

forty minutes, brought blocks and other play materials back into the classroom, cut homework, and instituted a seventy-five-minute play club each Friday morning. Evaluation is ongoing, but child and parent responses thus far have been very positive. Programs in several other countries influenced by the Finnish model, are “Anji Play” in China, as well as experimental programs in New Zealand, Scotland, Croatia, and Tokyo.

For those who already believed in the importance of play, or are convinced by reading this book, the last chapter, “Play in the Schools of Tomorrow” should be useful for taking action. It contains strategies for home, school, and community change makers; provides thoughtful warnings about too much digital play; and lists questions that parents and citizens should ask about school quality. The book concludes with insightful quotations from twenty-five play scholars on why play is important.

Let the Children Play is an interesting, motivating, and very important book. I recommend it highly for parents, teachers, administrators, planners, and school boards—in short, anyone who cares about children and wants schools to better serve them.

—Olga S. Jarrett, *Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA*

Folk Illusions: Children, Folklore, and Sciences of Perception

K. Brandon Barker and Claiborne Rice
Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2019. Preface, acknowledgments,

accessing audiovisual material, appendix, bibliography, index of subjects, index of names, and index of folk illusions. 244 pp. \$35.00 paper. ISBN: 9780253041098

Some folklorists look at scientific research for concepts to help them understand the everyday, expressive (as opposed to instrumental) communication in the small groups they usually study. Neuroscience, cognitive science, and evolutionary psychology offer insights that bring biology back into the interdisciplinary mix used by folklorists. This well-researched and well-written book by K. Brandon Barker and Claiborne Rice provides a welcome addition to this growing body linking traditional folklore studies to current scientific research and to thinking about human behavior.

The specialty of children’s folklore studies has always had roots in developmental psychology, for obvious reasons. After all, Brian Sutton-Smith—so central to play studies and to children’s folklore studies—began his career in child psychology, but this science always served his interest in play and games. As Sutton-Smith expanded his repertoire of disciplines to include folklore, sociolinguistics, anthropology, and sociology, those who studied children’s folklore relied on his scholarly guidance to sustain the interdisciplinary project. His last book, *Play for Life* (2017), published posthumously, circled back to neuroscience and evolutionary psychology to make his final statement about the centrality of play in the lives of children and in the lives of those adults who never forgot how to play.

Barker and Rice have mastered of the body of scholarship about children’s folk-

lore, and their focus on what they call “folk illusions” leads them to expand the circle of scientific research helping us understand the minds of children at play. Their topic is “embodied perception,” the idea that our sensory organs and the neural apparatuses serving them give us no reliable access to how things really are, that we always see (or hear or touch) things imperfectly, and that the Cartesian separation of mind and body simply does not capture how much we experience the world through our bodies, including how our bodies teach our minds. The embodied mind is a subject examined by philosophers, linguists, cognitive scientists, neuroscientists, and evolutionary psychologists. Barker and Rice comfortably consult these fields for the ideas and observational or experimental results that help them understand the folk illusions learned and performed by children for each other.

The authors recognize that defining folk illusion is as difficult as defining folklore, and like most folklorists attempting to define folklore, the authors rely on a general definition and then offer many examples under their rubric folk illusions to convey the meaning of the phrase. They have collected through performances and remembrances “types of play that create a perceptual illusion for one or more participants” (p. 5). The illusions are visual, sensory (touch), and audio. They begin with the Rubber Pencil illusion created by holding a pencil at one end and wiggling it up and down so quickly it appears to be elastic. Eventually they discuss a whole catalog of folk illusions they have collected (seventy discrete illusions and their variants), noting four basic forms (floating arms, twisted hands, the chills, and light

as a feather, stiff as a board) and noting in each analysis of one of the illusions “its salient features—especially participant roles, morphological similarities, performance positions, priming periods, and ludic qualities” (p. 28).

The authors aim to do more than simply collect, classify, and interpret these folk illusions as folklorists usually do with traditions they find performed in the folk groups of children and adolescents. They are most interested in the ways this play with illusions by folks actually reproduces experiments and other inquiries into the nature of perception and reality by philosophers and scientists. And not unexpectedly, they also consult the professional literature on the performance of magic tricks.

A study in bodylore, this book consistently steps back from the entertaining details of the folk illusions (including photos and links to audio and video performances) to make more philosophically sophisticated points about the embodied mind, about our understanding of “embodied similarity” with others, about theories of active perception and passive perception, and about what the authors term “body acquisition,” a term paralleling language acquisition in children and denoting the role of play with folk illusions in children’s acquisition of an understanding of the vicissitudes of their own bodies and the bodies of others.

Some readers will enjoy this book simply for its survey of body-based illusions, stirring memories of games played in their past, and its suggestions of new games to play. The folklorists among the readers, especially those who study children’s folklore, will appreciate not just the

fun examples but also the authors' analysis of issues normally of interest to folklorists, including elements of tradition, transmission, and children's uses of folklore as they manage their psychological and social anxieties. Some will read for all these reasons but also for the interdisciplinary connections to philosophy and science relating to the embodied mind.

The reader who approaches the book with a primary interest in play, no matter what the home discipline, likely will note that the authors never actually define play (or games, for that matter), counting on the reader's intuitive understanding of play. What that assumption misses, though, is a point hinted at in a few places in this book (e.g., in the discussion of the mirror game Bloody Mary and other games of the supernatural). Gregory Bateson's frame theory of play and fantasy (see *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* 1972) notes that when we enter the play frame we step outside ordinary, everyday, taken-for-granted reality and into a reality where the subjunctive, what-if mood dominates. We might even enter the sort of state of ecstasy described by William James in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) or the state of flow described by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (*Beyond Boredom and Anxiety* 1975). Only a few of the folk illusions discussed by Barker and Rice in this excellent book induce such an alternative reality, but this is a point worth making as children explore what-if.

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Planet Cosplay: Costume Play, Identity and Global Fandom

Paul Mountfort, Anne Peirson-Smith, and Adam Geczy

Chicago, IL: Intellect, The University of Chicago Press, 2018. Acknowledgments, introduction, conclusion, and index. 299 pp. \$79.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9781783209569

About five years ago, I was a masters student applying to graduate school at the University of Southern California with a writing sample called "Raceplay: Cross-Racial Pop-Culture Cosplay as Political Speech" (now a chapter in a forthcoming book). During my interview for the program, I had the opportunity to discuss the paper with my now-advisor, Henry Jenkins. I told him I could hardly find any reference texts on cosplay, and I asked if he had any suggestions. We were both stumped and, much like the authors Paul Montfort, Anne Pierson-Smith, and Adam Geczy, I had to draw on popular sources and on theory focused on other fannish practices to cobble together a theoretical understanding of cosplay.

Now, thanks to these authors, future students will have access to *Planet Cosplay: Costume Play, Identity, and Global Fandom*. As far I know, *Planet Cosplay*, is the first major theoretical text about cosplay from an academic press. This is a supposition born out in the introduction to the book, which covers the very brief history of cosplay scholarship, consisting of about two decades. To say that the work is timely, fresh, and significant is an understatement considering the relative dearth of scholarship on the topic and the thorough—if broad—treatment the subject receives here.

The book is broken into three sections