

CHILDREN IN THE NURSERY: THE ANALYSIS OF PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE TÉTÉNYI ÚTI BÖLCSŐDE [ENG. “TÉTÉNYI ROAD NURSERY IN BUDAPEST”] IN THE 1970S

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The subject of the present study is the analysis of the photographs of the Tétényi úti Bölcsőde in the 1970s. The basis of image processing is the iconographic-iconological method developed by Erwin Panofsky. When analysing the five photographs, it was not possible to disregard the characteristics of the socio-historical background and the nursery history of the time: the principles of professional and methodological education of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the history of the Hungarian nurseries of the time, provided important guidelines for the analysis of the photographs. The purpose of the image analysis is to provide insight into the nursery history of the 1970s from the aspect of game control. The professional practice depicted in the analysed images reflects the theory of activity stimulation.

Oggetto del lavoro è l'analisi delle fotografie di Tétényi úti Bölcsőde negli anni '70 attraverso il metodo iconografico-iconologico sviluppato da Erwin Panofsky. Analizzando le cinque fotografie, non è stato possibile non confrontarsi con le caratteristiche del background storico-sociale e con la storia della scuola materna, ed, in particolare, con i principi dell'educazione professionale e metodologica degli anni '60 e '70. La storia della scuola materna ungherese del tempo, ha fornito importanti linee guida per l'analisi delle fotografie. Lo scopo dell'analisi delle immagini è quello di fornire una visione della storia della scuola materna degli anni '70 dal punto di vista del game control. La pratica professionale rappresentata nelle immagini analizzate riflette la teoria della stimolazione dell'attività.

Key words: *Image analysis, iconography-iconology, nursery history, Tétényi úti Bölcsőde, theory of activity stimulation.*

Parole chiave: *Analisi delle immagini, iconografia-iconologia, Storia della scuola materna, Tétényi úti Bölcsőde, teoria della stimolazione dell'attività.*

Introduction

The 1970s can be considered a milestone in the development history of the Hungarian nurseries. The Bölcsődék Országos Módszertani Intézete [Eng. “the National Institute of Methodology for Nurseries”] (hereinafter BOMI) was established that time, which operated as a research and controlling centre and had its own nursery. [Translator’s note (TN): In Hungary, two kinds of full-time centre-based ECEC services are available: nursery (bölcsőde) for children up to age 3 and kindergarten (óvoda) for children between age 3 and compulsory school.] The institution played a key role in enabling the theoreticians to test the developed pedagogical principles, which they wanted to apply nationally, in BOMI’s own nursery (Akócsi & L. Galamb 1971). In

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connection with the nursery experiences and the literature analysis, a change of attitude was formulated in relation to the stimulation of direct activity, directed play. Within this theoretical and practical framework, a need emerged in the profession to reassess the role of nursery nurses in children's play.

The purpose of my current research is to explore the specifics of game control in the 1970s based on five photographs taken in the 1970s at the Tétényi úti Bölcsőde. The 100-seat nursery at Tétényi Road was handed over in 1973, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Pest-Buda-Óbuda's unification, and it was the first facility in the 11th district of Budapest to operate a kindergarten, too. The institution carried out the professional work of both a nursery and a kindergarten independently. Although there was a Methodological Centre for Nurseries operating in the district, the Tétényi úti Bölcsőde started working as a principal Early Childhood Education and Care Centre. Its main role was to assist the operation of the nurseries of the district. Further responsibilities included overseeing the professional work of council and factory nurseries, conducting demonstration sessions and vocational training, advising the Council's Health Department and providing professional guidance on starting and equipping new nurseries. Previously, the central tasks had been provided by the Keveháza utcai Bölcsőde [Eng. Keveháza Street Nursery]. Now the nursery team working there was transferred to the Tétényi úti Bölcsőde. The new personnel were strictly screened, as their work served as a model for presentations and vocational training. A lot of foreign professionals visited the nursery, which was the scene of the visit of protocol guests at that time¹.

In addition to my doctoral studies, I spent two years working as a nurse in a nursery class in the Tétényi Úti Bölcsőde, which is the field of my research². In the year of 2016, the nursery hosted an exhibition of images from the 1970s to the present. The pictures of each era were presented in glazed frames. The 1970s photo frame featured 10 photos: 5 photos showing children playing, 1 photo showing the sleeping, 2 photos showing them eating and during creative activities respectively. For my analysis, I chose the five photographs displayed showing children playing. Playing is the most important activity of a child. It serves recognition, the understanding of the surrounding world. Also, while playing, children can unfold and develop their abilities. A child's play expresses not only their stage of development but also their emotional state. A child's play also depends on the circumstances in which he or she plays: a child who feels safe and gets an opportunity to develop can play anywhere³.

Each picture was taken in the 1970s, but the exact date of the photos is not known. The pictures were taken in the nursery building or on the playground, but we do not know whether by a photographer or a staff member. The photos suggest non-set scenes.

Finding relevant literature was essential for the topic. Within this framework, I analyzed the relevant literature on early childhood education and care as well as on

¹ Budapest Főváros XI. Kerület Bölcsődéinek Története [Eng. The History of Nurseries in the 11th District of the City of Budapest]. The book was published by the Újbudai Bölcsődei Intézmények [TN: the main early childhood education and care centre of the 11th district of Budapest] with the participation of several nursery workers. Author, year and publisher are not included in the volume

² The management of the Újbudai Szemünk Fénye Központi Bölcsőde [Eng. Szemünk Fénye Central Nursery of Újbuda] (formerly called Tétényi úti Bölcsőde), in particular Mariann Szuhár, nursery head, provided essential assistance in the data collection phase.

³ Boros K., Farkas M., Gallai M., Mózes E., Szomor É., Topolánszky Zs. K. & Tóth A. (2009), *Gyerekek. Módszertani ajánlások a gyerekekkel végzett munkához a Biztos Kezdet munkatársai számára*, Szociálpolitikai és Munkaügyi Intézet, Gyerekesély projekt, Budapest.

Hungarian nursery history, which focus on the historical changes of the Hungarian nurseries. Studies of Endrődy-Nagy⁴ and Somogyváris on iconographic analysis helped with the analysis of the visual material. These studies, on the one hand, cover the history of childhood and, on the other hand, include the analysis of children's imagery, which has helped me to understand the practice of pedagogical image analysis. The literature describing the method of iconography-iconology in detail gave me guidance for structuring the methodology used in analysing my source material. An important foundation of my work was the volume *Budapest Főváros XI. Kerület Bölcsődéinek Története* [Eng. *The History of Nurseries in the 11th District of the City of Budapest*], published recently. The book also contains a brief history of the Tétényi úti Bölcsőde.

By presenting the theoretical and methodological literature on the subject, as well as the iconographic-iconological analysis of photographs, I intend to highlight the history of the Tétényi úti Bölcsőde in the 1970s, primarily from the aspect of game control. Introducing the images, the present study focuses on the applicability of the method.

1. Applied methodology for photo analysis

We live in a world of images. Paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, photographs and films show the social, cultural and anthropological phenomena of the age⁶. Imaging science, which evolved as a result of the pictorial turn, deals with images and the visual world, with the focus on exploring their contemporary and historical dimensions⁷.

Endrődy-Nagy⁸ mentions images and photographs as possible sources of childhood history in his iconographic analysis entitled *A reneszánsz gyermekképe* [Eng. *The Child Image of the Renaissance*]. The source of my research is based on photographs, which play a decisive role in what is said about "*educational and care situations, breaking the silence about the specific character of teaching and educational habits, seeking the opportunity to convey a message of education*"⁹. Pilarczyk and Mietzner highlight the fact that the source value of a photo rests on its complexity, while the methods used to construct a photo highlight patterns in the structure of pedagogical and social situations and relationships¹⁰.

⁴ Endrődy-Nagy O. (2014), *A reneszánsz gyermekképe. A gyermekkép reneszánsza 1455-1517 között Európában. Ikonográfiai elemzés*, Doktori (PhD) értekezés, ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, Budapest.

⁵ Somogyvári L. (2015), *Ikonográfia a neveléstörténet-írásban*, Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest. Somogyvári L. (2014), *A tudásátadás, nevelés intézményi és intézményen kívüli terei (Képelemzések a magyar pedagógiai szaksajtóban, 1960–1970)*, Doktori (PhD) értekezés, Pécsi Tudományegyetem, Oktatás és Társadalom” Neveléstudományi Doktori Iskola.

⁶ Mietzner, U. & Pilarczyk, U. (2005), *Methods of Image Analysis in Research in Educational and Social Sciences*, in: Mietzner, U., Myers, K. & Peim, N. (eds), *Visual History: Images of Education*, Peter Lang AG, European Academic Publishers, Bern, pp. 109-129.

⁷ Németh A. (2005), *A neveléstudomány nemzetközi modelljei és tudományos irányzatai*, Magyar Pedagógia, Vol. 115, n. 3, pp. 255-294.

⁸ Endrődy-Nagy O. (2014), *A reneszánsz gyermekképe. A gyermekkép reneszánsza 1455-1517 között Európában. Ikonográfiai elemzés*, Doktori (PhD) értekezés, ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, Budapest.

⁹ *Ivi*, p. 87.

¹⁰ Pilarczyk U., Mietzner U. (2010), *A képtudomány módszerei a neveléstudományi és társadalomtudományi kutatásban*, in *Iskolakultúra*, Vol. 20, N. 5–6, p. 7.

Because of the verbal, literary nature of Western culture, discourse on images poses many difficulties, but the method of iconography-iconology known from art history can help us¹¹.

Erwin Panofsky, the father of iconography, developed his method of image analysis for paintings. According to iconology, the image to be analysed depicts the person in it on the one hand and expresses the idea of the creator of the image on the other. In the light of this, there are two ways of approaching the interpretation of images: from the painter's aspect, who gives the final structure of the image, or from the person's aspect displayed in the image¹². However, the recipient's world cannot be ignored either.

Panofsky's method has been revised for photos by Mietzner and Pilarczyk. The two researchers pointed out that the analysis of the photos has to start with background information. This is followed by an examination of the photos to see how they reflect reality. During the analysis, we must not ignore the purpose of the image. After that, one should try to discover the values of the photo. Finally, it should be examined whether the photograph can actually be interpreted as a historical document¹³. In her study, Endrődy-Nagy draws attention to the fact that neither method can fully assist in exploring the relation of the given age to children.

The basis of image processing is the iconographic-iconological method developed by *Erwin Panofsky*. His methodology consists of four levels. On the first two levels, we examine the manifest contents, while on level 3 and 4 we examine latent contents¹⁴. Several approaches¹⁵ describe this approach as a three-step process.

The first stage is the *pre-iconographic description*, which remains within the world of motifs¹⁶ taking a written inventory of the visible physical aspects of the image. At this stage, the image is being converted to text¹⁷.

This is followed by *iconographic analysis*, which no longer deals with motifs, but with depictions, stories and allegories. We need knowledge of topics and concepts that are based on literary sources. At this level, we explore the circumstances in which the image was formed and we fit it into the context of similar images of the given era¹⁸.

The third level is the *iconographic interpretation*. At this stage, the symbols created by the painter or photographer are being unfolded, that is, we try to interpret what the creator manages to represent with his or her work¹⁹.

¹¹ Somogyvári L. (2014), *A tudásátadás, nevelés intézményi és intézményen kívüli terei (Képelemzések a magyar pedagógiai szaksajtóban, 1960–1970)*, Doktori (PhD) értekezés, Pécsi Tudományegyetem, Oktatás és Társadalom” Neveléstudományi Doktori Iskola.

¹² Géczy J. (2008), *Ikonológia–ikonográfia mint a történeti pedagógia segédtudománya*, Iskolakultúra, Vol. 18, n. 1-2. pp.108-119.

¹³ Endrődy-Nagy O. (2014), *A reneszánsz gyermekképe. A gyermekkép reneszánsza 1455-1517 között Európában. Ikonográfiai elemzés*, Doktori (PhD) értekezés, ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, Budapest.

¹⁴ Géczy J. & Darvai T. (2010), *A gyermek képe az 1960–1980-as évek magyar nevelésügyi szaksajtójában*, Új Pedagógiai Szemle, Vol. 60, n 3-4, p. 204.

¹⁵ Panofsky E. (1984), *Ikonográfia és ikonológia: bevezetés a reneszánsz művészet tanulmányozásába*, in Panofsky E. (ed), *A jelentés a vizuális művészetekben*, Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest. Somogyvári L. (2014), *A tudásátadás, nevelés intézményi és intézményen kívüli terei (Képelemzések a magyar pedagógiai szaksajtóban, 1960–1970)*, Doktori (PhD) értekezés, Pécsi Tudományegyetem, Oktatás és Társadalom” Neveléstudományi Doktori Iskola.

¹⁶ Panofsky E. (1984), *Ikonográfia és ikonológia: bevezetés a reneszánsz művészet tanulmányozásába*, in Panofsky E. (ed), *A jelentés a vizuális művészetekben*, Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, pp. 289.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*

¹⁸ *Ibidem*

¹⁹ Géczy J. & Darvai T. (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 204.

The fourth level is the *iconological interpretation*, which requires more than the knowledge of the themes and concepts explored by literary sources²⁰. The deeper contexts, meanings and connotations of the image are being explored²¹.

Each of the five images analysed is from the age of activity stimulation. Applying *Panofsky's* method, in the first phase of the examination of the images, the analysis focuses on the motifs in the photos, such as the building block or the circular sandpit. In the second phase, iconographic analysis is carried out using literary sources. Among my literary sources, there are several studies on nursery history and doctoral theses that have helped to integrate images into the context of similar images from the 1970s. During the iconographic interpretation of the third phase, I performed an expansion of the symbols to show what the photographer was able to display with his or her images. In the fourth phase, during the iconological interpretation, I attempted to explore the deeper correlations of the image.

Analysing the five photographs is an attempt to answer the question of whether interpretations that can be explored by iconography contribute to the analytical aspects of the literature.

2. The beginning of the development of the Hungarian nursery system

The first nursery was opened on the initiative of Francois Marbeau in Paris. Its founder said: “A nursery ennobles everything it comes into contact with”²².

The first Hungarian nursery was opened on 21 April 1852 in Kalap Street, Budapest by the Pesti Első Bölcsőde Egylet [Eng. First Association of Nurseries in Pest]²³.

Julia Forrainé Brunszvik ran the nursery for 12 years as president²⁴. The founders of the Association were Chief Physician Károly Tormay; István Majer, a Catholic priest; City Councillor Antal Rozmanith and Archduchess Hildegard²⁵. The first nursery in Hungary welcomed young children from the age of 14 days to 2 years and provided them with three meals a day, a separate bed, crockery, linen and institutional clothes²⁶.

In the 19th century, there were only a few nurseries in the capital and they were working through donations. The donors included Archduchess Hildegard; Julia Forrainé Brunszvik; Julia Nádasdyné Forray; Ányos Jedlik, the father of the dynamo; Ferenc Marelli, a conductor and Gusztáv Heckenast, a printing press owner.

After three years, the Kalap Street Nursery moved to Kerepesi Street [TN: Budapest]. In 1857 a nursery was opened in Terézváros, too [TN: in the 6th district of Budapest], which was merged with the Kerepesi Road Nursery after three years. The Association decided to build an independent nursery building, which was completed in 1868 in Mária street, in the 8th district of Budapest. This nursery welcomed the children up to the age of four. The statute of the institution read: “*To raise the infants of poor,*

²⁰ Panofsky E. (1984), *op. cit.*, p. 292.

²¹ Géczi J. & Darvai T. (2010), *op. cit.*, p. 204.

²² Vokony É. (2002), *Kis magyar bölcsőde-történet*, Kapocs, Vol. 1, n. 2, pp. 50-54.

²³ Hornyák M. (2002), *A 150 éve alapított első hazai pesti bölcsőde és Forrainé Brunszvik Júlia grófnő, Brunszvik Teréz Szellemi Hagyatéka Alapítvány*, Martonvásár.

²⁴ Aggné Pirka V., Mikonya GY., Mészárosné Darvai S. & Szarka E. (2014), *Kora gyermekkori nevelés – és családtörténet*, ELTE TÓK, Budapest.

²⁵ Vokony É. (2002), *op. cit.*

²⁶ Aggné Pirka V., *op. cit.*

out-of-home parents up to the age of 4 and to protect them from need, trouble and illness with careful supervision and nursing"²⁷. The mothers who used the nursery worked mostly as craftsmen, day women, market women, laundresses, ironers, maids, charwomen, housekeepers and seamstresses. They had to go back to work two weeks after childbirth, so their infants could already go to nursery from the age of two weeks. The conditions of admission to nursery were the employment of the mother, the residence in Budapest and the poverty of the family²⁸.

Miklós Ybl [TN: a well-known Hungarian architect] made the plans for the nursery in Józsefváros [TN: in the 8th district of Budapest], which opened its doors in 1877 on Nagytemplom Street. The institution still operates as a nursery, and in 2002 the Nursery Museal Collection opened its doors in this building.

After the Second World War, women became massively employed, and consequently, the need emerged to improve maternal and child protection, and thus the nurseries' role extended, too. In 1954, the *Bölcsődék Működési Szabályzata* [Eng. Code of Conduct for Nurseries] was published, which included the children's daily routine, as well as the meal and care responsibilities, the work schedule and duties of those working there²⁹.

After the Second World War, the world-famous Pikler Institute on Lóczy Street, Budapest was established (a residential nursery), where wards of the state lived. Aspects were developed that counteracted hospitalism. The residential nursery had a tremendous impact on Hungarian nurseries and was able to serve as a model because of the caring of similar age groups. Emmi Pikler, head of the residential nursery, dismissed the nurses who looked for the children in an insensitive, hurried and conveyor-like manner. Emmi Pikler and her staff started training nursery nurses. She developed her own concept that covered all areas of infant-care. She stressed the importance of personal stability. It took a decade for the nurseries to establish a phasing-out system of personal nursery nurses³⁰.

3. Hungarian nursery history of the 1970s

The second phase of the Kádár era stretched from the early 1960s to the late 1980s [TN: János Kádár was a Hungarian communist leader and the General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, presiding over the country from 1956 until 1988]. During this period, the New Economic Mechanism was introduced in 1968, coupled with what was good for the people of Kadarism. Hungarian society devoted an incredible amount of energy to obtaining the benefits of modern consumer societies. The structure of education underwent significant changes over the years, too. The most important part of the structural changes concerned the generalization of pre-primary education and training. From the 1950s, women were heavily employed. In addition, the disintegration of traditional large families necessitated the provision of a large number

²⁷ Aggné Pirka V., *op. cit.*, p. 104

²⁸ *Ibidem*

²⁹ *Ibidem*

³⁰ Gyöngy K. (2014), *A bölcsődei művészeti nevelés előzményei és jelen gyakorlata*, ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, Budapest.

of kindergarten children aged 3-6. Family policy measures introduced in the late 1960s and early 1970s aimed at avoiding population decline³¹.

The theoretical and practical demonstrations of activity stimulation began in nurseries in the 1960s. Activity stimulation was different from a traditional nursery session inasmuch as it initiated the young child into independent activity, which required conscious planning by the nursery nurse – taking age characteristics into account. The young child did not have to attend it. One of the educators associated with the activity stimulation theory was Maria Keresztúri, who said that the length of the activity stimulus cannot be determined in advance, as it is impossible to know how long a nursery nurse can catch the attention of young children with a given device. She also pointed out that the nurse encourages the child taking individual characteristics into account³². Founded in 1970, BOMI educators and psychologists spoke out against activity stimulation. This meant that the nurses' play-related tasks required a change as soon as possible³³. In line with the Pikler principles, Ferenczy³⁴ emphasized free play, which required the nurse to allow child's initiative, i.e. the cessation of the practice of activity stimulation was formulated. BOMI and the experts of the regional methodological centres developed principles and practices that have raised the standard of the Hungarian early childhood education and care system to a world-renowned level³⁵. From the 1960s to the late 1970s, the theory of activity stimulation provided guidance for nursery nurses. This was a guideline on how nurses with health education can participate in children's play. In addition to improving the skills and knowledge of children, the activity stimulation aimed at developing their personalities. In the game, through the development of their personality, children need to be prepared for work and for living in the community. Thus the emphasis transferred to adult activities³⁶.

These professional, methodological principles as well as the nursery history of the time are important guidelines for the present image analysis.

CHILDREN IN THE NURSERY:

Analysis of photo 1

Pre-iconographic description: The 1st picture shows children in nursery age and their nurse. The picture was taken in the nursery class room. The clothes of the children and the nurse are strikingly festive, in black and white, and each child has a white collar. Three of the children in the picture are wearing uniforms, but all clothes have the same features. The people in the picture are all sitting in a corner of the nursery class room. Our attention is focused on the child and nurse playing in the middle of the photo. The child is wearing braces. In the background, beside the radiator and the curtain, there are passive children sitting on a cot and a checkered rug. The children's hair is of almost the same style and length. Every child is watching something except the nurse, who is watching the child playing in front of her. Everyone in the photo is wearing short-sleeved shirts and shorts, illustrating that the picture may have been taken in summer or spring.

³¹ Romsics I. (2005), *Magyarország története a XX. Században*, Osiris Kiadó, Budapest.

³² Gyöngy K. (2014), *op. cit.*

³³ *Ibidem*

³⁴ Ferenczy Á. (1978), *Játéktevékenység a bölcsődében*, in: *VTVB Egészségügyi és Szociálpolitikai Osztály* (ed) II, Országos Bölcsődei Anket. Szolnok, pp. 130–140.

³⁵ Vokony É. (2002), *Kis magyar bölcsőde-történet*, Kapocs, Vol. 1, n. 2, pp. 50-54.

³⁶ Gyöngy K. (2014), *op. cit.*



Photo 1: Building blocks in the nursery

*Building block sets implicitly contain the image of the child as a constructive builder, a useful member of industrial society – it is not difficult to project this idea into the reality of the industrial-agricultural Hungary in the 1960s*⁴⁰. In my view, this finding is also valid for the time of the analysed photograph. Constructive play as a form of play is a controversial issue, whether play or work for a child. The construction activity can include many components. They are dealt with by different types of literature in different types of activity, such as construction games or DIY⁴¹.

Iconographic interpretation: The festive attire, the expression on the faces and the four passively seated children imply the anticipation of something. During the waiting period, the nurse may want to engage one of the children for some reason. The nursery nurse's facial expression and her hand on the child's foot may also mean that she is observing and controlling the child's playing. It may also mean that she is asking the child to stop the playing, though. The latter may also be indicated by the fact that there are hardly any building blocks removed from the bowl: we cannot see an in-depth play activity. It can also be seen that the nurse is sitting with her back to several children and only looking at one child, which raises the suspicion that there might be one more carer nearby.

Iconographic analysis: The play is distinguished from many other activities of infants by the sense of joy while playing³⁷. Fröbel believes that the divine origin of the child's creative process is manifested in speech, play and imagination³⁸. The photo shows a constructive game. There are three toy blocks of the same color next to each other and stacked on the carpet. The child is holding two building blocks of different colors in his hands just assembling them. During the activity, the child's attention is divided: neither is he watching his hands or the nursery nurse sitting near him. The object of the playing is the building block, which in itself carries a meaning. Somogyvári³⁹ has already highlighted this in his study, where he analysed, among other things, the cover of an issue of *Óvodai Nevelés* in the 1970s [TN: Eng. "Kindergarten

Education", a Hungarian journal dealing with early childhood education and care]. *The*

³⁷ Mérei F. & V. Binét Á. (2006), *Gyermeklélektan*, Medicina Könyvkiadó, Budapest.

³⁸ Pukánszky B. (2005), *A gyermekről alkotott kép változásai az óvoda történetében*, *Educatio*, Vol. 14, n. 4, pp. 703-715.

³⁹ Somogyvári L. (2014), *A tudásátadás, nevelés intézményi és intézményen kívüli terei (Képelemzések a magyar pedagógiai szaksajtóban, 1960–1970)*, Doktori (Phd) értekezés, Pécsi Tudományegyetem, Oktatás és Társadalom" Neveléstudományi Doktori Iskola.

⁴⁰ Somogyvári L. (2014), *op.cit.*, p. 59.

⁴¹ Kerekes V. (2012), *A kisgyermekkor pedagógiája*, ELTE Bárczi Gusztáv Gyógypedagógiai Kar, Budapest.

Iconological interpretation: Considering their activities, there is a very sharp dividing line between the child and the nurse sitting in the foreground and the children sitting and watching something passively in the background, even if we cannot see an intense constructive play. The image from the age of activity stimulation suggests that the nurse is communicating with the child. The nurse's facial expression suggests that she is trying to control the child, the goal being to involve the child in the activity.

Analysis of photo 2

Pre-iconographic description:

Photo 2 was taken on the nursery playground. It shows three children and a nursery nurse. The children are playing intimately in a very small sandpit. The size of the sandpit does not allow more than three children to play together. The summer clothing of the people in the photo suggests that it may be spring or summer. The nurse is dressed in white uniform. The



Photo 2: Playing in the sand on the nursery playground

nursery playground, a small part of which we can see in the photo, is the most important venue for the free movement of children. The nursery playground is surrounded by greenery, with trees and bushes in the background. We can see a shadow of an object projected on the side of the sandpit. The visible wheel suggests that it might be a toy. The children's intense playing is indicated by their focused attention to the sandbox, by the sand buckets in their hands and by the holding of their hands. The circular sandpit as a symbol represents the unity of the children, with all three children sitting inside the sandpit while the nurse is outside the circle. The circle itself „is a symbol of completeness, of wholeness; as an infinite line, it represents time and infinity at the same time, the eternal and the One”⁴².

Iconographic analysis: This photo also shows a constructive play activity: the children are using their previous experiences of the properties of objects and their behavior in space. This is followed by a transfer into the symbolic world⁴³. As mentioned before, the construction activity can include many components. While playing in the sand, the children's eye-hand coordination and fine motor skills are developing. They also learn how to break things up and put them together and what the properties of the elements are. They discover the relationship between the whole and the parts and also learn what they can and cannot do. They experience the joy of creation⁴⁴.

⁴² Pál J. & Újvári E. (2001), *Szimbólumtár*, Balassi Kiadó, Budapest. http://www.balassikiado.hu/BB/netre/Net_szimbolum/szimbolumszotar.htm [Letöltve: 2019. 07. 31.]

⁴³ Mózer E. (2009), *A játék és a fejlesztés szerepe a kora gyermekkori fejlődésben*, in: Balázs I. (ed), *Gyerekek – Szülők – Közösségek. Módszertani ajánlások a gyerekekkel, a szülőkkel és a közösségekkel végzett munkához a Biztos Kezdet program munkatársai számára*, Biztos Kezdet, pp. 25-41.

⁴⁴ Lakatos B. M. (2001), *Játékpszichológia. Olvasókönyv óvodapedagógus hallgatónak*, ELTE Tanító- és Óvóképző Főiskolai Kar, Budapest.

Iconographic interpretation: Nurseries offer a lot of opportunities for playground activities. The photo does not show a high-motion play activity, but an in-depth constructive game. In the photo, the photographer illustrates the variety of playing activities by one type, in which he or she is not drawing the children's attention to himself. Two children are holding a smaller and a larger sand bucket or cup. Both of them are pouring sand. The third child is completely inside the circle. We cannot see exactly what he is doing, but the picture illustrates that he is deeply involved in the activity. The photo suggests an action of imitation, a typical form of learning for this age group.

Iconological interpretation: "Observation was part of the activity stimulus, but it was not used to help children develop their skills. It was much more about monitoring the activities of the nursery nurse, whether the presence of an adult stimulant could be considered successful"⁴⁵. Although the nurse is standing out of the scene, she is strongly present, sitting near the children at the edge of the sandpit, with her hands hanging into the sandpit. The nurse is monitoring the children's playing, that is, she seems to be primarily an observer. However, this does not preclude her from controlling the children from the outside.

Analysis of photo 3

Pre-iconographic

description: The third photo, which was made in the nursery's playground, illustrates free play. This photo illustrates another corner of the nursery playground. The woody and bushy area in the background of the photo may indicate that the jungle gym tunnel is located near the sandpit in Photo 2. The dense bushes, the children's clothing, as well as the dryness of the soil indicate that it is



Photo 3: High-motion playing on the nursery playground

summer time. The photo focuses on the jungle gym tunnel and the children. The photo shows four children, three of them crawling through the tunnel, the fourth child watching them from outside. He may be expecting his turn, or he may be considered an outsider. All four children look similar in their clothing, hairstyle and in the length of their hair. Enlarging the image clearly shows that the young child in the background is holding something in his hand. It is only the second child climbing in the tunnel who is smiling in the photo. The first child is presumably watching the photographer.

Iconographic analysis: The photographer is illustrating a type of playground activities, the high-motion playing. Presumably, the photographer wanted to present a playground scene with several children playing. The look of the child crawling out of the tunnel suggests that the photographer or a person next to him (probably the nursery

⁴⁵ Gyöngy K. (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 24

nurse) is talking to her. Gyöngy⁴⁶ emphasizes in her study that in the age of activity stimulation, children's play tended to be more of a controlled activity.

Iconographic interpretation: The metal tunnel itself is not closed, the children are able to look outside. It is adequate for both inside and outside crawling. The tunnel, open from above and from the side, symbolizes children's connection to the outside world. The photo illustrates a pedagogical interaction between the children in the picture and the person/persons not present, i.e. the pedagogical intent can be detected in the background. Somogyvári⁴⁷ also concludes this in his doctoral thesis, in which he emphasizes that if a child's independent playing is shown in a photograph, there is always a pedagogical intent in the background.

Iconological interpretation: As mentioned earlier, at this age (0-3 years), young children learn through observation and imitation. One child starts crawling and the other starts crawling too. The same is true when the nurse controls the play activity. The smile of the child crawling through the tunnel suggests that they are playing cheerfully; this rhythmic sequence of crawling attracts other children to the activity area. The picture of the children crawling in the jungle gym shows an intense play activity.

Analysis of photo 4

Pre-iconographic description:

Photo 4 also illustrates a playground activity. This picture shows another part of the nursery playground. In the background we can see a woody-bushy area, a nursery fence and a house wall with windows. Behind the paddling-pool, there is a narrow concrete sidewalk in the background. The picture was clearly taken in summer. The photo shows ten children, the majority of them naked, bathing in the paddling-pool. The play activity itself is one of the high-motion activities. In the photo, the



Photo 4: Splashing Around In The Nursery

nurse in white uniform stands out from the kids, and it is interesting how the kids stand out from the water, too. The boys' hair is the same length and style, and there are three blond children in the photo, as well. It is also prominent that the hair of not all children is wet. Two children are crouching, four sitting and four standing in the paddling-pool. The paddling-pool is shaped like a stream with stones at the edges. It is quite narrow, the water depth is very small. It serves as some refreshment for children when it is hot. We cannot see how long the paddling-pool is. At the edge of the paddling-pool, we can see a bit of a scaffold appearing in the picture. There are four larger beach balls in the paddling-pool. The inscription reads "NIV" indicating that they might have been the gifts of the NIVEA company. The number of balls allows several children to play at the

⁴⁶ Gyöngy K. (2014), *op. cit.*,

⁴⁷ Somogyvári L. (2014), *op.cit.*

same time, either individually or in groups. The two boys facing each other in the photo are probably talking to each other.

Iconographic analysis: The nurse's posture may indicate that she is just picking up a ball, or she may be offering it to the children to play with. It is also possible that she would like to offer the ball to the taller boy in front of her, as this boy is not looking at the photographer, his attention is directed towards the nurse. However, behind the tall boy there is a little child moving towards the nurse. Five out of ten children are watching the photographer, and nobody is smiling. The photographer must have drawn their attention, as the eyes of the children are directed towards the photographer. It is also striking that only the children who are closer to the photographer are looking at him/her. It can be inferred that the photographer caught the moment at the beginning or at the end of the playing.

Iconographic interpretation: The photographer wanted to depict the paddling-pool in a third part of the nursery playground. It is remarkable that in the 1970s children could have access to such a paddling-pool, and of course, the fact that the nursery was and has been ever since a Methodological Centre for Nurseries, plays a major role in it. In the heat, children can cool off in the paddling-pool. Water implies many play options, which, however, is not illustrated by this photo.

Iconological interpretation: The photo does not show an intense play activity. The paddling-pool is a place of high-motion playing activities. At this age, it is rather untypical for a child to stand or sit inactively and to do nothing. This photo suggests that the nurse is not part of the children's activity, and that most of the children are not controlled by her. At the same time, her presence in a given activity area attracts one's attention. The children are not running and jumping around. The use of a paddling-pool surrounded by stone is subject to rules, and it is clear from the photo that the children are using it disciplined.

Analysis of photo 5

Pre-iconographic description: Photo 5 shows seven nursery children and their nurse. The children are wearing uniforms, and the nurse is sitting in white uniform among the children on the carpet. The children's hair is similar in length and style. In the background, there are some animal figures, wooden toys, pots, buckets and building blocks in a white basket on the toy shelf, suggesting that the photo was taken in the nursery class room. Attention is focused on the game surrounded by the children. It is striking that the three children outside the circle are also looking at the game. One of the children outside the circle is resting his head on the nurse's shoulder, and the small child kneeling beside him is standing out. The third child, half visible on



Photo 5: Board games in the nursery

the right side of the picture, is turning towards the center of the circle with his/her torso. Enlarging the picture shows a board game with puzzles of various lengths, like chopsticks, which are probably hollow and can be fitted to the board. These puzzles can also be found scattered around the carpet. The game can be a jigsaw puzzle that, if you examine the picture well, appears in the lap of a child sitting directly to the right of the nurse.

Iconographic analysis: The photograph shows the initial form of construction. Children can fit the puzzles on the board, probably based on some aspect, such as colours or dimensions. The play activity suggests that the photograph depicts children of age 2. At this age, the initial form of construction appears: putting the pieces side by side, stacking and loading them. At this age group, construction is not yet planned in advance⁴⁸.

Iconographic interpretation: The photograph shows a corner of the nursery class room, which looks very crowded. The photographer, however, is very good at demonstrating the intense playing together. The concentric position of the nursery school children and the nurse on the carpet symbolizes the community, and this community is reinforced by the presence, interest and attention of children outside the circle. At this age, children seek proximity to each other, but play together for a very short period of time. The role of the nursery nurse is crucial, as the children are not able to share the toys yet⁴⁹.

Iconological interpretation: The attention of the children inside and outside the circle, the nurse's salient yet powerful presence in the circle of the children, her facial expression, as well as the parts of the game in her hand suggest that she is playing a dominant controlling role. Children outside the circle are also attracted to the game, suggesting that the nursery nurse is constantly communicating with, motivating and guiding the children. The greatest proof of this assumption is the intense, relaxed play activity of the children in the photo.

Reflection on research results

In my study, I have analysed photographs of children from the 1970s at Tétényi úti Bölcsőde (Szemünk Fénye Központi Bölcsőde). The five photos illustrate children's play activities. By analysing the photographs and presenting them, in addition to illustrating the everyday life of the Tétényi úti Bölcsőde in the 1970s, I wanted to give an insight into the history of Hungarian nurseries at that time from the aspect of game control.

The analysed images are from the age of activity stimulation, which is well reflected in the analysed photos through which play activities have been recorded. It is the developmental approach of controlled play that appears in the five photos.

Gyöngy⁵⁰ demonstrates that the methodology for activity stimulation is fundamentally violated in practice, as the nurse has primarily implemented her own plans and ideas. There are no investigations into whether nursery nurses have

⁴⁸ Korintus M., Nyitrai Á. & Rózsa J. (2003), *Játék a bölcsődében*, Módszertani levél. http://www.magyarbolcsodek.hu/files/shares/jatek_a_bolcsodeben.pdf [Letöltve: 2019. 07. 31.]

⁴⁹ Lakatos B. M. (2001), *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ Gyöngy K. (2014), *op. cit.*

misapplied activity stimulation. A German qualitative study from 1992 to 1994, in which the work of East German nursery nurses was examined through recollective discussions, highlights the differences between theory and practice. *“No matter how good an educational and care program is, its implementation and bringing the principles to life is up to each individual nursery nurse. Their co-operation or sabotage, or misunderstanding of the principles, will result in significant changes in the local implementation of the program”*⁵¹.

BOMI conducted observations at Csecsemőotthonok Országos Módszertani Intézete [Eng. the National Institute for Methodology in Infant Homes], where they saw young children develop properly without controlling their play. From the 1980s on, activity stimulation was replaced by free play and compulsory child monitoring began. As mentioned earlier, the observation also appeared as part of the activity stimulation, but its purpose was to monitor the activity of the adult, observing how successful the nurse's stimulating role was. Professionals who spoke out against activity stimulation highlighted the problem that during the controlled session, the nursery nurses did not take into account the child's own initiative, and that the control obscured the child's inner urge to display important events in the play⁵².

After the professional acceptance of the principles of free play, it was a great struggle for nurses in nurseries to understand them⁵³. *“The child image behind the activity stimulation regarded the child as someone to be developed. The methodology of free play, however, regarded the child as an experimenter, and play was considered to be the motor of children's own development”*⁵⁴. Nursery nurses had to recognize the areas in which the child could be given freedom and the situations in which they should have got involved in the play of young children. The role of the nursery nurse was to provide the conditions necessary for the play, to offer activities to bored children, to support autonomy, to establish rules of play, to give information about the use of toys, to manage conflicts and to do so in the background⁵⁵.

Over the coming decades, there have been mixed opinions about adult participation in the play. The views of BOMI and of the Emmi Pikler Csecsemőotthonok Országos Módszertani Intézete both emphasized free play. The two institutions were opposed to each other, though, which can be explained by the different situation of the children they cared for (Pearl 2014). *“The one emphasizes creativity and meeting emotional needs, while the other emphasizes the adult's contribution to information from the world in intellectual development”*⁵⁶.

The present study, as a preliminary study, serves as a basis for a research into a larger image corpus related to the subject, and also helps in comparative analysis with photographs taken during the free play period of the 1980s. Further research and analysis of contemporary photographs can shed light on the pedagogical difference between the two approaches, and enrich the examined period of nursery history with deeper interpretations.

⁵¹ Gyöngy K. (2014), *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁵² *Ibidem*

⁵³ *Ibidem*

⁵⁴ *Ivi*, p. 31

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*

⁵⁶ *Ivi*, p. 35

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