



The World Through Children's Eyes: Hide and Seek & Peekaboo

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Hide n' Seek

If you want to play hide n' seek you need a good park with trees or a place with bushes and paths where you can hide or a big place with lots of boxes and crates that you can hide behind. You have to play hide and seek with at least 10 people. You need a base. You have to know secret places and places where there is no traffic in the area. The best is a sandy field or grassy place where you can move around without making noise. The base has to be in an open where you can see the person who is "it". You also have to know places where you can see the person who is "it" but he can't see you. The person who's "it" can't just stay around the base looking but he's got to go look and walk through the paths and look behind walls and bushes so that you have a chance to run to the base and be free. (9 yrs.)

This is Jannie's story about playing hide and seek. It was originally written in Dutch, as were most of the reports used in this paper², but we think our English speaking audience will recognize and understand her account. Her story is an example of the raw data we used to write this paper. Our purpose was to gain a better understanding of the child's experience when playing hide and seek. In other words, our perspective was phenomenological.

Unfortunately, phenomenological sounds forbidding. It should not. We mean by it the understanding of an event from the point of view of the participant. In this case hide and seek from the child's point of view.

Every event can be explained from a variety of viewpoints. For example, hide and seek could be studied: to determine the moral judgement levels of the children, or to look for sex role identification in the social interaction of the children, or to determine the relationship between competence in play and self concept. All of these are legitimate and perhaps important ways to study the game but they differ from the observers (adult) point of view. Phenomenology asks: What is the participant's, in this case the child's, experience like? The focus is, as much as possible, the participant's rather than the observer's. We are trying to find out what children find compelling about the game. Because science has as its goal to better understand and because the correct procedure for reaching this goal cannot be known ahead, it is difficult to say which is the best way to do research. Every study begins from a judgement of the researcher. We think this diversity is good. Out of different perspectives are likely to come a variety of insights and fuller understanding.

The Phenomenological Viewpoint

Human understanding rests upon a foundation of untested and untestable beliefs. These are what we call common sense. No "higher" knowledge would be possible without this stable base from which to build. Our language communicates because we share this common world and we

have no doubts about it. This very ordinary and common world is called intersubjective by phenomenologists because it is shared and psychological. It is the intersubjective world of hide and seek which we will study.

Language is the primary means for the communication of phenomenological insights. At times it seems a weak tool which cannot fully carry the meanings of gesture and feeling which are also an important part of experience, but it is the tool we will use nonetheless because it is the best available. We shall use it by having our informants write about their experiences of playing. We shall also use language to describe our own beliefs about hide and seek after reading these accounts and reflecting on them.

All that we say must be tested by the reader for its accuracy. There are no methodological safeguards in this research, no control groups, no assumptions about randomness. We will try to speak sensibly about the intersubjective world of hide and seek, using language that everyone can understand. The value of phenomenological research is not assured by methodological orthodoxy but rather by the researchers ability to express shared experience in an understandable way. This is not always as easy task.

Is it possible to understand a game like hide and seek from a child's perspective? Or more generally, is it ever possible to achieve phenomenological insight? We think it is, otherwise we would not be doing as we are. However, the answer to these questions is always in doubt until the research is completed. Every study is a new act of faith that better understanding of the other's point of view is possible. We believe that adults can see the world through children's eyes. None of us can be children again, but we can take children's experience seriously and learn from it.

A study of the ordinary is likely to report what everyone already knows, to be banal. This is true, though it is surprising how extraordinary the ordinary is when it is the focus of interest. The human sciences are inevitably stuck with the human experience as subject for study. It can be made no more interesting than it is found to be. It is possible, in order to avoid studying what may appear overly common, to study the esoteric or to use esoteric methods to "scientize" and make the ordinary into something which is totally new. The effort to achieve counter-intuitive results in the social sciences is an example. By focusing on the unusual the scientist tends to make it more important and the ordinary less significant. We would like to see the ordinary world of experience elevated in importance even if at times its very simplicity seems boring. In most cases that first impression is changed after closer examination.

Taking experience seriously means believing what informants say. Trust is essential. It also means that the immediate events become more important than past and future ones. Every experience is embedded in a history and is directed toward some future goals. The entire context is important in order to understand what is going on. But our interest is in the thing itself, in this case hide and seek, for what it can tell us about the child's world. We are not concerned about its future applicability to the

world of work though our research may reveal a possible connection. The study of hide and seek treats childhood as an end rather than a means to some more important future.

A major theme of phenomenology is “to the things themselves.” That means laying aside preconceived notions about even the most ordinary event in order to see it in a new way. In other words looking naively, with a sense of wonder, at events and asking questions that usually aren’t asked because of their simplicity. That is what we understand by the phrase “to the things themselves.”

The four authors of this paper have come together for a year to write a book about doing phenomenological research. We have begun our collaboration together by conducting a study of the children’s game “hide and seek.” Each of us brings to this research a slightly different focus of concern. Bleeker and Mulderij are committed to the study of children’s play “out of doors” and to how better living arrangements can be built based upon this research. Their recent book *Kinderen Buiten Spel* (1978) reports the first phase of their work. Beekman is a contributor to this research but is also interested in demonstrating the general value of phenomenological studies in the world of education—a world which is important for the growing child. Barritt, the only American in the group, is in Holland to work with Beekman, Mulkerij, and Bleeker on an English version of the Dutch handbook for doing phenomenological research, *Beleving en Ervaring* (1977). He is interested in demonstrating, particularly to the American educator, that good social science is not the same thing as good statistical analysis. The value of research in the human sciences rests upon its utility, not its orthodoxy.

The original impetus for this study came from a film by Juan Goudsmit for the “Stichting Ruimte” (Foundation for the Study of Living Space). By making a film about children playing hide and seek, Goudsmit was able to show adults how children use the places around their homes for fun: how streets, doorways, and cars are transformed in this game from their adult functions into objects behind which one can hide. He helped us to “see” the importance of this widely played children’s game.

Peekaboo, I See You

Hide and seek and Peekaboo both involve hiding and mutual seeking: i.e., seeing and knowing you are being looked at. This mutual seeing is a stirring experience for young children and adults.

In *Being and Nothingness* (1948) Sartre speaks about this mutual seeing using the example of someone seemingly alone peeking through a keyhole. When the voyeur is seen and knows it, shame is the result. He is “caught” looking. For Sartre, depending on the circumstances, mutual regard can lead to pride or shame. We will see that in the game played by children pride and joy predominate.

We begin with three observations of young children playing with adults at hiding and being sought. The first observation made by one of us in Amsterdam:

There is an outdoor celebration on the Nieuw Zijdsdolk. I sit about 15 feet from a small table where a mother sits with a small child, about a year old, on her lap. I watch him wriggle around; he stands up now, looks over his mother's shoulder, all around. Suddenly, he sees that I look at him. He disappears completely clinging to his mother's breast. She is talking to someone but she puts her arm around him and holds him tighter. After only a few seconds his head reappears and he looks carefully (the eyes just above the mother's shoulder) at me. I laugh and see his eyes laugh and at that moment he ducks away again. Now he comes back again and with eyes wide open he gives me a triumphant laughing look. So, I make my eyes bigger. Exuberant laughter and head shaking follows. He does this about 10 times until other people pass between us and he no longer sees me. About five minutes later he laughs again and opens his eyes wide. Maybe I do it too. Then it is busy between us and we lose one another from sight.

Is there anyone who does not recognize this experience? Who has not either played this game or watched it being played? This observation seems so self evidently characteristic of childhood experience that we cite it as a preliminary example of hide and seek. It is hide and seek, if you will, for the very young child.

Without doubt this is a delightful experience for the child. He looks around anonymously and suddenly realizes that he is being seen. He is not the only one though because he has also "caught" the stranger in his eyes.

Here are two further examples of similar games played by young children that seem to us to lie on the youthful side of hide and seek. These examples also point to the joy of seeing, being seen, hiding and being re-born in the eyes of another.

Nancy (2 1/2 yrs. old) calls to her mother, "Find me. I'm hiding." Mother tells her, "All right" and walks over to the closet where Nancy is standing in full view. Mother calls out in mock distress, "Oh, dear, I can't find my Nancy. I wonder where she's gone? Perhaps she's only gone out to buy some bread and milk, but I didn't hear the door. Oh dear, she's just disappeared." Nancy is chortling with delight. Mother pulls back the clothing and looks in at Nancy. She shakes her head and says: "I guess she isn't here. There is a little girl here but her name is Mary. I still don't know where my Nancy has gone." Nancy laughs and hides her eyes. Nancy continues as mother enacts variations of the theme of "Where has Nancy gone?"

Amsterdam, Central Station; a narrow grey platform with steel masts in the form of I beams and countless bizarre little constructions, the remains of earlier efforts and new additions, modern benches. Grandpa, grandma and grandson, 3 or 4 years old; grandpa moves a few yards away toward the train schedule board. Grandma and grandson see a beautiful chance and hid themselves behind a pillar. Grandpa comes back, misses them and looks around. The moment that he sees them (grandma and grandson are dancing about, talking softly but frequently) he acts as though he didn't see them, goes farther looking on the wrong side swinging his cane as he goes forth. Grandma and grandson venture out, bent over, from the shadow of their hiding place in order not to miss the role that grandpa is playing. And grandpa plays for his audience. Others waiting, see what is going on but they act as though they don't see it. As grandpa pretends to be ready to give up grandma and grandson appear at exactly the right moment to laugh at how dumb grandpa was at not being able to find them. They saw him very well. And the little boy is now dancing and jumping about in enjoyment over grandpa's act. Grandma also beams.

It is evident that these games are fun. Each observer speaks of delight, or laughter, or dancing for joy. Why should hiding and them being "caught"

by another person's gaze be so much fun? Perhaps a closer examination of the observations can help us to understand better what the child finds so fine.

In the first observation the child is looking around when his eyes meet those of the strange adult, he suddenly ducks from sight. Mother, though otherwise involved, hugs the child tighter as though reassurance was necessary. The careless gazing of the child has been interrupted to be replaced by the careful look over Mother's shoulder at the now laughing stranger. This stranger is OK, willing to play. Then the child laughs too.

A sudden transformation has occurred in the child's situation when he is "caught" looking at this man. We think this reaction is a kind of stage fright, created by the mutual gazing. Looking without being looked at, one is anonymous as if hidden, but the meeting of gazes fractures the anonymity and brings self awareness. The child reacts as if afraid to be so visible. The stranger seems to understand the need for reassurance because, when next their eyes meet, he is smiling. The child accepts this offer of friendship. When the child realizes that his presence is not being challenged but supported the result is joy.

Gadamer (1975) calls play a transformation of life into a structure, structures having beginnings, ends, rules. Transformation means a sudden change in one's relationship to the world and that seems to be the case here. The child's world is transformed just as the look transformed the world of Sartre's voyeur. In the present case the child's "nakedness" becomes joy in the stranger's smile and the start of peekaboo.

The transformation of looking is triggered by the mutual gaze and completed as the game begins. Now the child is present, no longer anonymous, in a small world that includes this man with whom he is playing, but which is set apart from the world of the other people present. These others slip to the periphery of concern, and both players become unaware of them in their concentration on their presence for one another.

The joy in the game comes from the mutual reaffirmation of the play which includes an ability to communicate intentions to the other. There is support in the reactions of the adult to the intentions of the child. Rather than reacting to the child's embarrassment as embarrassment, the adult treats it as play and the child accepts that reading gratefully responding to it by playing; fun too for the adult who also has his intentions accepted and who has the pleasure of bringing pleasure to a child. There is mutual reaffirmation of being in the game.

In the next two observations we should rather talk of "a play" than play. The two are quite close to one another and the line is easily crossed. The tension and joy of the interaction between awareness-presence and unawareness-hiding is still at the heart of the matter.

Nancy "hides" from mother and says come find me. Mother pretends not to see her, and Nancy is delighted in the part mother plays. Nancy is not there in the eyes of her mother; she is sought for, cared for, but yet she is at the same moment present to watch these expressions of concern. Mother loves, mother affirms, and mother plays. Mother accepts the

invitation to join the world of play—what a marvelous mother I have, who loves me so. Consider the same situation if mother had rejected the game by finding Nancy in the closet or by refusing to look because she has more important things to do.

The same sort of play is played by grandfather. He realizes the moment that he actually sees grandma and grandson “hiding” that he has a chance to affirm, to bring pleasure to the child, and to show his love. He looks elsewhere, where he knows that they are not hiding. He plays a role as seeker using his cane to exaggerate his concern and his ineffectual search. He plays the fool for his grandson. What better way to show how much you care for another than to act out that concern before their very eyes. It is a source of support to the child to see his initiative seconded by grandpa, who is an adult and has many other important things to do, who lives in the world out of play yet who moves into play for the grandson.

Once again there is transformation of big world into small. The others waiting for the train recede from focus; they move off stage and take up position as observers.

These games played by adults with children are like hide and seek but different. Alike because the tension in all of them comes from hiding with the implicit question, “Am I important enough in your eyes to be sought?” The joy comes in the positive response from the seeker.

Hide and seek is a game for children. It involves a close attachment to one’s neighborhood. It is not spontaneous as is peekaboo; the rules are more explicit. These are some of the distinctions between peekaboo and hide and seek. There are many similarities, however, between these games of seeing and being seen.

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“Here I Come, Anyone Around My Base is It.”

We asked 30 fourth grade children to tell us about playing hide and seek. In addition, 30 adults wrote their recollections of the game. We began this article with Jannie’s story, and now we present three more children’s accounts and two from adults. One from each of these is written by an English speaker as a complement to the Dutch informants.

In the case of the Dutch informants we selected stories that we thought were representative, neither better nor worse than the others. The two American accounts were collected later. Except for some difference in detail (Americans don’t hide behind dikes) the stories seem in most important respects similar. It might be useful for readers who wish to check our comments and analysis to take a moment to write about their own recollections or to ask a child to describe the playing of hide and seek. This should greatly enrich the reader’s insights.

The first and third reports are from Dutch children age 10. The second from an 11 year old American.

When you play hide and seek one person counts and the others go hide. And we go most in the garage to hide and also sometimes behind the dike. And we also go sometimes in the woods because that is fun because there is high grass and we

also go sometimes to sit in the trees and then they don't see us so quickly. And there is a shed where we also go sometimes to sit or stand or lie on the shelf. Because it is high you must climb up to the shelf otherwise you can't get on the shelf. If you sit on the shelf you hit your head. And behind in the woods we also go lay down because if you sit or stand then they see you and we are finished. And then I'm "it" and that's great I think when you have to go look for someone in the bushes and there you can sit inside with five others. And sometimes we hide in our hut and our hut is very big and high. You can stand up there and you can also hide there and that is neat. And we also play hide and seek when we go camping in the field where there is high grass.

There are a couple of ways of playing hide and seek. One of them is called, or I call it, hide and seek safety. The person who is "it" stands by a tree or a rock, anything big enough to see well from far away. Mr. "It" counts up to 50 or 100 then calls out, "Apples, peaches, pumpkin pie, whoever's not ready holler I! If someone hollers I, then Mr. It or Miss It counts up to 20. If no one hollers I, then they holler, "Ready or not here I come." Now that tree is a safety and you must touch it to be safe. Once you have touched it you have to stay there. After you have touched it you can take your hand off it but can't help Mr. It. If Mr. It touches you before you have touched the tree, you are It and everybody else must come out of hiding.

Another way of playing hide and seek is for Mr. It when he sees you to holler, "I see so and so," and then to try to beat you to the tree, but if you are first you are safe. If Mr. It is nowhere to be seen or even if he is, you could try to run to the safety but if he sees you and gets there before you, you are it. That's all there is. Sometimes people cheat and make up more rules that aren't true. The End.

If you want to play "hide and seek" first you've got to count off. And whoever is left over is "it," then you've gotta count like this: 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100, whoever isn't away is caught. I count to 10—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. I come. And then you've gotta look. When you've got a good place to play you won't be found quickly but one time it wasn't like that for me. I had the best spot in the shed and I was the first one found. And I laid in the grass and I was the last one found and I was still free. And I was only "it" two times and never after that. That is because I run faster than the others and I'm lucky because of that. But when I was about four I could run just as fast as the others and then it was much better, then everyone could run just as fast. I have something else to tell, when you are found by the person who's "it" then you are "it." When you get to the base yourself and say, free, then you are free and that is everything about hide and seek . . .

Now two examples from the recollections of adults. The first from an American, the other from a Dutch student. The American:

We played hide and seek all the time when I was younger, but it was played best in the summer at dusk. Then the street lights were on. Base was always a telephone pole under the street light between the woods on one side of the street and an empty lot on the other. Whoever was "it" would hide their eyes against the pole and count to 100 by 1's or 500 by 10's, whatever was the decided upon procedure for that night. Everyone else scattered down the embankment, behind the fence. Most people would try to find a good spot and stay put. Some would move around trying to get a clear shot at the base when the person who was "it" was far away or had his back turned. You could "win" by touching the base and saying "free" before the person who was "it" touched it and called your name and said where you were seen, e.g., "Marty running across the street" or "Judy behind the big rock across the street."

The most exciting part of the game was the final burst of speed to get to the base before the person who was "it" could see you, get to it himself and declare that you were seen. Everyone who had already been caught would stand around

kibitzing and trying not to give you away as you first snuck and then ran to that base. Sometimes the excitement would be overwhelming and smaller kids would start to jump up and down as you neared the base. I'm excited as I write this and relive those summer evenings.

One of the inevitable parts of our game were the arguments which occurred. E.g., the seeker would declare that he had seen so and so in a certain place but that person would not give up. Any one of several things would then happen. The seeker, the person who was "it," would say you're caught, so and so, and I'm not looking further for you. Then when so and so sprinted for the base to say "free" the seeker would have to decide whether to stick to his guns or to try to get there first and declare that person caught. Whatever happened there would be a big brouhaha. "I saw you behind the big rock." "You did not. I know you didn't because I could see you the whole time and you never even looked my way," etc., in some cases interminably.

To be put to bed early on a summer evening and to lie there listening, knowing what you were missing was to be in the depths of childhood misery.

One of our Dutch informants:

Sunday evening playing hide and seek in the field.

What an experience!

To play with children who you never saw during the week. Yet it was also spooky. In a big field with all the little trees and small alleys.

Will Andrea come this evening? Will she laugh at me again? The last time she looked under my short pants and hollered to everyone that I had knitted underwear on. If she comes, I'm leaving. No, then she'll laugh at me because I'm afraid. What a pain. I hope that Inneke is there. It's so good to talk to her, even though she is Catholic.³ Maybe I can hide with her. I wouldn't do that with Andrea. Crazy, last week Inneke told me that she went to mass on Wednesday evening. Who goes to church during the week? What would you do there? Should I also go once? Bert told me that he always blows out the candles. What an idea; that I would dare to do it! Inneke also says they have a bishop. Crazy that I like to talk to her when the teacher says that the Catholics are expanding. I won't tell him (the teacher) anything about hide and seek.

Shall I be "it" tonight. I never know where to look in that huge field. I'm afraid when everyone is away. At least when I find one person I can talk to them. Shall I first go into the woods?

Lucky, I'm not "it." Be careful that I'm not the first one seen then I don't have to be "it." I find the alley by Orië's terrifying. Tonight I would dare to hide there because Martin is with me. Shall we give up? They'll never find us. What will the neighbors think when I play Sunday evening with the other kids? I'm going back next week. Inneke told me she's coming back too, next week. If only she sat by me at school rather than Andrea.

We will begin with some observations about common themes that seem to us to appear out of these and the other stories. We make no pretense that these are the only ones. There is a good deal that we shall leave unsaid, but for our purpose the important thing is the role of hide and seek in the child's experience. We will try to keep that foremost as we identify similar threads that tie these reports together.

There is no formula that we know to identify themes "objectively." We have read the written accounts again and again. We are the instruments of analysis and other instruments might well put different labels on these common forms. We do think, however, that there are common forms and that any conscientious reader would find most of the same ones which we point towards, though he or she might give them different names or be

even more insightful in reading their significance. To those who abhor the "sloppiness" of these procedures, we can only say that the problem is not ours alone. It belongs to life itself. Experience is meaningful, else it would have no significance and we would have no history. The meaning of our experience is irreducible and with that we are stuck. Our analysis tries to uncover some meanings of hide and seek for children.

"Then you've gotta...": How To Play Hide and Seek

The parameters of the game are marked out by the rules and these are important to the children. They arise as well in the recollection of adults. There is a right way and a wrong way. Our American informant says, "Sometimes people cheat and make up more rules that aren't true." All of the children make an attempt to identify the important elements of these rules, in particular by discussing the role of the seeker, what he or she must do, e.g., counting, not staying too close to base; and the hider, where, for example, you must not hide (at home); and the environment, the base has to be big and visible.

There appear to be two fundamental rules which must be obeyed to make the game hide and seek. First, that the hidiers must hide away from the base. Several of the children repeat a version of the incantation, "anyone around my base is 'it'," as the last thing said before going to look. Second, that the seeker must go to look, not stand by the base and wait for the hidiers to get bored.

Among the "have to's" and the "got to's" of our informants there is also a flexibility expressed. The flexibility does not extend to the two guiding rules mentioned in the paragraph above, but within them there is room for negotiation, for changing the rules. One child, for example, reported that "little ones" are allowed to be "it" with a friend or two. Something that strictly speaking is against the rules.

The Surroundings in Which You Play

It is no surprise that the place you play hide and seek is important in these accounts. We undertook this study because of our interest in the children's play space, and we were certain hide and seek would allow them to tell us what kind of place is best for this game. And they certainly did.

A woods, especially the trees, a place with lots of objects behind which or in which to hide, club houses, sheds, cars and dikes. These are all important part of a good hide and seek environment. No one said you could hide in a football field. But it was pointed out that the base must be out there where you can see it and the seeker.

Several of the children did talk about the danger of the street. Here is one particularly hair-raising tale from a child who is describing what happened to him one day when he was the seeker.

When everyone had hidden themselves again, I saw Sandra laying in the path of a moving car. It scared me to death and I jumped out in front of the car to pull Sandra out of the way and then we were laying on the stones of the street. The car screamed to a halt. Everyone was so scared that hide and seek fell apart. My whole knee was bloody and Sandra was completely upset.

We could say more about automobiles and their danger to children but this is not the place.⁴ Suffice it to say that cars are a threat to the playing child's life. Movement, so characteristic of children from the earliest years must be severely restricted because of autos. It is interesting that the "reservations" called playgrounds, to which many would like to confine children, occupy very little of neighborhood space. The auto, with its streets, has a much larger area reserved to it, to the great danger of the child. This is one of the crazy foibles of our age.

The Other Players

There must be "at least 10 people," "you need a lot of people to play hide and seek," etc. These were typical comments. Who you play with and who you hide with are important. Some children are good hiding companions, others not.

The seeker is along. Taking all of our written samples into account, one would have to say that this is not the happiest role for someone to have to play. Here is a good example: "Then I turned around, squinting in the light with the uncertain feeling that everyone can see me, but I am not able to see them. At that moment I walk hesitantly away from the base."

Still there are children who find the role of seeker fun. It is a tension filled role. You must have a good knowledge of hiding places, your distance from the base, and you must take the other players foot speed into account. You can be surprised from all sides at once. The neighborhood becomes measured in distance from the base and companions are now hiders who run faster or slower than you. Realistic appraisal of one's own ability is needed. Little ones can sometimes play hide and seek but they can't be the seeker. One of the children wrote about this: "But the little ones only have to count to thirty. We let them be 'it' with a friend or even three of them to be 'it' at once." This is a nice example of the way older children compensate for the youth of their compatriots.

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Hide and Seek is Fun

These accounts either implicitly or explicitly make it clear that this game is fun. It is fun because it is exciting to sit with your heart beating so loudly you can hear it in your hiding place, trying to remain still when you know that danger is nearby, that "Mr. It" is stalking you.

It is fun to hide well and not be found first. It is the height of the game to run to the base unseen and say "free." It is fun, too, when the danger is far away, to contemplate the world around you without haste. One of the children wrote, "Sometimes even when the danger of being found diminished, I didn't try to run to base. Then, lying on my back looking at the clouds I saw all sorts of strange heads or wild beasts. Then I heard the crickets...."

It is fun to hide with someone else too because, if you are with someone, then a special kind of solidarity is possible, a certain trust. You together, against the seeker.

The Others, Usually Adults

Adults seldom play hide and seek themselves, but they can play an important role. Sometimes they give the hider away unknowingly with a “friendly” look. Sometimes they attach no importance to the game, act as though it were not being played, and give away the hiding place on purpose. “Mr. K. started banging on the window because we weren’t allowed in the bushes and that gave us away.”

Another child mentioned watching out for the park warden while hiding behind a hedge because the grass and hedges were not supposed to be played on or around. The rights of the shrubs were being protected by this adult.

The Importance of Play

“It is hard to imagine any function for peekaboo aside from practice in the learning of rules in converting ‘gut play’ into play with conventions. But there may be one additional function; as Garvey (in press) has noted, one of the objectives of play in general is to give the child opportunity to explore the boundary between ‘real’ and make believe” (Bruner and Sherwood, 1976, p. 61).

All living is becoming, or formation. This is not less true for the adult than for the child. All our lives we depend upon past events to help us act now with intent directed toward some future goal. The task of phenomenological analysis is to understand the meaning of experience in its personal historical context as much as possible as a totality, embedded in all of its contexts. This search for the meaning of events can only occur if the experience under study becomes the prime focus, in the language of phenomenology, “for itself” and not as a means to some other end.

The play of children can be interpreted as a means rather than an end. If adulthood is the goal, the important end, then all of childhood is prelude. In this way it is possible to overemphasize the role of the future in the present, where the child’s experience is concerned, and lose sight of the immediate social dialectic of experience. We are all living in a “now,” with others, adults included. The “now” of adulthood must not become the standard by which the importance of childhood experience is judged. That distorts our picture of childhood.

The correction for this distortion is to take the child’s experience as seriously as the children themselves do. That means elevating hiding games to importance, for themselves as a way of being for the child. To try to determine the functional role of these games, meaning what they teach the child that he or she presumably doesn’t know and needs to learn, is one sided, being the adult’s point of view, and distorts the reciprocal relationship between the child and others. Adults play peekaboo, too. What is its “function” in their lives? Certainly no one would want to presume that they are playing to learn about reality. Why make the same presumption about the child?

Play is as important as childhood itself. In our own adult belief that “maturity” and serious purposes are life’s ends, we forget what children

never doubt that play is important, an intense experience which matters very much for itself. Hiding games are played throughout the world. Aries (1962) has documented their existence as early as 1604 in France. Attending to these seeing, being-seen games may help up to understand widely shared aspects of being for adults.⁶

Our organization for discussion and analysis of hiding games was suggested by Roche (1973) who identifies bodily being, intentionality, the social world, and temporality as fundamental aspects of lived experience.

Bodily Awareness

Hiding and being seen or sought increases bodily awareness. It is your body that goes away to hide. The differences between the games described earlier are perhaps revealing of the changing of the "I" as bodily being.

The younger children do not run away to hide themselves. In two of our first three observations the child is not out of sight. With the older children in the game hide and seek, you are caught if you are not well hidden. It might seem that the young child does not have a good understanding of his body. It would appear that the young child still has a lot to learn. However, before coming to that apparently self evident conclusion, perhaps we should examine the situation after putting aside our preconceptions about the child's limited awareness. No one who plays peekaboo hides completely. Adults, too, only hide their eyes when they play. Everyone accepts the fact that adults know what they are doing. Why assume that children do not?

A game is a social dialectic. Each knows the actions of the other because what one does dictates the response from the other. The child, in our observations, ducks away, and what does the adult do? If he plays, he makes sure that eye contact is established when the child looks. Peekaboo is not like hide and seek because you only hide your eyes. Everyone knows that.

On the one hand we want to make clear that peekaboo is not in the first place to be interpreted as important because it is functional, important for a better, more "objective" understanding of one's own body (size, proportion, what people call a developing body schema); it is true there does develop through the game a growing self consciousness. One can talk of a growing consciousness of one's own "I" body (Merleau-Ponty's "*corps-sujet*") in active relationship to another and at the same time the self-as-body object visible in the interest shown by the other; one can talk of an active dual relationship in the game, a full fledged dialogue takes place, with bodies. Peekaboo removes anonymity, the routine of just looking; peekaboo begins with, hey, that's me! With awareness of self identity.

Looking and being looked at is in human relations uncommonly important. For babies it quickly becomes a source of joy. Babies are interested in faces with eyes which look, recognize, and laugh. A face is often the stimulant of the child's first smiles. The little child looks with the look of the other: If mother looks at something else, then the child follows the mother's glance. Peekaboo differentiates between looking and being

looked at; hiding makes being seen difficult, thus, when you are seen, it is because you want to be seen. If you control the little game, you can draw it out and vary it with more and more playful challenges to make yourself more available.⁷ In these encounters beaming eyes are the center of interest. The child can apparently never get enough of them. Again and again he or she actively seeks to receive the special interest from someone's eyes. The child seeks out this action especially *to be* the one seen.

Even at older ages this sort of play remains fun; older children play with younger and enjoy it with them—with eyes and nose pressed close against each other, eyes closed, we count together one, two, three, and at the same time we open our eyes and laugh together at the pleasure we feel. Or, on the swing: children swing toward one another, suddenly make eye contact and lose it. Or, they sit playfully back to back, run around the little shed, peek around the corner and eye to eye, unexpectedly, meet each other and then shriek with excitement and pleasure. It was also fascinating to see how a shy five year old child uses peekaboo to make friends with a new camping neighbor. (These observations were made by Bleeker and Mulderij at a family camp in Holland.)

What can be said for our observations of Nancy in the closet and grandma and grandpa playing with grandson on the station platform? Here play has become "the play." Now the game has become theater. These two forms of activity have much in common. Both are worlds apart in which the normal everyday life rules are suspended or changed. We don't talk here about a boundary between "reality" and "unreality" but about a *different* reality. A play is no less real for its difference from the usual events in our lives. The play may in fact be more revealing of fundamental truths and, for that reason, of more interest to everyone (see Gadamer, 1975).

A play is reality to the second power. It is not dull. If we assume for the moment that in both the case of the closet and the station platform a play is being played and not a game and that everyone knows quite well what is going on, then we have no reason to conclude that the child lacks bodily awareness. The child is a player like mother and grandma and grandpa; everyone is agreed on the script and, as in an improvised piece of theater, each takes his cue from the other. Grandma and the little boy hide, but it is grandpa who creates the play when he pretends not to see them. And he does that after he has seen them. Are we to believe that grandma doesn't know she was seen? No, of course not. Why then assume the child is also unaware? The point of play, the source of the delight comes in knowing that it is theater and that grandpa loves us enough to play it with us. And what of the onlookers in this case? They pretend, too. They pretend that nothing unusual has occurred. It is only three people showing their understanding and pleasure in being together by acting out their love.

Nancy and mother represent a similar situation. Mother even says that there is a little girl here, but it isn't Nancy. Nancy delights in being able to watch while at the same time she isn't supposed to be there. She is like the voyeur who has not been seen, still anonymous in the sight of the other.

In comparison with peekaboo, this is a much more complicated game. The possibilities for variation are much greater; this is make believe: doing

as if you are someone else, and doing *as if* you are not there. A whole field of fantasy possibilities is opened for entering into other identities, the other that you yourself could have been. Nancy lives through these experiences to the high point: I, Nancy, am myself. End and high point are the recognition and acknowledgement of yourself in full bodily awareness. Everything is exciting yet safe in the warmth of the older, trusted player. You can take the risk of a disguise: You can almost disappear because you know definitely that, in the end, you will be found, back again, in triumph.

The body must be gone to play hide and seek. You must hide yourself somewhere in the immediate surroundings. For that you must be able to run and you must know all the good places to hide. We note that there is talk here of a realistic self consciousness in relation to the real surroundings of people, things, and landscape. There is a realistic and very practical assessment of what is possible developed with or through the game. More precisely:

1. There is realism with respect to one's own body and understanding (recognition) of whole and part: If they see your hair, your bathing suit, or your shoes, or if they see part of you, then you are there, totally.
2. Realism with respect to the skills and capacities of your own body: If the person who is it goes farther away and doesn't look around, can't I make it?
3. Realism with respect to the estimate of the other person's capabilities: If he is faster than I am, then I must have a good deal less distance to cover to reach base than the seeker does. Children can, at very young ages, size one another up. One can easily see this in the choosing of teams at recess.
4. Realism with respect to those who don't play, usually adults: Children learn quickly which adults are so unaware they will give them away by speaking to them, who are kindly and will tolerate or help, and who are mean and likely to betray a hiding place on purpose.
5. Realism with respect to the physical surroundings and their possibilities: The little wall is realistically assessed with respect to its possibilities as a hiding place. What will happen as the seeker approaches the hiding place from the other side, etc.; a clever child of about 10 hangs his colorful jacket in a tree and then goes somewhere else to hide.

We see that we have come close to the view of Piaget about the growing "realism" in the child's development. Where Piaget focuses on the "real," the "abstract," the "objective" relations, we see a realism in human relations. It proceeds from a recognition of one's own and of the other person's body, the possibility of action and the possibility of changes of perspective. What we notice is not so much a change away from egocentrism to world objectivity, but rather a more differentiated and nuanced understanding of positionality. The child learns that there are *more* ways to look and learns that there are many ways in which you can be looked at. *Within* the one inescapable perspective that you are with your own body the child comes to understand that it is also possible to take up other person's perspectives.

There is thus no changing in your own positionality from the *corps-sujet*, but there develops a greater awareness of your own positionality in relation to that of others and of things in the world. From the child's perspective: First there is looking, and then you learn that there are many ways that others can look at you (or in which you can look together with someone); you learn, too, that you can look in different ways; there is a growing control of your own positionality; you may be shy or self conscious, but you have perhaps learned how to live with this shyness (to know you're being looked at); you might use peekaboo to conquer shyness.

In hide and seek you are "not there" when the game is being played, but the pleasure, the excitement from this game comes in knowing you are being sought. Jannie tells us a good hiding place allows you to see the base and that Mr. and Miss "It" must go to look and not stay at the base. It is aloneness with the sense of togetherness that unites all of these games. In hide and seek the feeling of aloneness is accompanied by bodily separation. You "really" are alone. That means you must dare to be alone:

a) Completely alone "by yourself"; all of a sudden; you have no choice; your heart thumps; your legs quiver; you're thrown back on yourself. Some children can't stand this tension for too long. If they aren't found quickly, they run out of hiding.

b) It is very painful when they won't come to find you; a dirty trick; then you are alone *and* deserted. They would rather *not* see you. You are ignored.

c) Alone with a friend is an entirely different sort of "alone." Both more exciting and a different kind of excitement; together, perhaps for the first time with *her*, alone; bodily close by one another in the closed hiding place, you hear the other breathe, smell the other; it is a little risky, growing in togetherness and a certain intimateness, together in a sort of unmentioned unspoken secret pact; "with sparkling eyes you look at one another."

d) But it can also happen that suddenly the excitement disappears (they look for someone else, or are far away, etc.). Then, there is a sort of time out. Then, together with someone else, can be a time for talk and the sharing of secrets.

When you are alone, safe, and hidden in the hiding place, then you notice the small world all around you, the grass and the bugs, the worker ants. It can also be a time for looking at the world from afar, lost in one's thoughts far from the game, day dreaming, carried away, by yourself alone, everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

In peekaboo, in its various forms, you do not have to move your body out of sight to be alone. You may stay but enjoy the excitement of being alone which accompanies the act of hiding. Bruner reports: "We have never in our sample of peekaboo seen a child exhibit the sort of separation pattern noted by Ainsworth (1964) when Mother *really* leaves the scene" (Bruner and Sherwood, 1976, p. 61). Children seem to know that they have not been left alone.

We don't think that the differences between the games of the younger and older children have a great deal to do with whether children know they

are hidden or not. Maybe younger children really don't know how to hide; it is hard to be sure about that. The important difference for our understanding of one child's lived experience is the enjoyment of being away but safe and, most importantly, sought. Mothers, grandmas, grandpas, and even strangers are expressing love and support for the children by playing along. There can be no better sign that I care than to take up the play where they have left it for me. This is true as well for children playing hide and seek. To ignore your lead is a real act of rejection.

The Social World

We have already said a great deal about the social world of these two sorts of games. Hide and seek is a game for peers to play among themselves. Peekaboo is played by children with adults, or older with younger children. Children usually do not play peekaboo with their age mates.

The fun of hide and seek lies in the dialectical tension in "together, but alone," which unites everyone in the game. To play means to play with someone. Hide and seek is no fun, it is a disaster, if no one comes to look for you. In the game, you are alone, but the idea is not to stay that way. The tension of being the last to be found, being alone while *everyone* is together at the base but pulling for you, is the height of the excitement of the game. It is what makes playing fun. You must deny yourself the pleasure of being with everyone in order to be a part of the group.

The seeker is someone apart, also alone, but also central to the play. This is an important role to play. He is "against" the rest, but he unites everyone else in their opposition. Playing against one another makes each necessary. You can do without the outside observer but for the hidden, the seeker is essential; without the to-be-sought, there would be no seeker role.

In hide and seek and peekaboo, the tension lies in cooperation and mutual support given one another by the players. In peekaboo particularly, it is as though the adult were bringing the child's intentionality into existence by playing along. The source of the child's joy comes from the realization that his or her acts are seconded by the adults around him. Peekaboo is a demonstration of power for the child—and for the mother. They give joy to one another as they realize their ability to communicate intentions through the game. Gadamer (1975) speaks of *Bildung* as the foundation for human understanding. *Bildung*, a difficult word to translate, means the formation of the educated person, the cultured person, the person who actively represents his or her cultural heritage. Gadamer says of this *Bildung*:

To seek one's own in the alien, to become at home in it is the basic movement of spirit, whose being is only return to itself from what is other... Every individual is always engaged in the process of *Bildung* and is getting beyond his naturalness, in as much as the world into which he is growing is one that is humanly constituted through language and custom. (Gadamer, 1975, p. 15)

We must not presume that peekaboo is meant only for the child. Adults are initiators and partners in the play. They derive joy from it, too. Recall the reaction that one of us had to peekaboo in Amsterdam. An adult who plays with a child is also enlivened by the experience.

To play the game is to be accepted, not passively but actively to have your existence seconded by your partner, and this as much for the adult as the child. For the adult, the joy comes from giving joy; for the child from gaining mastery, the assimilation of the socio-cultural reality of his or her own existence. To put it perhaps too crudely, when you are playing, you are controlling the other. They therefore show to you the importance of your own actions, your own existence and being for the other.

The importance of eye contact is something which binds all of these games together. To catch someone, you must look at them, whether it is hide and seek, peekaboo, or whatever. The essence of the game is to catch with your eyes. To know you are caught is to see yourself being seen, and eye contact is a tension filled event. In the games we describe, the tension is released with laughter, with joy, or with running to touch base. First you are alone, though being sought, then you make eye contact with the other, and then you react together. The game keeps the tension within bounds, but tension there is. Consider the account of running to base presented earlier.

Sartre writes of eye contact of a different sort in *L'Être et le Néant*. In his account of "le regard" the tension is clearly evident. It is not a game. Someone is caught looking through a keyhole. In that look from the other, the voyeur is shamed. First he was alone, unaware of himself spying, but now in that look from the other, he feels shame. He is suddenly conscious of himself and what he is doing. "It is shame or pride which reveals to me the other's look and myself at the end of that look. It is shame or pride which makes me live, not *know* the situation of being looked at" (Sartre, 1956, p. 350).

Sartre's description and analysis seems convincing. Children can also feel something like shame. Professor Tsumuri writes about this: "It will not be only children but adults too, to hide themselves out of sight when they are blamed for their faults and feel uneasy. To put oneself under a cover, not to be seen by others, is nothing but to make this inner world unseen from outside" (personal communication). An "inner world" is another way to say there emerges an "I" snatched from the other's look.

No matter how strongly I may want to disappear from shame, yet "I" remain present with my body; even for children who feel shame, the bodily consciousness and the "I" of the inner world are constituted together. In shame there is "too much" of me and thus the journey back inside is required. In shyness, on the other hand, there is uncertainty, hesitation; May I be here? The shy child is ready to step back but, in the right circumstances, even more ready to appear; to tell us: Yes, I am here, since there is no reason to distance myself from my own body as in shame where the "inner" becomes refuge. That an analysis of the look cannot rest with a description of shame is, we hope, to everyone who has followed the argument to this point, clear.

Sartre says that the look brings shame or pride. It is pride that we find in "hide and seek as theater" of Nancy and grandson with grandma and grandpa. Children show themselves and holler, "I'm Nancy." They are proud of their own existence, that they are themselves, that they have a

name. In hide and seek the same is true as each child is found; the seeker must identify them by name and say where they are to be found. They are brought to life first in the eyes and then in the acts of the other. Grandpa is not shamed at being caught, he is too proud, more alive than ever in the eyes of his grandchild.

In the example from Sartre the peeker is also brought to life, uncovered by the other—for himself. Why else does the feeling of shame wait until the seeing happens? The voyeur is suddenly aware of himself. In this sense he is brought into life. The response of the peeker is, “I wish I weren’t doing this,” shame, while in our example the feeling full of oneself is accompanied by joy and pride. In both cases, however, it is that look from the other that makes us aware of ourselves.

Intentionality

These three aspects of lived experience, the body, the social world, and intentionality, are not mutually exclusive, nor can they be discussed separately from one another.

Intentionality is a critical aspect of lived experience. When I look out my window, I see a rainy street with cars riding too rapidly up and down. Here comes the postal van. Is there perhaps a package for me? What might one of our childhood informants see as they go out to play hide and seek? You need a base, places to hide, somewhere away from traffic. The meanings attached to the objects seen are different for children playing. Things become important depending upon our intentional focus; that is, depending upon the use we intend to make of them. I have no intention of hiding outside behind a car, so for me it is just a car. I worry a lot about the children being hit by cars, so for me they go too fast. For children playing hide and seek, the neighborhood is a place to hide.

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You need a base that is big enough to be seen, a telephone pole under a light will do. You ought to be able to see the seeker, too. You need places to hide, trees, bushes, cartons, boxes. To play well, you must know your peers as hiders and runners. In particular, if you are “it,” you better know the foot speed of your playmates. The game requires you to see your friends in a new light. Consider again one child’s view of Martin and Inneke. They become people with whom one can hide.

In the three accounts given about the younger children, the meaning attached to adults was different. Grandpa and grandma became playmates willing to live within the child’s world. Mother was no longer the “mother” for Nancy, she became a playmate, and even our young friend in Amsterdam saw the stranger in a new way when playing peekaboo.

Temporality

Our experience of time changes with events. Usually when we are engrossed in something pleasurable, time flies by, but when we have nothing to do, time stands still. The passage of time is an important part of experience.

In the hide and seek stories children mention the slow movement of time when hiding, especially if they are the last to be caught. Some seekers

apparently use this fact to flush out their quarry, waiting quietly and more patiently than the hidden one for a curious head to appear. The hider, alone with nothing to do but wait, thinks that a lot of time has gone by, fears having been forgotten, wonders if anything has happened to interrupt the game, and pokes up a curious head—caught! A very clever strategy by the seeker.

In peekaboo and its variants, with the younger children there is a transformation of time as the game begins. The need to pay attention to the clock is set aside and the rhythm of mutual experience takes its place. As mother becomes a playmate, she drops her concerns of the moment to take up the game. At the entrance to the world of play, all watches are checked. When grandma, grandpa, stranger, or mother looks at a watch the game ends, like the disruption in conversation which happens when one of the participants glances at a watch.

Some Practical Suggestions

Now we know. We can see why parents and children must have time for one another; gladly to see one another and then spontaneously begin to play. Certainly in peekaboo, but also in other hide and seek games, children invite play and you, if you accept, will be the richer for becoming a willing player. Why don't people seek pleasure when it lies so ready to hand?

The decisions of adults should be informed by watching children: Do we need to "teach" them? Can we create more possibilities for play in the backyard, the playground, etc., so that children have a chance to play games that *they* enjoy there?

Research in the human sciences should strive for practical outcomes. It should help to improve the lived world of human beings. What does our study of hide and seek suggest about neighborhood planning? That neighborhoods are not now built with sufficient concern for the intentions of children (probably adults, too). Children should have a safe place to play hide and seek, away from dangerous traffic but not the safety of home; with places to hide, not only empty fields for baseball and football; with other children nearby with whom one can join in.

These seem simple enough, but they appear to be harder and harder to fulfill, particularly in the cities of our world where the two major constants seem to be high rise buildings which force children to play too far from the safety of home, and cars, which kill thousands every year. Our reliance on the automobile seems to keep us from even entertaining restrictions on its use.

Even in the better neighborhoods of the U.S.A. and Canada, it is sometimes hard to play hide and seek. The layout is grand, wide and open; wide asphalt streets, stately (flat) clipped grassfields where you need a green jogging suit in order not to be seen, few or no neglected corners, little groups of trees or sheds. Children feel lost here, exposed to every glance. Friends often live too far away for easy contact. Everyone lives too far away to walk. The whole neighborhood is built around the long wide street. We

agree with Hart (1979) that children need the experience of walking from place to place to become independent and to become oriented to a neighborhood. It is a childlike experience of being that deserves to be preserved.

The alternative to the danger of the street seems to be the playground. This is not always a happy alternative. Children should be close to their homes. Children should be a part of the world of adults too. There is too much isolation of people one from another. Nor is there any real need to confine children to play areas if the danger of the streets can be reduced. It is the street which makes the playgrounds necessary, not the other way around, and that, to our way of thinking, is exactly the wrong way around.

Our informants do not describe playgrounds when they tell of hide and seek. This is consistent with what two of us, Bleeker and Mulderij, found and reported in *Kinderen Buiten Spel*⁸ (1978). Children like to play where there is diversity and activity, and where there are other people. The ideal is a neighborhood without dangerous traffic, or sacrosanct lawns (as in too many suburban areas) where adults are coming and going and the children are never far from someone's sight. Large apartment houses and busy streets don't make it.

It might be well to mention here, since this article was originally written in Dutch and the research conducted in the Netherlands, one happy alternative to the danger of traffic and the isolation of playgrounds has been developed there. *Woonerven* (living areas) are streets which have been modified to slow traffic. These streets are clearly marked with signs and curbing to notify the drivers that this is no ordinary street. Here pedestrians and bicyclists have the same rights to move about as does the car. Automobiles must give way to foot traffic and especially to children at play. *Woonerven* are no longer streets but rather they are living areas where social contact can occur for those who live nearby. Parents can safely allow children to play near the house without fearing that a car will hit them. *Woonerven* are not without their problems, but they are a very sensible step in the right direction.

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1. Hide and seek is one of the important games that children play among themselves.

2. There are others, like tag, kick the can, marbles, jump-rope, etc..

3. They are all important, in part, because the children make the play by themselves, without the guidance of adults. This seems to make them happy, to be fun.

What children do among themselves and have done for many years is worth preserving. Particularly when it only requires that you do not make it impossible for the children to do it. Hide and seek and games like it are in no danger of disappearing, but they are getting harder to play today, particularly in our cities.

There are other games that children are taught by adults, like football, which we are not so excited about. These games derive their impetus from the adult "coaches" who instruct the youngsters in the finer points of play. The government provides special fields where these games can be played.

Local sponsors buy uniforms and parents and friends come to see the children play. In these games too much of the excitement comes from the tension of winning and losing. If you did well, you win; that means someone else lost. The world becomes a place where winning matters and where the winner is better than the loser. A world of best and not so good. Is this the world of hide and seek? We have no evidence from our reports that this is the case. The children do not talk about the winner or the loser in their reports. The game is played to play, not to win. What children learn about themselves is not filtered through the eyes of the adult coach or fans as they watch the performance. Rather, the children learn to know themselves in the eyes of their peers as an equal in a game with an opportunity for everyone to be himself. We think these games (hide and seek, tag, jump-rope) are like endangered species, threatened by our environment. We would like to protect and preserve them.

Notes

1. Beekman, Bleeker and Mulderij are at the University of Utrecht, the Netherlands; Barritt was on sabbatical leave from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A. in 1978/79 to be in Utrecht. This research was supported in part by the Netherlands Organization for Zuiver Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (ZWO).
2. This observation was made by Jean V. Carew and reported in "Experience and the development of intelligence in young children at home and in day care" Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 1980, 45 (6-7, Serial No. 187).
3. This informant grew up in one of the small villages in Holland where Sunday rituals are important and where the differences between Catholic and Protestant are stressed to children.
4. For a discussion of the way automobiles fracture human relationships see Barritt, L. "Autoloze Zondag", *Outlook*, a report of the experience of living in Holland during the crisis of 1973 when driving was banned on Sundays.
5. The accounts of several English speakers were added to this English version of the original *Jeugd en Samenleving* (1978) paper. The Dutch article "Wie niet weg is, wordt gezien. Ik Kom!" *Jeugd en Samenleving*, 1978, by Beekman, Bleeker, Mulderij.
6. John Adams is quoted by H. Arendt in *On Revolution*, Pelican; Middlesex, 1073, page 119, "Wherever men women or children are to be found, whether they be old or young, rich or poor, high or low, wise or foolish, ignorant or learned, every individual is seen to be strongly actuated by a desire to be seen, heard, talked of, approved and respected by the people about him, and within his knowledge.
7. Peekaboo is also played using a slow waving motion putting the hand in front of the eyes; sometimes even one eye is sufficient. (Personal communication, Prof. Makoto Tsumuri, Institute of Child Study, O Chanomizes University, Tokyo. At the breakfast Table P (2 yrs. old) puts a piece of lettuce over an apple and says: "The apple is playing peekaboo". (Personal report Dr. Tom Tak, Pedagogical Institute, University of Utrecht).
8. This title is a play on the dutch words *buiten* (outside) and *spel* (play). It means both that children play outside and that they are often outside of others' concern when environmental decisions are being made.

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