

“Collage of Colors”: Processing Place through Fantasy Play

JOHN MCDOWELL
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

In this article, I examine an episode of fantasy play, and a related theatrical production, as arenas for the creative processing of a child's experience. My five-year-old son, Michael, constructs a microcosm of our field site in Acapulco, Mexico, and animates a drama featuring dinosaurs in mortal conflict. My intention is to explore the ways a child makes sense of place through imaginative play, and, further, to address the role of artistic expression in the child's growing mastery over his material and social environments.

Adjacent to the many familiar facets of children's folklore is a domain of play that is variously called symbolic play, pretend play, or fantasy play, wherein children engage in imaginative routines that displace them from their actual selves and surroundings; they engage in this form of play at times by themselves, at times in the company of other children or of adults. I will reserve the term “fantasy play” for symbolic play engaged in the task of telling a story, and in this essay I discuss an episode of fantasy play to see, first, how a child might use it to make sense of place, and second, what sense a folklorist might make of it. In addition, the episode in question implicates another familiar domain of children's expressive culture, the dramatic performance or show, and I will have something to say about this feature as well.

As this play arena often lacks the flavor of the social aesthetics associated with tradition, it has not garnered much attention from folklorists (but see Elizabeth Wein 1991, Gary Alan Fine 2002, and K. Brandon Barker and Claiborne Rice 2012, among other exceptions to this claim). But, if folklorists have stayed on the fringe of children's fantasy play, others, particularly psychologists and child development specialists, have waded

right into the middle of it. Psychologists since Freud have looked to fantasy play as a forum where children can work through issues of concern and gain a mastery over them; in addition, many psychologists and others working with children have been absorbed with the child's ability to distinguish fantasy from reality. Students of child development have devoted a great deal of attention to what they term "symbolic play," in which signifiers (words, actions, objects) are attached to unorthodox referents (Pellegrini and Galda 1993). Jean Piaget, the Swiss pioneer in this line of inquiry, famously pondered the interplay of assimilation and accommodation as two drivers of the learning process, arguing that in symbolic play the child "transforms reality in its own manner without submitting that transformation to the criterion of objective fact" (1971: 338). Lev Vygotsky, another pioneer in this area, but from Russia, argued that symbolic play could be a zone of "proximal development," where children anticipate future behavioral gains, identifying "an imaginary, illusory world in which the unrealizable desires can be realized" (Vygotsky 1978: 92). For these scholars, as for their followers unto the present day, symbolic play is "a hallmark of the early childhood period" (Pellegrini and Galda 1993: 165) and consequently a focus of child development research.

Contemporary research in this field is ambivalent regarding the social and cognitive contributions of symbolic play. Vivian Gussin Paley's influential *A Child's Work: The Importance of Fantasy Play* (2004) makes a strong case for the importance of fantasy play in the early years of life in the development of the child, and Doris Bergen (2002: 1) points to "a growing body of evidence supporting the many connections between cognitive competence and high-quality pretend play." On the other side of the ledger, Lillard et al. (2013: 1) assemble research findings to argue that "existing evidence does not support strong causal claims about the unique importance of pretend play for development." It seems an opportune moment for the folklorist to enter the discussion

and provide situated case studies that illuminate the actual character and consequences of fantasy play in the lives of children closely observed in their natural habitats.

To this end, I offer here a careful inspection of an episode of fantasy play that I happened to capture on videotape in which my son, Michael, locates a dinosaur drama with mythical overtones in a microcosm of the field site where his mother, Patricia (Pat), and I are conducting folkloristic ethnography. This play is not solitary, since Michael has prepared a show, that is, a staged drama, for the benefit of his parents as audience. But it does have an idiosyncratic quality that distinguishes it from the public verbal exchanges of riddles, for example (McDowell 1979). I see Michael's show, which he titled "Collage of Colors," as a production lying at the periphery of children's folklore yet nonetheless of great interest to the folklorist as a parallel arena hosting the same social and cognitive progressions we like to trace in more central folkloristic environments (see Sutton-Smith 1971). Yet, as I hope to demonstrate, the discourses in "Collage of Colors" are also, inevitably, socially formed.

Our entryway into this fanciful realm is a short video segment I made in 1996, in the town of Tepoztlán, in the cool mountains of Morelos, where we had ensconced ourselves to take stock of field materials after several months of ethnographic research along the coasts of Guerrero and Oaxaca.¹ The scene is as follows: during a leisure moment, Michael has established a fantasy play arena that initially eludes our comprehension.² A polka-dot shirt is draped over a chair to simulate a volcano and at the base of the chair a number of items are arranged to simulate the natural and man-made landscapes. This ensemble approximates the physical setting where we have spent the last several months. In this rendering of the cosmos, a drama takes place featuring

¹ This footage can be accessed in my collection, "Music, Song, and Dance on Mexico's Costa Chica," located in the Ethnographic Video for Instruction and Analysis Digital Archive (EVIADA), at this site: <https://media.eviada.org/eviadasb/home>.

² See Appendix 1 for a rough sketch of this constructed environment.

dinosaurs in deadly intrigue. He has created a sign with the show's title and the information that there will be a five dollar admission charge. It is worth noting that Michael at this stage was an avid fan of James Gurney's *Dinotopia* series, which features dinosaurs and humans establishing and defending civilization on an isolated island. Also, with regard to Michael's title for the drama, please recall that Mexico is a very colorful place, especially in comparison to the bleak Midwest we had left behind in January.

As a properly engaged father, I videotaped this show, performed with me, my wife, and the video camera (and its implication of wider dissemination) as the target audience. Very much a family affair, Michael's show is punctuated with side episodes of family banter that evoke a great deal of laughter. But in this presentation I want to focus on a sequence of three key segments tied to "Collage of Colors": first, a prologue in which Michael sets the scene, explaining the microcosm of the field setting that he has fabricated out of available resources; second, the show itself, in three acts; and third, Michael's summary of the show's plot and his enunciation of its morals (there are two of these).

I view this video footage as a rich repository of evidence speaking to the significance of fantasy play in the life of young children – Michael was five-and-one-half years old at the time that he created and performed "Collage of Colors." I am interested in the imaginative processes that converted a corner of our room in Tepoztlán into a microcosm of south-central Mexico, in the staging of a mythic drama in this constructed environment, and in the tidy exegesis Michael crafts at the end of the drama. Both the scale-model of Mexico and the dinosaur drama that transpires within it exhibit the impact of the field setting, and a specific focus of this inquiry is to assess the ways children of ethnographers process the environments they are exposed to when they accompany their parents to the field. But this inquiry proposes a rich perspective on assimilation and accommodation in children's fantasy play, where we contemplate the child adapting to

the reality of the world or adapting its realities to his own purposes. In this vein I want to raise two additional questions: what logical operations are entailed in fabrications like Michael's "Collage of Colors," and how does Michael position himself as creator of this magic circle of play? Finally, I want to ask why this type of play invites the folklorist's attention.

THE VIDEO SEGMENTS

We are dealing here with just less than twenty minutes of video that I shot in our Tepoztlán lodgings that May day of 1996. The three segments that concern us are the setting of the scene, the performance of the drama, and the plot summary and moral Michael offers when the play is concluded. We can think of these segments as prologue, performance, and epilogue.³

The Prologue

The prologue occupies about five minutes and features a question-answer session in which Michael provides an orientation to the scene he has created. There are sixteen pieces to the prologue, taking us from the road, river, fields, and town at the foot of the volcano to the slopes and peak of the volcano itself.

Let's take a stroll through Michael's elaborated setting, sorting its sixteen pieces into eight composite zones, and making note of attributes that will figure in the analysis.

1. *The pyramid.* Michael has built a pyramid out of empty film boxes; we learn that it is "Teotihuacán," the famous archaeological site near Mexico City, home to the pyramids of the sun and the moon among other wonders. We had previously visited this site with Michael, who now helpfully points out that the stacked film boxes create the "steps" of the pyramids.

³ The full transcript of this performance is appended to this paper.

2. *Fields and stream and pine trees.* Lying along the flank of the volcano are a field of flowers (“This dress right here? This is the flower fields”), a farmer’s field (“The lines on it [the fabric] make it look like corn”), and a stream (a blue sheet) with rocks. It is notable that Michael has placed an actual rock on the sheet that represents this stream, mixing the semiotic modes of symbolization and ostension. The same is true of the pine cone he holds up to the camera, which reminds him that the pine tree forest still needs to be constructed – he dashes off to return with some tissue paper which he uses to represent the pine-tree forest, like the one on the road between Mexico City and Cuernavaca.
3. *Animals.* Michael injects three of his favorite animal figures into the scene: monkey, turtle, and *delfine* (he names the fish in quasi-Spanish). These figures are handled with loving care.
4. *Highway and cars.* Pointing to an area just beyond the features he has mentioned, Michael tells us that a series of miniature cars (and one van) are positioned on the “Alcapulco”-Mexico City highway (that’s how he pronounces “Acapulco”), and specifies that it is “the toll road.” We get a close look at four vehicles, three cars and a van. When I inquire if the cars are going fast he replies: “Oh yes, they are driving very fast. But I made it so they are not moving.” He insists on showing and talking about each of the cars – like the animals, each car is dear to him. But neither animals nor cars will figure in the dinosaur drama.
5. *Volcano with rainbow.* Michael indicates the volcano, a colorful shirt draped over a chair, and a rainbow upon it, in the form of a long piece of yellow crepe paper.
6. *Town.*

“The shirt.

That's the town."

[J: Which town is it?]

"Tepoztlán."

7. *"The Weirdo of Colors" and "Color Craziness."* These are fanciful characters, not native to the Mexican or any other known landscape. Michael acknowledges their peripheral status, calling "The Weirdo of Colors" "just a decoration," and saying of "Color Craziness," "he speaks English but it sounds like a screech."

8. *Drum.* Michael takes up the drum and beats a regular rhythm on it. I have this exchange with him:

[J: Does that mean the start of the show?]

"Well, I usually do it when I start my shows.

But sometimes if I can't find it, I just shriek."

[J: Well, I'm glad you found the drum.]

"Yes, 'cause it would be more horrible."

What is most striking about this assemblage is that it models, to a surprising degree of accuracy and completeness, the topography of the Mexican region where we were doing our fieldwork. Setting aside such fanciful elements as "Weirdo of Color" and "Color Craziness" and the beloved-to-Michael monkey and delfine, all of these features are present there, and moreover, in conjunction they compose a sufficient schema of the zone. Michael's creation approaches what Alison Gopnik (2005) terms *paracosms*, that is, "entire fictional universes with their own politics, economics, and sociology."

Equally interesting is the fluidity and flexibility of the modeling logic connecting signifier to signified. In two instances, the volcanic rock and the pine cone, an object signifies itself, activating the semiotic mode of ostension. In all the other instances, we move into the realm of iconicity, precise in the case of the cars and animals, for which toy miniatures serve as signifiers, much looser in the case of the pine trees and town, where

the sense of iconicity is much attenuated. The two fields, the flower field and the farmer field are intermediate in this spectrum of iconicity – the black dress that stands in for the farmer field has lines that resemble rows of corn, and the dress that stands for the flower field is sprinkled with prints of flowers. Likewise, while a colorful shirt can hardly be seen as iconic of a volcano, the way Michael positions it on a chair above the other signifiers does capture the sharp rise of Mexico's volcanic peaks from the plain below, and the shirt's decorative white puffs could be taken for clouds surrounding the peak. The rainbow as yellow crepe paper is a reasonable approximation to the real thing, as it contains one rainbow color and is thin and long and can be molded into an extended curve. But the verisimilitude stops there – the other colors are absent and the crepe rests lightly across the volcano, not across the sky. Michael's role as demigod in this paracosm is made explicit when he takes the rainbow in his hand to hold it out for our inspection and then replaces it along the crest of the volcano. The tissue paper as pine forest is the most whimsical of Michael's fabrications, but the pine cone placed on top of the tissue lends the arrangement an aura of authenticity.

Surfing this spectrum of iconicity is one way to measure the relative degree of assimilation and accommodation in Michael's microcosm of Mexico. Where the iconicity is strong, the prevalent operation is accommodation – the signer has activated the real properties of objects. Where the iconicity is weak, the child has willfully assimilated objects in the world to his own designs. This particular episode of fantasy play militates against drawing overly broad judgments on this count, since both mental operations are activated in this play. Michael is keen to point out the places where symbolization is roughly accurate, but he seems little troubled when his proposed linkages require a leap of faith from the audience.

A third detail to pause over in the prologue is Michael's sense of authority over the microcosm he has created. The telling evidence here is his assertion that the cars are,

in reality, speeding down the toll road, but that he, as the prime mover in this universe, has the ability to make it "so they are not moving." We see in this statement that Michael is fully cognizant of the constructed character of the microcosm and comfortable with his role as its guiding force. Scholars have been interested in the capacity of children "to move in and out of fantasy roles" (Goldman and Smith 1998: 219), and we observe in this fantasy play episode that the player appears to have no difficulty retaining the intra-play frame and the extra-play frame as simultaneous options. This feature is clearly evidenced in the discussion of the rainbow -- Michael assents that it is the rainy season and counsels us, "Just to be careful, don't get your camera rained on."

The Performance

The performance of the drama, "Collage of Colors," begins with the beating of the drum and moves rather tediously (a father can be honest here) through three acts over a stretch of roughly ten minutes. Michael delineates the acts for us, and within them I have designated scenes. Act 1 sets the stage and has two scenes, which I label "A Walk" and "Sleeping." Act 2 presents the core action and can be said to have three scenes: "Walking to the Volcano," "Tyranno Come Out," and "The Feather." Michael does not clearly signal a third act, but I detect a pastoral concluding act with two scenes: "Dinos at Play" and "The Trick." What we have here is the transportation of a well-worn dinosaur game into the paracosm of Michael's south-central Mexico. As in other playings of this routine, there is much scuffling about as realistic plastic models of dinosaurs are made to interact, at the foot of the volcano and at times near its peak. Indeed, it isn't until Pat calls out, well into the first scene, "Dialogue!" that we begin to hear the voices of the story's protagonists.

But if the dinosaur plot is familiar, its relocation to the Mexican paracosm is quite deliberate. The volcano figures prominently in the plot as revised for this setting, and the dinosaurs make incursions into the flower field and the stream with rocks at the foot of

the volcano. (Fortunately, they do not venture into the town or attempt to cross the toll road.) There are three central players – an unnamed dinosaur, a dinosaur named Corythosaurus, and Tyrannosaurus Rex (who is given no turn at speaking). It is the first two of these who keep us informed of the plot's progress. It is not terribly clear in the course of the play, but the plot revolves around some "awful mice" who are consuming the fruit trees that the dinosaurs feed on. Corythosaurus and his friend consult "the plant wizard" who tells them they must secure the gall bladder of Tyrannosaurus and throw it into the volcano. In this way they can rid themselves of the awful mice. This clean explication of plot only emerges in the epilogue, when Michael neatly ties together the loose threads of a somewhat rambling dramatization. "Collage of Colors" comes to an end with dinosaurs choosing their favorite activities, now that Tyranno and the mice are gone:

"I guess I'll just graze for a few minutes."

"I guess I'll just eat plants."

"I guess I'll just eat a little bit of plants."

"I'll just swim in the water for a while."

"I guess I'll just go around and exercise my leg."

"I'll just go to bed."

A final episode is more dynamic – one dinosaur goes to the top of the volcano to do his cord trick. Michael twists a cord tied to this dino's neck and then lets the cord unwind so the dino can spin about above the volcano. He calls out, gleefully, "Me clama, mira; oh, me clama, mira," which appears to be a pseudo-Spanish phrase (the "mira" is actual Spanish). Then, this player goes, "Oh, gulllll," and throws up; as Michael explains it, "He threw up; he threw up all over the volcano ash." The drama ends as this spinning dinosaur is tossed from the volcano's top down to the fields at the volcano's base, saying, "Instead of just going down the volcano, I guess I'll just fly down there."

There are a number of moves in the performance of the drama that tie into present concerns. I find it intriguing that Michael is able to create and maintain two very distinct voices, that of the narrator, explaining on-stage events ("Right now they're going to the flower field") and declaring the end and beginning of acts; and that of the two main story protagonists in conversation with one another. Segmenting "Collage of Colors" into acts, Michael evinces awareness of the dramaturgical model and his responsibility to maintain its conventions. As many researchers have noted, fantasy play is rule-bound, even if the rules are sometimes *sui generis*. In this instance, Michael adheres to the classical unities of action, place, and time; moreover, his dinosaur drama conserves a number of Axel Olrik's oral epic laws (Olrik 1965).⁴

The voicing of the two principal characters is striking on two counts. First, I can detect no clear differentiation of voices; each speaks much the same as the other. Second, they both talk in a stilted, artificial manner. This artifice is evident in the sing-song intonations of their utterances and in their favoring of circumlocution and a quaint lexicon. Consider this example, in which one of the dinos makes references to Tyranno:

"That's very huffy what he says every day.

I shouldn't like his comments."

Here we sense the intrusion of the social into this relatively private discourse. But where did Michael find this speech style? In children's literature? In the fairy tales we read to him?

Still, this artifice can swiftly modulate into accents closer to childhood, as we see in the following example:

⁴ In this vein, it is worth noting that Michael shows awareness of storytelling genres as well (see Appendix 2, lines 3 and 4), when the story protagonists observe that this is not "a bedtime story" and also reference "my father's dream stories," an interesting cross-over into the child's own experience, in which his father is known to create stories about running with various animals.

“Oh yes, Corythosaurus, you are very huffy.”

“Well, you shouldn’t judge me by my books, like that.”

“I don’t care about your silly book. Just let me rest.”

“Whee, I’m having a nice little piggyback.

Whee, whee, whee, wheeee.”

“Oh, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah. (Tuneful)

The stuffy dialogue gets derailed over a flawed effort to insert a proverbial phrase into the mix (“don’t judge a book by its cover”), though this misfiring oddly retains some sense, in view of Michael’s attachment to story-book dinosaurs. In any case, talk swiftly shifts into a gleeful game of piggyback and the exuberant and tuneful sound of children at play.

The Epilogue

The epilogue is a tight summing up and clever attribution of meaning produced in response to requests from both parents (who were left a bit puzzled by the play). There are two components to the epilogue, a story synopsis and an attribution of the moral to the story. The synopsis seems to take shape in the telling, but it does effectively gather the scattered events in the performance into a coherent narrative of questing and release. A key detail is the story’s “feather” that gets redefined as a dinosaur’s “bladder” in the synopsis. I reproduce the synopsis in its entirety.

[P: Is there a moral to your story?]

“A moral.”

[J: Could you tell us about the story a bit?]

“I’ll tell you the moral.

It’s about the story.

There’s some, there’s some awful mice that are eating the fruit trees where the dinosaurs eat.

And they want to get rid of the mice.

So, they go to the plant wizard.

And, he says, that if you kill the tyrannosaurus and take his gall bladder,
and throw it in the volcano,

it will start a small eruption,

and the mice will be gotten rid of in a no time.

And, I didn't have a picture of the, I shouldn't say it, the gall bladder,

Well I could have put it down."

[P: You could have drawn one.]

I didn't want to – it's too weird.

And, at the end,

They're all just doing what they want to do,

out in the field, eating, drinking, swimming, eating.

And that crazy guy down there that fell off the cliff,

was pushed down by Corythosaurus,

and Corythosaurus was being mean

'cause he wanted to see how angry that dinosaur could be.

He was tenting him." (taunting? testing? tempting?)

The plant wizard was not included in the performance, but we did hear one oblique reference to "those awful mice." The killing of tyranno was enacted for us, but there was no talk of a bladder at that moment in the drama. Instead, if I hear the word correctly, Michael tells us that "a feather" is dropped into the volcano to trigger an eruption. I take it that the plot is a work in progress and I must say that bringing in the detail of tyranno's bladder is a deft touch for enhancing the tale's mythical reach. It is worth noting, in passing, that Michael's mother had had her gall bladder removed not long before we embarked on this field trip to Mexico.

Now, for the moral of the story. Michael seems to call it “the mirror” or possibly “the mural,” but despite confusing the terminology, he has a good grasp of what morals to stories are supposed to sound like.

“And the mirror of the story is, not to hurt others.

And the other mirror is, don’t, don’t eat other people’s things without asking.”

[J: That’s a very good point.]

His first effort comes across as a little bland, but he nails it with his second effort, for it was the mice eating the dinosaur fruits that set into motion the whole plot of “Collage of Colors.”

DISCUSSION

In this paper I examine the intersection of fantasy and reality for the perspectives it might offer on the child’s processing of place through fantasy play. Michael McDowell at five-point-five years of age finds himself far from the familiar comforts of home in Bloomington, Indiana. There have been multiple dislocations – taken out of Bloomington Montessori to land in Real del Monte, his Mexican school; from a world dominated by English to a world permeated by Spanish; from humid lowlands to the dry Pacific slopes; and many others. He has also been witness to many episodes of documenting culture as he joins his father and mother in attending festivals and performances of music and dance and observes them as they interview and photograph performers and their families and talk to *curanderos* and other cultural specialists. In short, over a half-year period, Michael has been imbibing the cultural milieu of the field setting. “Collage of Colors” and the setting where it is performed must be viewed as a child’s attempt to model, make sense of, and manipulate the curiosities he encounters in this novel environment.

Let’s pursue this idea of modeling. In the microcosm laid out in our Tepoztlán room, Michael recreates salient aspects of the physical environment he now inhabits.

Relying mainly on processes of iconic representation, he creates a generalized scale model of this brave new world. Into this microcosm he introduces a dinosaur drama, and elements of the microcosm, especially the volcano but also the fields and stream, figure prominently in the drama's plot. Moreover, this plot is evidently influenced by the kinds of stories Michael has been overhearing as his parents investigate and discuss the spiritual beliefs and practices of the local population. There is an episode in the play where one dinosaur complains to his companion, "Well I think they're some spirits bopping my head." This detail, as well as the mythical substrate of the drama's plot, argues for a penetration of the parent's research agenda into the child's fantasy play. Clearly, Michael has been soaking up information and his performance of "Collage of Colors" affords him a venue to probe his mastery of significant physical and conceptual elements.

It seems indisputable that "Collage of Colors" is a model of the child's experience of the field setting of his parent's research. But certainly it is more than that. As in other dinosaur dramas from this stage of Michael's childhood, here it is the herbivores who win out over the carnivores, and specifically, Corythosaurus, one of Michael's favorites, who vanquishes the brute, Tyrannosaurus Rex. Michael was struggling with the rapacity of the meat eaters and this drama, like others from this period, celebrates the triumph of good over evil with the demise of Tyrannosaurus Rex. Other components of "Collage of Colors" transcend the field setting. For example, the play's final episode where Corythosaurus "tests" or "taunts" his companion dinosaur, speaks to Michael's continuing efforts to fathom the dynamics of friendship. Michael's exegesis of that episode, presented above, envisions peer-group episodes of teasing and taunting, where the boundaries of friendship are tested. Recent scholarship has cast doubts on fantasy play as a medium for working out problems and issues confronting the child (Gopnik 2005), but it is difficult not to see this dynamic at work in Michael's "Collage of Colors."

Finally, I return to a question posed at the outset: what business does the folklorist have with children's fantasy play? In spite of its idiosyncratic tendencies, fantasy play contains, I'd argue, ample social and artistic elements to attract the notice of the folklorist. The designing of paracosms reveals the child as bricoleur, working with available artifacts to create viable scenarios. The discourse of the child's pretend play reveals the child as mimic, sampling from available public registers to garner the voicing he wants to implant in his characters. Employing the semiotic modes of ostension and iconicity, stepping in and out of fantasy, and exercising a godlike control over the fabricated environment, the child exercises and extends the same cognitive skills we find activated in riddling and other forms of children's folklore. Even when the fantasy play is somewhat solitary, the child can include scenes where one character tries out anger and tests another character, as Michael does in "Collage of Colors" to explore the mechanics of social relationships. In these and other ways, children's fantasy play holds riches for the folklorist concerned with children's folklore as an avenue of insight into the mental and affective life of the child.

Elizabeth Wein (1991: 23) finds a pattern in the "shows" she performed as a child, noting that "over the years they grow more oriented towards a written text and less towards play...becoming more like 'a play' than 'play.'" Michael's "Collage of Colors" seems transitional on this scale, not scripted in advance though made comprehensible in retrospect, yet reasonably well-formed and intentional in the pursuit of its fantasy plot. His attention to staging instructions, and his persistence in portraying the demise of the awful mice, though admitting the intrusion of some side-plots, reveal (a father can be proud here) a creative mind and a determined will, mustering an impressive set of resources to enact a complex dramatic performance. We see the young artist at work, at play, demonstrating to himself and to his parents his engagement with the world around him and his increasing mastery over its multiple elements.

John McDowell, professor of folklore and ethnomusicology at Indiana University, looks closely at speech play and verbal art as instruments of social process in a variety of settings, including children's peer-group interaction.

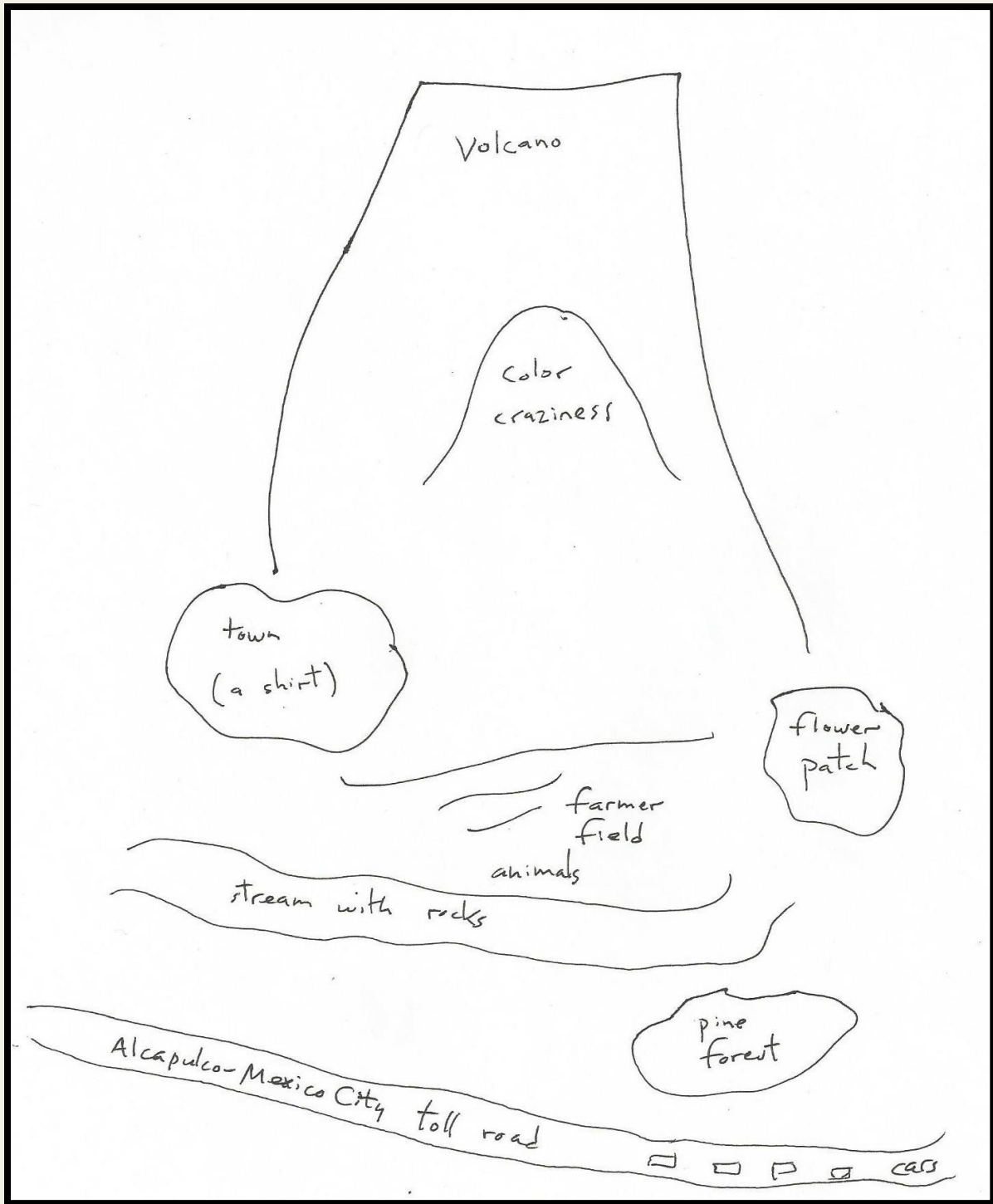
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APPENDIX 1: Sketch of the Constructed Terrain



APPENDIX 2: Transcript

[Note: The transcript consists of three episodes: "The Scene," "The Show," and "The Mirror." J and P are John and Pat, Michael's father and mother, respectively. Their contributions are enclosed in square brackets. I have labeled in bold font and numbered the components of episode 1, "The Scene," to capture the features in Michael's exposition of the play landscape. In episode 2, "The Show," I have labeled in bold and numbered the action elements.]

EPISODE 1: THE SCENE**1. Pyramid:**

[J: OK, Michael, what do you have to tell us about this?]

"That's a pyramid right there.

And yellow steps."

[P: What pyramid is it?]

"Teotihuacán."

2. Flower fields.

"This dress right here?

[J: Yes.]

This is the flower fields."

[J: Lovely.]

"And underneath -- this is the flower patch, I'm sorry."

INTERLUDE: FOCUSING THE CAMERA

[J: A field of flowers.

What else do you have there, Mikey?]

"A pyramid."

[J: Yes, we saw the pyramids.]

3. Farmer fields.

"And here's the farmer fields."

[J: Which one, the black one there?]

"This one right here."

[P: What's the difference between the flower fields and the farmer fields?]

"Cause the flower fields have flowers and the farmer fields have corn."

"There's lines on it that make it look like corn."

4. Stream with rocks.

[J: And what else is down there?]

"Well right here is the stream with rocks,
as you can see, there's a little bit of rocks."

Right here was from a volcano that's mostly up here.

That shoots out lava and comes down below.

This is the little piece of rock."

5. Animals.

"These are all the animals.

One, monkey,

two, turtle,

three, *delfine*."

6. Highway.

"And here's the Alcapulco highway,
Mexico City."

[J: I see some cars on it.]

"Yes, and there's....

It's the Alcapulco-Mexico City, it's the toll road."

[J: Are they driving very fast?]

“Oh yes, they’re driving very fast,
But I made it so they’re not moving.”

7. Volcano.

[J: Now can you show me the volcano?]

“The volcano.
Right here.”

[P: And who’s that creature under the volcano?]

“Oh, that’s just a decoration.
That’s the bird who has all this weird stuff.
He’s called, ‘The Weirdo of Colors.’”

8. Town.

“The shirt.
That’s the town.”

[J: Which town is it?]

“Tepoztlán.”

9. Rainbow.

[J: Is there anything else you need to explain?]

“Yes, there is.
This is the rainbow.

See this yellow thing?

[P: Is it the rainy season?]

“Yes, it is the rainy season.
Just to be careful, don’t get your camera rained on.”

[J: OK, I’ll watch out.]

10. Pine trees.

“Now these...are from pine trees.
And the pine trees are right here, but you just can’t see them.

I'll be back in a minute.

I'm going to make the palm trees, the pine trees deal.

To mark the pine trees."

INTERLUDE WITH PAT AND JOHN TALKING

[J: So the toilet paper down there is the pine tree,
it's a whole forest of pine trees?]

"Yeah, it's a whole forest of pine trees."

[J: Like the one between Cuernavaca and Mexico City?]

"Yes."

[J: Very good.]

11. Car with saw.

"Now, can you see that on the front this it has a little bit of a saw on it?"

[J: If you say so.

Let me get a little closer look at it.

No, actually, if you leave it still back where you were.

This one up front?]

"Yeah, this one."

[J: It has some kind of a saw?]

"It has some blades on it."

[OK, fine.]

"It also has a number up here."

[Yes, it does, very good.]

12. Car with snake.

"This is a snake that was cemented into a car."

[J: How interesting.

What a concept.]

13. Car with chicken.

[J: OK, well, would you like to begin the show now?]

“Well, as soon as I show you all the cars.

This has a chicken on it.”

[J: Are you sure?]

“A red chicken.”

[J: It sure does.]

INTERLUDE WITH PAT MAKING HEN NOISES

14. Van with sun on it.

[OK, what else, Michael?

Shall we begin the show?]

“This is a van with some sun on it.”

[J: My, what a vehicle.

OK, thank you.]

15. Drum.

[P: The drum.]

“The drum.”

[J: Does that mean the start of the show?]

“Well, I usually do it when I start my shows.

But sometimes if I can't find it, I just shriek.”

[J: Well, I'm glad you found the drum.]

“Yes, 'cause it would be more horrible.”

16. Color Crazyiness.

[J: Yes, tell me about this guy]

"Well, he's the Color Craziiness.

He wears earrings, and you can see sunglasses.

And all that stuff.

[J: Does he speak Spanish?]

"He speaks English but it sounds like a screech."

EPISODE TWO: THE SHOW

Act I

1. A walk.

(Dinosaurs jumping)

[P: Dialogue!]

"Well, we're having a nice walk, aren't we?"

"Yes."

"Well, I often do like to have this walk."

"I wonder if they're any animals around here.

Let's go see."

{"Right now they're going to the flower field."}

"You didn't move there."

"I guess I'll just go back to bed."

2. Sleeping.

"Yesterday, this/

{"Pat, what's this one's name?"}

[P: Corythosaurus.]

"Oh yes, Corythosaurus, you are very huffy."

"Well, you shouldn't judge me by my books, like that."

"I don't care about your silly book. Just let me rest."

"Whee, I'm having a nice little piggyback.

Whee, whee, whee, wheeee."

"Oh, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah. (Tuneful)

"That's the end of number one."

Act II

1. Walking to the volcano.

"Oh yes, I'm having a very nice day, aren't you?"

"Oh my dear Corythosaurus, you musn't talk like that.

Tyrannosaurus might hear us and eat us for sure."

"Well, I don't see him."

"Oh wait, it's act number two."

"I hope Tyrannosaurus Rex is not about right now.

Oh, I'll just sneak under the curtain.

—

"That's very huffy what he says everyday.

I shouldn't like his comments."

"We must walk to the volcano."

"OK."

"Ow!"

"Well I think they're some spirits bopping my head."

"Let's go to the volcano now."

(They appear on top of volcano.)

"Well, drop the bladder(?) in."

"Well, I think this will start a little eruption, I hope.

Get rid of those awful, awful mice."

"Well, I haven't seen any yet, but they're probably some around here."

"Well, I guess I'll just go back to sleep."

(They lie down at base of volcano.)

2. Tyranno come out

"Now, I'd rather get up, I should say.

"Well, I don't think you want to go to bed.

This is not a bedtime story."

"Well, I would say, I really do like my father's dream stories."

"Well, I didn't know about that."

"But just come over here."

"What are you going to say?"

"Tyranno is coming out in two minutes."

(There is some scuffling.)

"Oh, so you're out."

"Beeeep." {This is a bopping.}

"Tyranno died." {Announcing voice}

[J: Yeaah. Is that the end?]

"No, this was just the second.

There's one more part."

3. The feather

(There is much stomping about.)

"Oh, I'm so worn out I can't even move."

"Well, I shouldn't run so fast as I am.

I usually don't."

"Well, just put your arms up high so you can run faster."

(Dino comes out and snaps its moving jaws several times.)

"OK, well we must do up the bladder (feather?) in the lava."

"Well, I don't know about that so much, but I guess we should."

"Did you see that dinosaur?"

"Well, I guess I'll just go to bed."

Act III

1. Dinos at play

(There is a dino above on the volcano and some tramping around down below.)

(Humming sound.)

"I guess I'll just graze for a few minutes."

"I guess I'll just eat plants."

"I guess I'll just eat a little bit of plants."

"I'll just swim in the water for a while."

"I guess I'll just go around and exercise my leg."

"I'll just go to bed."

2. The Trick

"Oh stop, you better do some tricks or I'm going up the volcano."

"I'll do my cord."

(Dino swings on a cord above volcano.)

[J: Wow, what a cool trick!]

"Me clama, mira; oh, me clama, mira;

Oh, gulllll."

"He threw up; he threw up all over the volcano ash."

"Instead of just going down the volcano, I guess I'll just fly down there."

(Dino is dropped in front of volcano.)

"Wheee."

"He jumped – that's the end."

[J and P: Yeeaaaah!!!] (clapping)

EPISODE 3: THE MIRROR

"Now I'll have to clean up all this mess."

[J: That's right.]

[P: Is there a moral to your story?]

"A moral."

[J: Could you tell us about the story a bit?]

"I'll tell you the moral.

It's about the story.

There's some, there's some awful mice that are eating the fruit trees where the dinosaurs eat.

And they want to get rid of the mice.

So, they go to the plant wizard.

And, he says, that if you kill the tyrannosaurus and take his gall bladder, and throw it in the volcano,

it will start a small eruption,

and the mice will be gotten rid of in a no time.

And, I didn't have a picture of the, I shouldn't say it, the gall bladder,

Well I could have put it down."

[P: You could have drawn one.]

I didn't want to – it's too weird.

And, at the end,

They're all just doing what they want to do,

out in the field, eating, drinking, swimming, eating.

And that crazy guy down there that fell off the cliff,

was pushed down by Corythosaurus,

and Corythosaurus was being mean

'cause he wanted to see how angry that dinosaur could be.
He was tenting him."

"And the mirror of the story is, not to hurt others.

And the other mirror is, don't, don't eat other people's things without asking."

[J: That's a very good point.]