

lies create and participate in the kinds of communal structures and experiences that promote diverse child and family well-being.

Jung, another contemporary and rival of Freud, also merits significant mention in this volume. Jung's emphasis on archetype and myth resonates with popular storytelling approaches that emphasize universal themes and spirituality. The reader, though, might bear in mind that the particularity of human experience undergirds all therapeutic work with children and families. Family diversity is an important way to express this particularity. As professionals, we need to challenge the assumption of heteronormative families and to de-stigmatize single-parent families in those mental-health and educational practices in clinics, schools, and public institutions that create a sense of community for families. An appreciation of the particularity as well as the diversity of human experience is critical to promoting child and family well-being.

The book blends established professional concepts, such as developmentally appropriate practice, with unconventional practices, such as the mutual child-parent application of skin lotion and therapist-child prayer as therapeutic interventions. The authors consistently note the importance of developmental considerations such as creating experiences and tailoring expectations for children at their developmental level. In this, play therapy is consistent with the principle of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) that guides early-childhood practice. DAP is surprisingly absent from this volume. Even in chapter 7 where the authors discuss Stanley Greenspan's DIR (Developmental,

Individual, Relationship-based) floor-time approach to working with children on the autism spectrum and their families, they do not acknowledge Greenspan's influence.

DAP is especially relevant to work with children with disabilities and their families because expectations and experiences need to be developed in accordance with children's developmental needs rather than their chronological age. DAP provides for a base line entry point into designing play therapy and family counseling interventions and for facilitating play-based experiences in community settings. But for DAP to function as a dynamic concept, practitioners need to bear in mind that children's development always occurs within a range, with the goal of the practitioner, educator, and parent to introduce well-timed challenges and expectations to further developmental gains.

Play therapy is a natural ally of education, both in and out of school. It has a place within the evolving discipline of play studies and provides theoretical and applied perspectives to understanding the place of play and the power of relationships in children's lives. It is critical that the emerging discipline of play studies take up the diversity of human experience and provide spaces that are inclusive, accessible, and welcoming to all families.

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Toy Stories: The Toy as Hero in Literature, Comics, and Film

Tanya Jones, ed.

Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2017. Introduction, about the contributors, images, and index. 188 pp. \$29.95 paper. ISBN: 9781476665177

In *Toy Stories: The Toy as Hero in Literature, Comics, and Film*, Tanya Jones has compiled a collection of essays that strive to examine what makes toys heroic in fiction. The contributors provide varied and informative perspectives on representations of toys in American and international literature, comics, and films. From discussions of the Biedermeier period to modern materialism, from the killer toy genre to repression of youth culture, *Toy Stories* focuses on how toys communicate our anxieties, histories, rules, social values, and beliefs.

The editor gives primary importance to English pediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott's theory of transitional objects, which he presented at the British Psycho-Analytical Society in 1951. His paper, "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena—A Study of the First Not-Me Possession," suggests how a child uses an item, often a blanket or soft toy, to provide psychological comfort as she moves from her internal world to the external world and develops a sense of self.

The majority of essays in *Toy Stories* lend an existential discourse about what it means to be real, a topic expertly explored by Lois Rostow Kuznets in *When Toys Come Alive: Narratives of Animation, Metamorphosis, and Development* (1994). The contributors introduce titles and characters synonymous with childhood, such as the Velveteen Rabbit, Winnie-the-Pooh, Calvin and Hobbes, Pinocchio, and the toys of the *Toy Story* film series.

Kirsten Møllegaard's essay provides a

detailed study of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Steadfast Tin Soldier." Andersen seems to have deliberately embedded two contradicting interpretations into "The Steadfast Tin Soldier." The first is a story of a tin soldier as a romantic hero, and the second is a story of blind faith. Møllegaard argues that the tin soldier serves as a symbolic allegory "of the Biedermeier period's attempt to conform and domesticate the unruly sensitive spirit of the romantic hero" (p. 41). She devotes considerable attention to Denmark's Golden Age, Andersen's attempt to criticize these social norms, and toys in this complex social and political context. What makes the essay worth reading are the comparisons of the tin soldier to toys represented in other works by Andersen.

In "They Don't Make 'Em Like That Anymore: Dolls vs. Modernity," Craig Ian Mann studies the antagonist as hero in the 1987 film *Dolls*. Toys have served as stock antagonists in horror films since *The Great Garbo* in 1929. Mann discusses *Dolls* as a criticism of the Ronald Reagan era and consumer culture. The murderous dolls in the film appear as protectors of childhood innocence, defending children against the consumerist and capitalist ideals of the 1980s. Mann argues that parents in the decade viewed "items once sentimentalized as symbolic of childhood innocence" with "suspicion and fear" (p. 66). This perspective might have intensified in the 1980s, but the view that media and toys compromised morals has existed for centuries. A few decades before the release of *Dolls*, psychiatrist Fredric Wertham criticized comic books and pulp fiction heroes for corrupting the minds of youth. In the 1960s, Aurora marketed to boys a line of

Universal Monsters plastic model kits as “America’s newest, most spine-tingling hobby.” Traditional monsters could not die, which proved an intriguing marketing strategy for children growing up in the Cold War era. It might be more interesting to consider how a child relates to the monstrous toys presented in popular films like *Dolls* or what the relationship between a child and a murderous doll suggests about how adults view children.

Overall, the contributors provide a broad overview of toys in literature, comics, and film. The book serves as a good general resource. But the use of a toy as a heroic trope is not well-defined in the text and, therefore, the essays do not seem to form a cohesive study. Many of these essays would be strengthened by defining “hero” or by removing the concept of “hero.” Even if defining a hero proved impossible, the reader would benefit from a more structured collection. Restructuring the book based on format, origins, chronology, or theme might also provide a more critically astute body of work. Still, in spite of the generalist approach to the subject, the essays contribute to the literature in toys and cultural history.

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Atari Age: The Emergence of Video Games in America

Michael Z. Newman.

Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2017.

Acknowledgments, preface, notes, and index. 252 pp. \$29.95 cloth.

ISBN 9870262035712

In the introduction to *Atari Age: The Emergence of Video Games in America*, Michael Newman observes that he was born in the same year as the debut of *Pong* (1972) and grew up during the height of the Atari craze. As a slightly younger scholar, I missed the direct experience of the Atari era. Nintendo was all the rage among my peers, though like Newman I could not convince my parents to buy the hot console of the moment. Newman succeeds both in painting the era I missed in impressive detail and in capturing its significance for scholars. *Atari Age* focuses on a very narrow time period at the dawn of video games, as its title suggests. It is not, however, simply an account of Atari as a business or even as a cultural producer. Instead, Newman engages with the video game and console during Atari’s reign as physical artifacts situated in changing spaces influenced by a migration from the public to the domestic sphere.

Newman’s work looks at the decade from 1972 to 1982, which saw the release of not only *Pong* but also *Space Invaders* (1978) and *Pac-Man* (1980)—inescapable classics, well-documented in top games lists and still playable on arcade machines throughout the country. But Newman does not set out to retread old analyses or even to dive deeply into analyzing these or other games. Instead, he takes us outside the games to consider their situation, audience, reception, and context. He examines the challenges companies and marketers faced in positioning the games in relationship to the home and existing perceptions of the appropriate types of leisure divided along lines of class and gender. For scholars working outside games history, this analysis of play in the household and the