

or should care about children's freedom to play. It is for parents, community planners, architects, and everyone concerned about the health and well-being of the next generation. It is in part a how-to book, but it is more than that. Mike Lanza has done his homework. He presents the logic and evidence behind the methods he describes, and he documents his claims appropriately. I especially recommend the book to academicians who study play. It describes the real-world problems that prevent or dissuade children from playing freely outdoors, and it presents proven solutions to those problems. The book is well written in prose that anyone can read but that will insult nobody's intelligence. *Playborhood*, I hope, is one sign that our culture is beginning to turn around from a culture of increasing privacy and isolation to one that once again values public spaces, community, and childhood play.

—Peter Gray, *Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA*

Glued to Games: How Video Games Draw Us In and Hold Us Spellbound

Scott Rigby and Richard M. Ryan
 Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011.
 Images, charts, tables, index. 186 pp.
 \$34.95 paper. ISBN: 978-0313362248

Over the last few years, there has been great interest in the power of video games not just to entertain but to promote learning, health, social change, and art. Many believe that the deep source of this power is the ability of video games to attract and

motivate players (even up to the point of addiction, some claim). But what creates this power? Rigby and Ryan offer a psychological explanation—but one replete with social and political implications.

Video games, unlike books and movies, are not primarily about their content (e.g., their story). They are about interactions, the choices players make and the reactions the game takes to those choices. In video games, the content exists to motivate, facilitate, and give meaning to choices and interaction.

People have often turned to the idea of fun to explain the power of video games, but as the authors observe, the concept of fun seems pretty thin when considering what players actually do and endure. Players will keep going despite much challenge and frustration that—in the moment, at least—are not fun. They will leave the game only to engage with other fans—in review, critique, and analysis of their games. For example, when players of the massive multiplayer game *World of Warcraft* start “theory crafting,” they “are writing formulas, building spreadsheets, authoring fan fiction, and constantly sharing information” (p. 9). They are not just playing *in a* game, but *with* game and that kind of play goes way beyond a given game.

Rigby and Ryan offer a well-argued theory of video game engagement. They claim that video games capture us because they fulfill, in very powerful ways, specific and intrinsic human needs. These needs are competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Indeed, Rigby and Ryan argue that games that do not satisfy such needs well are not engaging or fun. Good games make us feel competent and give us a sense

of mastery by facing and overcoming challenging problems. Autonomy exists when we feel our actions are freely chosen, when we feel we have a sense of mission and purpose. Relatedness involves knowing who we are and feeling that what we do matters to others and to the world. Rigby and Ryan offer a great many examples of how and why commercial games, including “shooting games,” satisfy these needs. They also offer intriguing experimental data from their own work.

The authors also present excellent discussions of addiction and violence in video games, based on their needs-satisfaction theory. To give one important and interesting example, they show that while some players say they prefer violent games, when faced with a game during which they tag people rather than shoot them, their level of fun and engagement remains just as high. In reality, what captivates them is the satisfaction of their needs and not the violence, though, of course, conflict and the resolution of conflict can help people feel a sense of mastery, of being on a mission, and of mattering to the world.

Rigby and Ryan close with a discussion of games that goes beyond entertainment to engage with school learning, health, social change, and other matters. Our society so poorly meets the intrinsic needs of many in school or on the job, and thus video games hold out the promise of interactive communities of learners that provide people a sense of control, status, value, belonging, mattering—in short, mastery.

—James Paul Gee, *Arizona State University, Phoenix, AZ*

Des Jouets et des Hommes

Bruno Girveau and Dorothee Charles, eds.
Paris: Éditions de la Rmn-Grand Palais,
2011. Contents, illustrations, appendices,
bibliography, indexes. 328 pp. \$65.00
cloth. ISBN: 9782711857951

This comprehensive and extremely attractive book, written in French, comprises the companion volume to what must have been a fascinating and well-documented international exhibition on the history of toys made for Western children from antiquity to the present, with an additional glimpse of twentieth-century toys from Japan. Bearing the same title as the book and jointly organized by the Réunion des Musées Nationaux Grand Palais, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, and the Helsinki Art Museum, the exhibit *Des Jouets et des Hommes* (Of Toys and Men) appeared at the National Galleries of the Grand Palais in Paris, France, from September 14, 2011, to January 23, 2012, and subsequently in Helsinki, Finland, from 21 February to May 20, 2012.

While the toys in both book and exhibit came mainly from the Musée des Arts Décoratifs—which holds one of the biggest toy collections in Europe—some of the more interesting and rare artifacts belonged to private collections and other famous European and American museums, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Toy Museum of Nuremberg, and the National Museum of Play at The Strong. Together, these toys are the subject of comparative themes explored by Dorothee Charles and Bruno Girveau, both curators of the exhibit and editors of the volume.

The volume consists of two parts.