches the bars holding a toy pistol. The girls tell him to go away but he sprays water at them. One girl screams, "Oh no! Here he comes!" The girls giggle, scream and run off. (MC)

Two boys are sitting on the playroom floor. One, who has been playing alone and smashing toys, takes a chicken dolls and says, "I'm Might Mouse. Watch him!" He pushes a truck, smashes it. The other boy says, "Run me over." The boy refuses, "No, I'm Mighty Mouse." The boy asks him again and is refused. A girl joins them. The original boy says to boy, "You're th drivers." He points to a toy bus and says, "I'm Mighty Mouse." He hits the schoolhouse toy and makes faces at them. They run away. (WC)

Two boys sit on the monkey bars. One says, "I'm DARTH Vadar. I'm Star Wars." He chases the other boy around the bars several times. They then sit on the bars and make space noises at me and shout, "We are Star Wars." (WC)

One boy attacks another as the Hulk. Four other boys then hide under a blanket and whisper, "What would happen if we died?" The teacher comes in to check with the first boy (who has complained), but leaves quickly. The group giggles while the Hulk screams at them. They hide their heads under the blankets and the Hulk steps on them. They giggle and remain hidden. Girls, watching, run to teachers. The monster/hulk boy continues to stand outside. The group screams, "This is like a haunted castle." They tell the boy not to hurt them, "You made my head squooshed. You're fired." Monster says, "Well, you're fired." The entire group yells and screams, jumping up and down. The teacher comes in and stops the game. (MC)

The Hulk chases three boys across the yard. They return. The boys come over to me and say that they are all hulks. They scream at me, "You're supposed to go away. I'm the Hulk!" One looks at me and giggles, "I'm gonna hit the Hulk." He swings his towel at him. The Hulk roars and chases him across the playground, as he screams. (WC)

II. Protective/Dependent

Two boys stand on a ledge on the side of a sprinkler, which the other children pretend is dangerous. As the water comes in their direction, one plays at rescuing the other, holding his hands and placing him

further away from the sprinkler. He tells him, "You stay here. I got Superman glasses." The other boy repeats, "He's Superman 'cause he got Superman glasses." The rescuer attaches a towel to himself as a cape, and leads the other along the ledge. They sing adventure music and climb along the ledge. (WC)

A girls climbs on top of the slide and announces, "I am Wonder Woman." A boy says, "She's a bad Wonder Woman. I'm a bad Superman." They fight, using their feet, and sing. Another boy climbs to the top of the slide and begins to throw stones at children. Wonder Woman, who has been sliding down, says, "Oh no! Wonder Woman is here!" She swings her hips at the boy, who stops throwing stones. A teacher intervenes. (WC)

Supergirls are standing near the playhouse. A new girl comes over and they ask her, "What kind of superhero do you want to be." She says, "I'm the leader of the whole group. C'mon, there's a murder. Everyone is in trouble. C'mon." The girls run around the yard, in back of the playhouse, giggling. They go into the bottom part of the house quietly and whisper, following the leader. She goes to the top saying, "I'm not gonna get killed up here. I'm alright. I'll look out." She stands alone on the top while the others giggle and whipser, circling the house (MC).

Four boys play Spiderman and Superman. They run over to the playhouse, climb up the ladder, and slide down, go to the back of the house, and run through an "obstacle course" (which the staff has set up). One boy touches another, who falls dead. The "dead" boy runs and calls for Spiderman, "Help! Spiderman, I fell down and got hurt. Somebody help me. Rescue! Rescue!" Spiderman rescues him, and they all go to place spaceship. (MC)

Three girls play in the sand area. They cry "trouble" because there is a witch. They call Wonder Woman and Superman for help, "Hurry! Kill the witch, Wonder Woman, kill the witch!" Wonder Woman and Superman say, "Let's go to the hideout. I know where the hideout is." They run over to the playhouse, and then to the sand area. "We have to go to the hideout and get more powers." The teachers brings out a block and the child climb on it, "The Witch is here. No!" Wonder Woman says, "Come with me Superman, I'll save you." They run back to the house, climb the ladder and then get distracted. (MC)

III. Competitive/Aggressive

Four boys mock fight, using sound effects and hitting one another in stylized fashion. They cry, "Batman! Batman!" One boy is thrown down and the two others (Batman & Robin) run away. A teacher comes over and hugs the fallen boy. (WC)

In sandbox area, two boys face each other. One sings. The other says, "I'm Batman. I'm ready for you." Meanwhile, a girl grabs a towel from Batman who starts singing the Batman theme. He takes the towel from the girl, and hits her. She goes away. The boys lie down. (WC)

Three boys mock fight. One says, "I'm Batman." They fight and chase one another. One boy runs and grabs my leg and the others circle me saying, "I'm Batman.!" They run across the field, sit down and pretend that they have walkie-talkies, running around with the walkie-talkies. Finally, they sit and say, "This is a Batmobile." One boy tries to come them; they hit him and say, "Not for you. The Batmobile!" They run more and sit, "This is a Batmobile. This is my Batmobile." A teacher comes over and tells them that it is lunchtime. Batman tells Robin, "C'mon Robin." Robin replies, "What Batman?" Batman says, "It's time for lunch." They sneak across the playground and then return for lunch. (WC)

Two boys and a girl sit with dinosaur toys. They fly them through the air. One boy flings clay at the other, "I'm Dinoman. I'm a bad guy." The girl forms her fingers into a gun and "shoots" him. The boy says, "Pretend we're all bad guys and we're all fighting." They bump dinosaurs into one another, "We have to kill the clay when it comes at you." One boy flings more clay at them, "O.K. Take this!" Teacher comes over and asks them to clean up. (MC)

Boys with cape and girl with cape have mock fight, dancing as they fight. Girl says, "You can't kiss me, I'm not Wonder Woman. I'm Diana." They dance around and she says, "When I stop being Wonder Woman, then I'm Diana." He tries to kiss her and she says, "You're being silly!" They mock fight again and she runs to the playhouse to join another game. (MC)

Boys sit on playroom floor, with Star Wars Battleship. They set up teams, asking, "Where's Yoda?" "Where are the forts?" "Who can be Yoda?" One boy says, "Let's have a fight." They discuss roles: "Luke Skywalker's a good guy. You're not on my team." "I'm on everybody's team." "No, bad guys don't belong in there. This is a good guy, it doesn't shoot." The same boy tries to fly the ship but is stopped by a boy who puts the Luke doll inside it. They talk about Yoda ("a good guy") and Dart Vader ("a bad guy 'cause he fights with Luke"). They then crash planes into each other. (MC)

Boy pretends that he is Robin and asks me to watch him climb the pole of the swings, as he makes mus-c. He "flies" to the ledge and waves his cape. He challenges another boy. They fight and kick one another as they sing the Batman theme. Robin then steals a girl's towel and flies away. (WC)

Boy comes over to me as Superman. Another boy comes over as the hulk ("I am the Incredible Hulk!"). He attacks Superman and they punch one another. The Superman boy is hurt and cries, "You hurted me!" The Hulk comes over to me and says, "Do you want me to choke you?" I ask, "Who chokes people?" He says, "The Incredible Hulk." He widens his eyes and pretends to choke himself.

A boy as Robin attacks a boy, who is pretending to be the Hulk. They fight and Robin calls for Batman. He makes music and says, "I got Batman on the signal." He runs to Batman. Robin comes back and takes the Hulk as a prisoner over to Batman. He then goes over to the ledge and screams at a younger boy. The Hulk escapes and becomes Superman. (WC)

Boys stand with sticks and make odd noises. Two boys take sticks and duel, then run through the "obstacle course" (that the teacher has made) with their swords. They say, "We're playing Empire Strikes Back. I'm Ben Knobi." The other boy says that Ben Knobi didn't have a sword, to which the first replies, "Yeah, he left it at his house!" The teacher interrupts the game. The boys then go and get smaller twigs to continue fighting, "Hey, Darth Vader, hey, you're on my side." They unite and go into the playhouse. (MC)

IV. Egalitarian/Cooperative

Two boys stand near monkey bars. One says, "Let's play Empire Strikes Back!" The other says no but climbs bars and says, "Did you see Aristocrats? It was good, right?" The other boy says, "No one's coming up here." A teacher brings the boys boards and they set them upon the bars. Boy: "We're adding to our ships. No, we have other shipt." They assign boards as beds on the ship. One says, "I wanna blastoff." He runs around the bars and says, "It's our ship, our ship!" The other boy shouts, "Blastoff! Spaceship! Stay on this ship. Me and Scott will blastoff." Boy takes a tire and says, "This leads to our shipt. This is our ship and because it's our's, it's blasting off." They spot other children coming and they put a blanket over the top, "Oh, Earth people are coming." The other boy shouts, "This is ours. We don't want them on our ship." They huddle under the blanket, "We're space people. This is ours. We won't let Earth people in." Teacher intervenes and explains to the boys that they should share. The game ends. (MC)

Two girls fill sea shells with sand, "We'll make something for the Wicked Witch to drink." They pile sand into spoons, and say that it's poison for the Witch. They continue this until one girl leaves. (MC)

Six children huddle under the tent over the monkey bars and pretend that they are in a spaceship. One boy says, "C'mon, Wonder Woman, let's go out." She says, "I can fly out" and slides down the bars.

says, "This rocket is launching," in a deep voice. The children giggle, "You're funny." "We're flying up." The teacher calls them in for lunch. "Everybody, let's get down." "It's take-off time." The children pretend that they have landed and go off to eat. (MC)

Three boys play in the same with pails of water, pouring water to form puddles for "water traps." Boy: "It's hard work making the water traps for the creatures!" The boys take water out of certain puddles to add to others, "My water's going away." Boy: "We gotta make a real water trape. There are hot lava creatures in there, they are red, and the water kills hot lava creatures. You have to glue them up and bound them, you have to twist them all up." The other boy nods, "The water melts them. I'm trapping the hot lava creatures." Boy: "The sand has little guns in it and it shoot the hot lava creatures and in the sand, there's lava!" A third boy wants to play and he is told that "we're making water traps." He helps them to cover up holes. Boy: "Now my water can't get out. The hot lava creatures come up every minute. Gotta keep the water down." (MC)

Two boys sit on the floor and make guns. One stands up and says, "I'm in a fighter ship." The other says that he needs more parts. The first goes to find another gun and asks him to "watch my fighter ship." A girl cries, "Oh people from outer space!" The boys bring back a board saying, "This is to fix the rocket. You keep this, o.k.? Put this on front." They discuss how to make the rocket and then say "someone dropped a bomb on top of my rocket." They boys brings over a toy ladder, "This is your think to climb up and down." The boys look for the r2-d2 toy but can't find it. "Well, pretend that you can fly." The boy answers, "I can't." The other boy tell him to "pretend", and shows him how to "fly". They then discuss how their rocket can protect them against the bombs. (MC)

Two girls and a boy are one the monkey bars and climbing. One says, "I'll turn into Wonder Woman." They run into the playhouse. The boy, while running, spins around and cries, "Superman!" The girls run into the house and say it's a hideout. The boy says, "Here's a hideout, Wonder Woman. We gotta get out of here." He then says that he's Batman." The children climb up and declare, "This is only for people like Superman, Wonder Woman, and Batman." "I gotta get more powers" "I gotta get more machines." They run off to a metal tub, which they label a Batmobile. they climb on the tube and say, "I got millions of powers." The boy calls to the girl, "I got more powers than you." The boy falls and the girl climbs in the tube. They then say, "Let's go to our hideout." "Gotta get to our hideout soon." The girl combs the bars very quickly, "I gotta do this quickly. I gotta get millions of powers so I won'r run out." They slide down the bars. The girls say, "You can be Superman too if you want. I can't be Wonder Woman till I grow up."

Boys put on capes as Batman & Robin. They climb onto the ledge and wave their arms, then jump off. One says, "Oh no, a shark's in here. There's a monster riding the sea!" They leap across the sand area saying, "Let's go to the Batman and Robin castle." The other boy says "No! Our boss isn't there. He's at the airport. We'll fly there." They circle the sand area waving their arms. "We'll go on an airplane." Then they pretend to drive a Batmobile. They climb the pole of the swings and fly around the yard. (WC)

Boys on blocks pretend to use radio to sight the Shark. One boy announces, "You better hurry." The second falls into the "water" (floor area) and screams. The first takes the board to "cut" the boat in two, while the other cries, "Don't. That's our diving board." The boy pretends to hammer the boat together with blocks, and then both boys pretend to write messages to send ashore. "We better hurry." "Fire!" They both jump off the blocks, "the boat's on fire." "How?" "All the controls blew." They crawl on the floor, whispering "Look out for the shark." One boy (who has not been playing) is sitting on the boxes and they tell him, "You're on fire." They crawl under a table which they call a "water tunnel." One boy asks, "Is that our submarine." The other answers, "No, it's our tunnel". The play period ends. (MC)

Boys build with blocks on the playroom floor. One says, "This is an emergency helicopter. It helps people. If there is a fire or a shark. It lifts the people and takes them to a doctor. The boys continue to build then go over to a "landing pad." They take a glass box, "This is where people live. I'm playing Emergency Helicopter." They fly the planes around the room, "My helicopter can go around and around." They swoop down on floor and pretend to pick up dolls. They then go back to playing with blocks. (MC)

Two boys pretend that they are Superman & Batman and stand with arms crossed, in front of sandbox. "Pretend that there are bad guys in the sandbox. We better go and find them." They point to the window of the school, saying, "There's their trap." They discuss throwing stones at the trap. "Let's pretend like we fly." They climb the pole of the swings and sing. One throws a boy down, "I go get him." They slide down the pole and sing. One says to the other, "I go down and save you." They climb up and down the pole, sing, and finally put the toy on top of the pole. (WC)

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