

competitive ethos will find this to be a valuable book. The book is also a helpful introductory reference to competitive sport's contemporary moral dilemmas, including the controversies surrounding youth sport. After reading this book, readers will have more tools to debate further whether or not the competitive zeal so familiar to ancient Greeks is a desirable element in contemporary life.

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Investigating Play in the 21st Century: Play & Culture Studies, Volume 7

Dorothy Justus Sluss and Olga S. Jarrett, eds.

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The Association for the Study of Play (TASP) is a multidisciplinary organization that focuses on play studies. It consists of anthropologists, educators, folklorists, musicologists, scientists, psychologists, kinesiologists, and historians, and its members meet annually to discuss and disseminate scholarly investigations on the importance of play. Since 1998, TASP has published *Play & Culture Studies*, a scholarly journal on the topic of play, and Dorothy Justus Sluss and Olga Jarrett, co-editors of volume seven, have produced an exceptional issue. This publication not only has something for everyone (academics, educators, parents, communities,

agencies, and players) but the practical and theoretical contributions are timely, informative, and sometimes fundamental. Not since Albert Ellis (1973) have so many models for explaining play's role been represented in one publication.

Regrettably, most of the scientific community has neglected and ignored play or been dismissive of this topic as too frivolous for serious consideration. Many of those in the field of education remain wary and suspicious of play as a subject for serious scholarship, and advances in play research have been scattered and scarce. The only exceptions have been TASP's conferences and publications (though play scholars welcome the new spotlight from the *American Journal of Play*). Sluss's epilogue in this book focuses on this wariness, the main conundrum for play and culture studies. Play can be immature, disrespectful, and chaotic, but these very characteristics enliven our existence and render our lives worthwhile, a truth reflected in every chapter of this outstanding, delightful, and insightful publication.

The volume begins with three theoretical challenges in part 1. Joe L. Frost's article, "Genesis and Evolution of American Play and Playgrounds," clamors against the demise of spontaneous play and advocates for the return in importance of natural play spaces. "The Promise of Sociology for Play Studies," by Thomas S. Henricks, asserts that play is more about social interaction, more about influencing and being influenced by others, than it is about the game itself. He says developmental psychologists (and parents) acknowledged long ago that interacting, spending time with a child, is a more powerful motivator of feelings and produces more satisfaction, enjoyment, competency, and resiliency

in children than the play activities themselves. David Kushner's "Children's Play in the Journal, Young Children: An Analysis of How It Is Portrayed and Why it is Valued" evaluates why one journal promotes the importance of play to child development while so much of the professional literature in the field of education tends to ignore play as a subject altogether.

In part 2, the cross-species and cross-cultural chapters are especially interesting. Peggy O'Neill-Wagner's "Playful Companions for Motherless Monkeys" focuses on parallels between animal and human development. O'Neill-Wagner discusses the importance of positive socialization to animal reproduction and animal families and finds remarkable similarities to human cultures. Sue Dockett and Alice Meckley take a look at American and Australian school curricula that currently deemphasize play in "What Young Children Say about Play at School: United States and Australian Comparisons." James E. Johnson and Pei-Yu Chang's "Teachers' and Parents' Attitudes about Play and Learning in Taiwanese Kindergarten" offers cross-cultural evidence on the importance of friendships and on the challenges of adopting Western standards for a predominantly Chinese culture. In "Playfulness among Swedish and Japanese Children: A Comparative Study," Sanomi Taylor and colleagues also offer cross-cultural comparisons about play, this time involving Sweden, a country that valorizes independence and another, Japan, that valorizes interdependence. In "Playgrounds and Children's Play Supply in 14 Districts of Northeastern Portugal," Beatriz Pereira et al., describe children's play in a country where play is eroded by too little space, too much television, too

little appreciation, and too fast an onset of adolescence (with all the attendant behavioral acting out, including smoking and drinking). Francis Wardle's "Playground Safety in Brazil" addresses playground standards in Brazil and concerns about injuries and unsafe practices.

Science features prominently in discussions of play in part 3. "Play and Creativity: The Role of the Intersubjective Adult," by Deborah W. Tegano and James D. Moran III, presents "inter-subjectivity" and the initiation of play mentors as essential ways for science teachers to promote play. They say three key factors—tolerance for ambiguity, resistance to evaluation, and an open-ended interactive style—support the role of play in science education. Then Olga S. Jarrett and Pamela Burnley review the importance of childhood play in the lives of several prominent scientists in "The Role of Fun, Playfulness, and Creativity in Science: Lessons from Geoscientists."

In part 4, chapters on play, communication, and literacy remind us of the importance of play to traditional, modern, and postmodern interpretations of culture. In "Storybook Time and Free Play: Playing with Books," Laurelle Phillips suggests that younger and even preliterate children benefit from story-time activities, where they play with books and they interact with a teacher. The "Effects of Environmental Print Games and Play Props on Young Children's Print Recognition," by James Christie et al., describes the importance of props and genres to the encouragement and recognition of "environmental prints." Doris Bergen's "Communicative Actions and Language Narratives in Preschoolers' Play with 'Talking' and 'Non-Talking' Rescue Heroes," provides research on toys

with sounds and espouses the advantages of these technological advances to children's early literacy.

Part 5 offers, perhaps, the most diverse topics of the volume. In "Toy Libraries, Play, and Play Materials," Margie I. Mayfield advocates for placing toy libraries and play materials especially among disadvantaged immigrant populations and poor mothers to break down barriers and to permit socialization outside of the home. "Hey, No Fair!: Young Children's Perceptions of Cheating during Play," by Robyn Holmes et al., examines cheating among children in relation to moral development in the context of board games and card games. They found cheating to be more prevalent where winning was emphasized and expected—even accepted—if a participant often lost over a prolonged period. Melanie S. MacNeil's "Clinical Approaches to Achieving Positive Environments with Suicidal Aboriginal Adolescents: Play and Culturally Sensitive

Considerations" describes the importance of providing play in the kind of positive environments where culturally sensitive evaluation counseling techniques and tools serve to decrease rates of suicide among Native American youth. Finally, in "Role-Play on Parade: Child, Costume, and Ceremonial Exchange at Halloween," Cindy Dell Clark offers highly enjoyable insights on the importance of children's role reversals that occur during Halloween festivals—the temporary ascendance to power and the generational inversions that come from mocking death, the supernatural, and the terrifying.

In short, readers will not be disappointed in this work. Sluss and Jarrett have compiled a masterpiece, and they should be congratulated for so capably advancing our scholarly interests in play.

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