

He points out clearly that there are those who get to play and those who get played.

Trammell further delves into the concept of involuntary play and examines torture as a part of Black play in chapter 4. He speaks to how torture has become legitimized and invisible in our society. This tolerance has allowed torture to remain present even today to serve as a form of social control. He presents the example of the slave and slave owner to show the intimacy of some forms of torture. This allows him to shift to the Black radical tradition of singing. He immediately follows the slave and slave owner example with a discussion about how slave songs have helped (and continue to help) Black people cope with such torture, yet song or singing have often not been recognized as forms of play. Trammell argues that because of White supremacy, Whiteness has become invisible and Blackness has become shameful. Notably, this chapter focuses on the gaming sector to offer two key points. First, he discusses the consideration some Black gamers give to hiding their identity and avoiding the harassment that may occur when other gamers discover they are interacting with a Black player. Second, this chapter provides examples of how Black game developers currently engage in the Black radical tradition through the development in their games of their own characters, storylines, and objectives.

Three things contribute to the readability of this book. First, the writing style and length allows it to connect well with play professionals, play advocates, and play scholars alike. It is readily digestible and provides heady insights throughout. Second, Trammell is careful to articulate fully his thesis that play can produce

pleasure and pain. This has been conveniently overlooked in previous discussions of play, especially where the play of Black people and other BIPOC communities are concerned. And third, the book offers hope. Trammell refuses simply to tell a sad story of Black people and their play as devalued. He offers points of light throughout the chapters as he highlights historical and contemporary examples of Black people reclaiming their play spaces and the stories around their play experiences. This book is a valuable resource that all protectors of play should consider adding to their library.

—Harrison P. Pinckney IV, *The Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA*

**Brian Sutton-Smith,
Playful Scholar**

*Michael M. Patte, Fraser Brown, and
Anna Beresin, eds.*

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foreword; introduction; appendix; about
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The aptly titled, *Brian Sutton-Smith, Playful Scholar* celebrates his contributions to the study of play published in what would have been the hundredth year of his play life. Written in clear, engaging prose, it highlights Sutton-Smith's ability to navigate playfully multiple disciplinary territories in his thinking, research, and writings about play. Collectively and individually, the chapters provide a glimpse into Sutton-Smith's views on play that, like his concept of adaptive variability, were constantly

evolving. This volume is a fine contemporary companion to *The Future of Play Theory*, essays that focused on the ambiguity of play in honor of Sutton-Smith's retirement from the University of Pennsylvania.

James Johnson's foreword highlights Sutton-Smith's major contributions to the field of play and his humanity, noting how deeply he cared about the relationships he formed with those who shared his interest in play. Michael Patte's introduction echoes these sentiments and highlights Sutton-Smith's multidisciplinary perspectives on play, his role as a teacher and scholar, and his quest to legitimize the study of play. Sutton-Smith's extraordinary breadth, interest in the ambiguity of play, search for the meaning of play, and desire to establish and maintain caring relationships are pervasive themes throughout this volume.

In the first chapter, Sylwyn Guilbaud pays tribute to Sutton-Smith's appreciation for the connections between things by constructing and deconstructing *Homo Ludens*, *The Ambiguity of Play*, and *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood* to explore how we frame play. Gordon Burghart recounts his correspondences with Sutton-Smith over the years in chapter 2. He focuses on their shared interests of play and emotions. Crossing disciplinary boundaries, Sutton-Smith's play rhetorics shaped Burghart's thinking about animal play.

In the third chapter, "Brian Sutton-Smith and the Obscurity of Play," Peter McDonald rereads *The Ambiguity of Play* to acquire new understandings of how Sutton-Smith's views changed over time. McDonald focuses on obscurities across play practices, players, and disciplines.

McDonald's reinterpretation generates new directions for play research.

In chapter 4, Anna Beresin discusses phrases Sutton-Smith introduced into the play literature and comments on their meaning, including "folk stories," "as," "adaptive variability," "emotional survival," and the "triviality barrier." These terms situate Sutton-Smith as a champion of play, legitimizing children's play and those who study it and the connection he makes between play and emotions, the subject of his last published work from the Strong National Museum of Play. These terms shape contemporary play discourse. In chapter 5, June Factor, the preeminent Australian folklore scholar pays homage to Sutton-Smith's range of scholarship and his work across disciplines in folklore and play.

In the sixth chapter, "Play Manifesto," Ana Marjanovic-Shane uses Sutton-Smith's view of play as "liminal" to address adult and societal threats to children's play and the importance of play, playfulness, and creativity especially as they relate to schooling. Sutton-Smith believed that play researchers should take a child-centered perspective on play and lamented the adulterating of play. This chapter connects to other tensions between play and education explored in *Play and Curriculum: Play & Culture Studies, Volume 15*.

Chapters 7, 9, 13, and 16 are clever, playful accounts of Sutton-Smith's playfulness, wit, humor, and views of play. In chapter 7, John Joseph Cash and John A. Cross connect their improvisational performance, "The Ambiguity of Love," to the play rhetorics. In chapter 9, Jay Mechling creates a story situated in a camp and wooded setting honoring Sutton-Smith as the storyteller and his views on play and

narratives. In chapter 13, Elizabeth Tucker recounts childhood birthday party traditions in New Zealand to celebrate Sutton-Smith's one-hundredth birthday. In chapter 16, Anna Beresin conjurs an enigma in Sutton-Smith's honor.

The eighth chapter anchors the volume. Fraser Brown and Michael Patte offer a previously published interview with Sutton-Smith. His recollections of his New Zealand childhood and adult experiences provide the reader a path to his views on dark and risky play; his choice to study games, play, folklore, and humor; his passion for collecting children's artifacts; his connection between play and narratives; and how and why he began to think about the ambiguity of play.

In chapter 10, Helen Schwarzman uses the Italian tradition of carnival as a mirror to view Sutton-Smith's life. She recounts how he embraced multiple perspectives of play and how his thinking on play mirrored his ideas on the adaptive variability in play—constantly in flux, adapting, and evolving. She highlights the power of his playful approach in communicating his ideas on play, an approach that continues to guide those who study play.

In chapter 11, Fraser Brown uses the ambiguity of play to describe the benefits of play for children not simply as a developmental outcome but while children are playing. He connects this to playwork and how children represent reality by drawing on Sutton-Smith's view that, in play, children create and re-create their own world.

In the twelfth chapter, Jeffrey Goldstein highlights Sutton-Smith's position on children's culture and children on the periphery. Although initially doubtful of the benefit of digital play experiences, his

flexible and adaptive thinking led him to accept all forms of play including electronic games and toys.

In chapter 14, Han recounts how Sutton-Smith inspired her to become a more playful teacher scholar. She illustrates how to integrate play into graduate class, conceptualizing play as a learning context. Sutton-Smith advocated for play across a lifespan and for the adaptive variability of play in helping us adjust to change.

In chapter 15, Jeremy K. Saucier offers a guided tour of The Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play located at The Strong National Museum of Play. The collection reflects Sutton-Smith's remarkable multidisciplinary interests and perspectives of play. The notations he placed in books reflect his playful mind, constantly in motion, making connections, and searching for the meaning of play.

The volume ends with the reflections of people who knew Sutton-Smith. This edited collection honors his legacy and humanity and conveys this message to readers—with Sutton-Smith's guidance, the future possibilities of play are boundless. It is a worthy contribution to the literature and should appeal to all those interested in the study of play.

—Robyn Holmes, *Monmouth, Long Branch, N.J.*

Wandering Games

Melissa Kagen

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