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FROM THE EDITOR

TREVOR J. BLANK

This thirty-seventh volume of *Children's Folklore Review* is a special issue commemorating the life and work of the late, great Brian Sutton-Smith, a prolific scholar of play, children's folklore, and developmental psychology whose immeasurable impact continues to resonate in the research and theoretical orientations of countless individuals and interdisciplinary fields of inquiry invested in the study of expression and creativity in childhood and adolescence. It is a true honor to pay our respects to his brilliant career and legacy as a friend, academic, and human being.

I can recall my own first encounter with the gifted mind of Brian Sutton-Smith. As a graduate student at Indiana University in 2006 I stumbled upon his seminal work, *The Ambiguity of Play* (1997). There, I found a powerful observation (on page 198 of my 2009 copy of the book): "The opposite of play... is not work... it is depression." It was such a crisp and succinct truth to ingest, especially at that time in my life where the rigors of graduate school felt so formidable and all consuming. It is a truth that I often come back to whenever I find myself a bit overextended or occasionally overwhelmed—in other words, times where such postulations serve as a gratifying dose of reality amid an otherwise foggy brain. But even out of context, the statement holds up. There is an elusively magical quality to it, much like Brian Sutton-Smith's inspiring body of scholarship itself, which has and will continue to delight and inform students of children's folklore for generations to come.

Unfortunately, I never had the opportunity to meet or collaborate with Brian Sutton-Smith, but the first four contributors to this special issue, Garry Chick, Jay Mechling, Anne Beresin, and Elizabeth Tucker, most certainly have, and each of their essays weave between their personal and professional admiration and memories of working with Brian Sutton-Smith alongside critical insights into his contributions to the study of children's folklore (among many other disciplines and areas of specialization) and his lasting legacy for those who have had the honor and pleasure of learning from and with him. I am pleased to note that this special issue also features the 2014 William Wells Newell Prize winning essay, "Children Have Their Own World of Being': An Ethnography of Children's Activities on the Day of Saraswati Puja," by Semontee Mitra, which stands as an immersive venture into the world of child's play during a culturally significant gathering. Her essay is a most fitting addition to complement this special issue's celebration of Brian Sutton-Smith.

All back issues of *Children's Folklore Review* since 1990, except for the most recent volume, are now available online through our digital repository, hosted by IUScholarWorks. To view the repository, please visit <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/handle/2022/13438> (or via the shortcut <http://tiny.cc/CFRarchive>); browse "By Issue Date" to scroll through all issues chronologically. I should note that we are currently exploring the possibility of fully or partially transitioning *CFR* into a

digital publication beginning in 2016, and I encourage subscribers to keep an eye on the AFS Children's Folklore Section website (<http://www.afsnet.org/?Children>) and Facebook page (<http://tiny.cc/childrensfolklore>), as well as the *AFS Review* newsletter for any pertinent updates. Regardless of what direction things go, we do intend to maintain a print presence in some capacity, and we will be absolutely sure to keep all subscribers informed in the months ahead of any changes. One thing that definitely won't change is our commitment to publishing the finest folkloristic scholarship pertaining to the intricate components of childhood and adolescence. I welcome correspondence should anyone wish to discuss the journal and/or contributing to it, especially individuals who are currently working on research that may fit well within the scope of *Children's Folklore Review*. Please feel free to contact me at blanktj@potdam.edu.

Finally, I would like to thank Elizabeth (Libby) Tucker for all of her time and assistance in helping me transition into my new role as editor of *Children's Folklore Review*. No matter how small of a question I've had, Libby has always enthusiastically replied with helpful feedback and positive words of encouragement. I am also grateful to Mandy Brennan, one of my students at SUNY Potsdam, who compiled an exhaustive bibliography of Brian Sutton-Smith's publications during the early preparation stages of this special issue. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to Kathy Buchta for her continually fantastic work in shaping the journal's layout and design, and Sheridan Press for its great printing and mailing services that make it possible to bring this journal into the hands of readers across the globe. And special thanks are also due to Emily Sutton-Smith and the entire extended Sutton-Smith family for their time and generosity in corresponding throughout the production of this special issue.

It is my sincerest hope that you find reading this special issue to feel much more like play than work. For starters, please be sure to check out the incredibly important, mind-blowing factoid at the bottom of this very page for a quick primer on the dynamic nature of play (and to get into the spirit of this special issue)!

Made you look.

**GAMES AND THEIR RHETORICS:
AN IDIOSYNCRATIC APPRECIATION OF
THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF BRIAN SUTTON-SMITH**

GARRY CHICK

Brian Sutton-Smith left a legacy of more than 40 books and 300 articles published, along with numerous conference presentations, television appearances and projects, and speaking engagements around the world over a 60-plus year career. While not all of these directly engaged play, this corpus surely makes Sutton-Smith history's most prolific scholar and advocate of play. The majority of his research on play was directed at children and psychological in nature but he was deeply eclectic and bridged a variety of other disciplines including anthropology, sociology, folklore, history, philosophy, biology, ethology, and neurology, among others. In addition to several of the essays in this special issue, his work has been reviewed and summarized by others (see Meckley 2015) and by himself (Sutton-Smith 1995; 2008). I edited two issues of the journal *Play & Culture*, plus part of a third in 1991, as a *Festschrift* for Sutton-Smith while Anthony Pellegrini edited another in 1995. Sutton-Smith further cemented his legacy with the publication of his classic book *The Ambiguity of Play* (1997). In this book, he convincingly showed that how we have thought about and conducted research on play has been based in a series of underlying cultural and ideological values and that understanding them may lead to a more unified discussion of the phenomenon.

To review his career and contributions to play research alone, without even considering what he did for other fields such as children's folklore, is a daunting task and one that I am unprepared to execute. While Brian was my friend, we were never collaborators. He did, however, co-author several very influential articles with my Ph.D. advisor, John M. Roberts, during the 1960s. Our association since the mid-1970s rests, in large part, on that conduit. So, as a friend, but outside observer, and an anthropologist with interests in expressive culture, broadly considered, but adult play and leisure, more particularly, my review of Brian's contributions to play theory over his long career will be personal and idiosyncratic rather than comprehensive. In particular, I will focus on Sutton-Smith's early contributions to the study of games and suggest how they may have influenced his thinking on play, specifically in terms of play research that he regarded as reflecting the *rhetoric of progress*, the *rhetoric of fate*, and the *rhetoric of power*.

In *The Ambiguity of Play*, as well as several earlier publications (Sutton-Smith 1993a; 1993b; 1995), Sutton-Smith (1997) detailed seven of what he termed *rhetorics*, or narratives designed to persuade, about how play has been, or should be, conceptualized. These include the *rhetoric of play as progress*, the *rhetoric of play as fate*, the *rhetoric of play as power*, the *rhetoric of play as identity*, the *rhetoric of play as the imaginary*, the *rhetoric of play as the self*, and the *rhetoric of play as frivolity*. Briefly, the rhetoric of play as progress is based on the notion that play is adaptive, for both animals and children, and is a context for their socialization and enculturation for the latter. The rhetoric of fate, which Sutton-

Smith regarded as the oldest of the group, has generally been applied to games of chance based on the belief that the human condition is controlled by external forces—the gods, luck, and so on—and possibly influenced only by magical or religious manipulation. The rhetoric of power is most often implicated in athletics, sports, and physical contests and is a representation of conflict. The rhetoric of identity usually applied to festivals and celebrations of community. The rhetoric of the imaginary idealizes the imagination and celebrates the creativity that so often occurs in play. The rhetoric of the self generally refers to solitary and risky activities, such as individual hobbies or bungee jumping, but also to the intrinsic and aesthetic experiences of the players. Finally, the rhetoric of frivolity has a reflexive character, “applied to the activities of the idle or the foolish” (Sutton-Smith 1997:11), but also acts as playful dissent against the orderly world imposed by society. Sutton-Smith (1997) termed each of these a rhetoric “because its ideological values are something that the holders like to persuade others to believe in and to live by” (11). He noted “By seeing how the play descriptions and play theories can be tied in with such broad patterns of ideological value, one has greater hope of coming to understand the general character of play theory, which is the ultimate objective here” (12). But, in the long process of arriving at this ultimate objective, Sutton-Smith began with the ethnographic study of children’s games.

The Study of Games

Games appear to be a universal component in the content of cultures, both past and present (Brown 1991; Murdock 1945) and their study has occupied a small, but relatively consistent, niche in anthropological research for more than 150 years. Lewis Henry Morgan, for example, in *League of the Iroquois* (1851) claimed that the Iroquois had six principal games that could be described as either athletic or as games of chance. In the first cross-cultural comparative study of games, Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1879) attempted to show that apparent similarities between *patolli*, as played by the Aztecs, and *pachisi*, as played in India, provided evidence that the civilization of India had influenced the culture in Mesoamerica. Tylor’s thesis was soon dismissed and the cross-cultural comparative study of games was dormant in anthropology for the next 80 years.

Nevertheless, numerous ethnographic descriptions of games, both among children and adults, continued to be produced. These include Stuart Culin’s studies of games in Brooklyn, New York (1891), in Korea, China, and Japan (1895), in Hawaii (1899), and his canonical treatises on Native American games (1902; 1907). Other studies include Firth’s (1930) ethnography of a dart match in Tikopia, Raum’s (1953) description of hoop-and-pole games in Africa, and Cooper’s (1949) survey of games among Native South Americans. In the functionalist tradition, Stumpf and Cozens (1947; 1949) claimed that games and sports served as training for war among the Maori of New Zealand and the natives of Fiji. Similarly, Dunlap (1951) suggested that Samoan games and sports interrelated with aspects of social organization that included not only warfare but also education, economics, and religion. Sutton-Smith made important contributions to game ethnography with

several studies of the games of New Zealand children in the early 1950s (Sutton-Smith 1951; 1953a; 1953b) culminating in a book, *The Games of New Zealand Children* in 1959.

The Cross-Cultural Comparative Study of Games

Although ethnographic studies of games continued to be produced, cross-cultural comparative research on games languished. Then, in their classic 1959 article, “Games in Culture,” Roberts, Arth, and Bush launched not only the modern era of cross-cultural comparative research on games but also of expressive culture (to include play, sport, art, music, and other leisure pursuits), more generally. Additionally, they provided both a definition of games and a system for their classification that have since become standards in anthropology and have been used in other fields, as well. Roberts et al. (1959) defined a game as “a recreational activity characterized by: (1) organized play, (2) competition, (3) two or more sides, (4) criteria for determining the winner, and (5) agreed upon rules” (597). They regarded certain other recreational activities, found around the globe but lacking competition, such as “noncompetitive swimming, top-spinning, and string-figure making” as “amusements” (597).

Roberts et al. (1959) classified games in terms of what leads to winning and losing, that is, physical skill, strategy, or chance. Therefore,

Games of physical skill as herein defined must involve the use of physical skill, but may or may not involve strategy or chance; examples are marathon races, prize fights, hockey, and the hoop and pole games. In games of strategy, physical skill must be absent and a strategy must be used; chance may or may not be involved. Chess, go, poker, and the Ashanti game of wari are examples. Finally, games of chance are so defined that chance must be present and both physical skill and strategy must be absent; examples are high card wins, dice games, and the moccasin games. (597–98)

Roberts et al.’s (1959) final and most important claim was that games are expressive models of other, important real-world activities. These include things such as hunting, warfare, social interaction, and divination:

It is also evident that most games are models of various cultural activities. Many games of physical skill simulate combat or hunting, as in boxing and competitive trap shooting. Games of strategy may simulate chase, hunt, or war activities, as in backgammon fox and geese, or chess. The relationship between games of chance and divining (ultimately a religious activity) is well known. In instances where a game does not simulate a current cultural activity, it will be found that the games ancestral to it were more clearly models. (1959:599)

Moreover, Roberts et al. (1959) regarded the types of games existing in various cultures to be products of, or at least related to, child socialization practices and to form valuable contexts for learning, particularly about things that may be dangerous in real life, such as hunting big game and warfare.

In his first anthropological article on games, "The Meeting of Maori and European Cultures and its Effects upon the Unorganized Games of Maori Children," Sutton-Smith (1951a) showed that the Maori game *buripapa*, a form of knucklebones (a game that resembles *jacks*), predated European contact despite a claim that it had been introduced to the Maori by early whalers. Additionally, he briefly described numerous types of games then still played in Maori schools. Given his abiding interest in games, after arriving in the U.S. permanently in 1956 and having published (with clinical psychologist Benjamin G. Rosenberg) "Sixty years of historical change in the game preferences of American children" in 1961, he was drawn to the work of Roberts, then a professor of anthropology at Cornell University. He first collaborated with Roberts on a cross-cultural comparative project based primarily on the idea that games are expressive models of real-world activities (Roberts and Sutton-Smith 1962). In particular, they viewed games as "exercises in mastery, with games of strategy, chance, and physical skill being related, respectively, to the mastery of the social system, the supernatural, and the nexus of the self with the environment" (168).

Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1962) utilized ratings for child training for 111 societies compiled by Bacon, Barry, and Child (1955). Bacon et al. (1955) rated boys and girls separately for child training in "responsibility, obedience, self-reliance, achievement, nurturance, and independence" (168). The ratings provided information on rewards for showing the behavior as well as the amount of anxiety displayed for not showing the behavior, the frequency of the various behaviors, and the degree of conflict over them. Of the 111 societies, data on games and game play were available in the Cross-Cultural Survey and Human Relations Area Files based at Yale University. Twenty-seven societies contained "moderately complete descriptions of games, and 29 societies provided descriptions which were usable though incomplete" (Roberts and Sutton-Smith 1962:168). Game play was not distinguished on the basis of age or sex since the ethnographies often failed to provide such information. Hence, the separate child training ratings for boys and girls presented a problem. Roberts and Sutton-Smith solved this by combining the ratings for boys and girls as Bacon et al. (1955) indicated that females tended to receive mostly positive ratings (i.e., rewards) while males received both (i.e., rewards and punishments). Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1962) addressed only four types of games: (1) games of physical skill, (2) games of physical skill with strategy, (3) games of strategy, and (4) games of chance. They found no instances of games that involved all three outcome determinants, that is, games of physical skill with both strategy and chance. Games of physical skill with chance or strategy with chance were too infrequent to consider separately so they combined the former with games of physical skill and the latter with games of strategy.

Roberts et al. (1959) had determined that presence of games of strategy was associated with cultural complexity when measured by the degree of political

integration and social stratification in societies. Because complex social systems presumably required obedience to authority, Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1962) were not surprised to find that the presence of games of strategy was associated with childhood training in obedience. In particular, societies that had games of strategy were more likely to reward children for being obedient, to punish them for disobedience, to have high frequency of obedient behaviors, and to instill conflict over obedience. The presence of games of chance was found to be associated with rewards for responsibility, the frequency of responsibility, and anxiety over achievement. Finally, the number of games of physical skill had significant relationships with rewards for achievement and frequency of achievement. Games of physical skill with strategy also were associated with punishment for not achieving. In sum, Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1962) concluded that the relationships they found “show fairly specifically that strategy is associated with obedience and not with responsibility or achievement, chance with responsibility and not with obedience, and physical skill with achievement and not with obedience and responsibility” (174).

Based on these results, Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1962) then conducted what they termed a “subsystem validation” to examine differences between American girls and boys. Since “girls are given more consistent obedience and responsibility training” while boys received higher training in achievement, girls should then be more interested and involved in playing games of strategy and of chance while boys should prefer games of physical skill. They tested these conjectures using data on the game preferences of 1,900 third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade Midwestern children gathered earlier by Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1961). The cross-cultural findings indicated that, since girls received more training in responsibility and obedience while boys received more training in achievement, the former should prefer games of strategy and chance while the latter should be biased in favor of games of physical skill. Specifically, they found that boys and girls shared preferences for 18 games of strategy although girls preferred five not liked by boys. Girls preferred five games of chance not liked by boys while boys preferred one game not liked by boys. Girls liked five games of physical skill not liked by boys while boys liked 20 not preferred by girls. Although not all of their premises were supported in a statistically significant sense, all were generally in the directions predicted. In a later study (Sutton-Smith, Roberts, and Kozelka 1963), they found support for the same predications among adults.

Based on their findings with regard to games, which they regarded as expressive cultural models, Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1962) proposed a general theory of involvement in cultural models that they termed the “conflict-enculturation” hypothesis (184). They indicated

The theory implies (1) that there is an over-all process of cultural patterning whereby society induces conflict in children through its child-training processes; (2) that society sees through appropriate arrays and varieties of ludic models to provide an assuagement of these conflicts by an adequate representation of their emotional and cognitive polarities in ludic structure; and (3) that through these

models society tries to provide a form of buffered learning through which the child can make enculturative step-by-step progress toward adult behavior. (183–84)

Games, and presumably other expressive cultural models, are therefore microcosms of social structures wherein winning and losing are represented. Individuals seek these models because, in them, they can find codifications of the cognitive and emotional aspects of conflicts inculcated during their childhoods that are not available to them in real world cultural participation due to their lack of maturity. So, for example, in games of strategy such as chess or go, individuals can practice deceiving and outwitting powerful opponents while also commanding forces while still being commanded by others in the real world. According to Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1962)

Between the ages of seven and twelve years the child learns, in simple direct form, how to take a chance, how to show skill, and how to deceive. Increasingly, in complex games, he learns the reversibility of these styles—when to rely on one type of success gambit rather than another, how to combine them, etc. What he learns from the games are the cognitive operations involved in competitive success. These cannot be learned by young children in full-scale cultural participation. They can be learned only through models, whether games or models of other types. (183)

In a 1963 publication, Roberts and Sutton-Smith, along with Adam Kendon, focused on models of strategy not only in games but also in folktales (Roberts, Sutton-Smith, and Kendon 1963). In this study, Sutton-Smith combined his interests in folktales with Roberts' interest in games by examining folktales "that resemble games in that they display definite outcomes with winners and losers" (186). They asserted that "Folk tales and games are quite different media of expression, but they are similar in that they model or represent behaviors occurring in other settings, both real and imaginary" (185). Their general hypothesis was that strategy in folktales will occur in cultural settings that also include games of strategy. In line with their previous research, they hypothesized, specifically, that strategic outcomes in folktales, when they occur, should be accompanied by games of strategy, high obedience training, and high levels of political complexity (a proxy for cultural complexity, more generally). To test their hypothesis, Roberts et al. (1963) used a sample of folktales assembled by Child, Storn, and Veroff (1958). Twenty-seven of the societies in the sample had previously been scored in terms of the presence of game types. Twelve folktales from each society, purportedly representative of the types of tales found in each, were judged by three raters whether they had an outcome, that is, an apparent contest between two sides, or not. Only those folktales agreed on by at least two of the raters were chosen for the study. Then, the three judges (based on definitions established by the first judge) rated the tales in the sample in terms of the relative extent to which the outcome for each involved physical skill, strategy, and chance although the

primary interest in the study was strategy. Roberts et al. (1963) found, in support of their hypothesis, that “(a) the strategic mode of competition is modeled in both games and folktales in a number of cultures; (b) where the strategic mode of completion is modeled in one medium (i.e., games) it is likely to be modeled in the other (i.e., folktales); and (c) the strategic mode of completion as modeled in games and in folktales is associated with both obedience training and cultural complexity” (195–96). Based on these and their earlier findings, Roberts et al. (1963) speculated, in terms of cultural evolution, that

the probable order of the appearance of the cultural inventories of child-training procedures and models is as follows: (a) nurturance and self reliance with no games; (b) independence, responsibility, and achievement with games of physical skill and games of chance; and (c) obedience with games of strategy. (198)

In a 1964 study, Sutton-Smith and Roberts showed that 8 to 12 year old children were able to attribute playing style-like characteristics to others. They created a categorization of players wherein those who “act (a) like players in games of chance and try to succeed by relying on luck, i.e., are *fortunists*; (b) like players in games of physical skill who try to succeed by applying physical power, i.e., are *potents*; or (c) like players in games of strategy who try to succeed by making wise decisions, i.e., are *strategists*” (15). Children who either lacked followers or gave up in the face of difficulties were regarded as *failures*. In addition to the children’s sociometric ratings of others, teachers rated the children in terms of their success in the classroom and on the playground. Sutton-Smith and Roberts (1964) found that 76% of the children named as classroom successes were in the top quarter of the distribution of strategists as perceived by other children. Fifty per cent indicated by teachers as successful on the playground were in the top quarter attributed as being potents. Fifty-nine strategists, but only four potents were regarded as classroom successes by teachers while 34 potents, but only 17 strategists, were classified as playground successes. Teachers classified 65% of the children regarded by their peers as either fortunists or failures as failures either in the classroom or on the playground.

Sutton-Smith and Roberts (1964) extended their study by further examining the children who were in the top quarters of the distributions in each of the categories. As some children were in the top quarters of more than one category, Sutton-Smith and Roberts created the additional categories of *potent-strategists*, *potent-fortunists*, and *fortunist-failures*. They reported:

Our results show that boys make distinctions among children who succeed by strategy, children who succeed by power, and children who succeed by using a combination of these two types. Boys do not, however, appear to distinguish clearly between children who succeed by good fortune and those who simply fail. To succeed by luck is apparently tantamount to failure.

Girls, on the other hand, distinguish between children who succeed by fortune and those who simply fail. The largest difference between the two groups is to be found in the girls' game preferences in which the fortunist—failures are not unlike the success groups in their responses, whereas the pure failure group is atypical and immature. The distinction made by girls between potent-strategists, strategists, and potent seems not to be a distinction in type as it is with boys so much as a distinction in degree. Potent-strategists have most of the desirable characteristics, strategists somewhat less, and potents even less; but all three groups are superior to fortunists and failures. (31)

Sutton-Smith and Roberts (1964) concluded that children can consistently place each other into categories based on games and that boys, in particular, play games that are analogous to their success styles. Girls tend not distinguish among success styles but do so among failure groups.

Roberts, Hoffmann, and Sutton-Smith (1965) then examined playing styles in the context of a simple game of pure strategy, tic-tac-toe. In a field experimental study, they had each sixth grader in a class play every other twice resulting in a total of 313 wins/losses wins and 910 draws. Arithmetic ability related to winning play styles while intelligence seemed to be linked to safe play styles (i.e., drawing). In a follow up study, Sutton-Smith and Roberts (1967) gave tic-tac-toe problems (developed earlier by Hoffmann) to girls and boys participating in the Achievement Development Project at the Fels Research Institute in Yellow Springs, Ohio.¹ They found numerous associations between problem solutions and children's play styles. What they termed the "winning girl" was positively associated with the instigation of verbal and physical aggression, associative play, dominance of other girls, concern with mastery of motor skills, and negatively associated with socioeconomic status, the amount of time spent alone on tasks, task persistence, and gender-appropriate play choices. The "drawing girl" was positively associated with socioeconomic status, need achievement, and gender-appropriate play but negatively associated with the instigation of physical aggression and concern with mastery of motor skills. The "drawing boy" was positively associated with need achievement and approval seeking from adults.

In addition to their work on games of strategy and folktales involving strategy, Roberts and Sutton-Smith looked at the cross-cultural correlates of games of chance more extensively in a 1966 publication, "Cross-Cultural Correlates of Games of Chance." In this study, they used results from a pre-publication version of Textor's (1967) *A Cross-Cultural Summary*, a huge compendium of computer generated comparisons of cross-cultural codes for about 500 variables for 400 societies selected by the editors of the journal *Ethnology*. For sampling purposes, the ethnographic universe was divided into six geographic regions. These included Africa, the Circum-Mediterranean, East Eurasia, the Insular Pacific, North America, and South America. While the sample was technically non-random, comparisons were accompanied by two measures of association (chi-square and phi) and included when the chi-square was significant at the 0.10 level.

A Cross-Cultural Summary (Textor 1967) included 10 comparisons involving games, four of which dealt with games of chance. Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1966) based their article on those four comparisons. Their most important finding was that games of chance appear to be most common in cultural contexts involving uncertainty. That is, games of chance occur where “a life situation where favorable and unfavorable outcomes may occur in an uncertain way, not easily controlled by either physical skill or strategy, particularly in the areas of environmental setting, food production, social and political interaction, marriage, war, and religion” (Roberts and Sutton-Smith 1966:143).

Sutton-Smith’s fertile collaboration with Roberts culminated in a brief chapter in a book edited by Lueschen in 1970 titled “The Cross-Cultural and Psychological Study of Games” and a chapter in the *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, edited by Triandis and Heron, in 1981 titled “Play, Games, and Sports.” Sutton-Smith’s and Roberts’ research in the 1960s, particularly their cross-cultural studies, pointed to several conclusions. First, they established an evolutionary sequence of game development beginning with, (1) no games, (2) games of physical skill, (3) games of chance, and, (4) games of strategy. Roberts et al. (1959) and Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1962) reported, with some surprise, that some cultures (e.g., the Yir Yiront, the Cuna) genuinely appear not to have games. They concluded that there are three possibilities: (1) some societies have never had games, (2) some societies have lost their games through deculturation and, (3) the ethnographic reports may be in error. Whatever the reason for the no-game reports, later cross-cultural comparative research (e.g., Chick 1998; Roberts and Barry 1976) has supported the sequence beginning with games of physical skill.

Second, their studies indicated that games are vehicles for socialization and cultural learning. Socialization for achievement is associated with the presence of games of physical skill and is most often directed at males. Socialization for responsibility is associated with the presence of games of chance and is most often directed at females. Socialization for obedience is associated with the presence of games of strategy and is most often directed at females. And part of this socialization is directed at conflict engendered by child rearing practices and its assuagement. Different types of games were also found in varied cultural complexes. Societies heavily invested in food collection had games of physical skill since the games themselves served, at least in part, as models of hunting (and war, which could be looked on as a form of hunting) but offered greater safety than learning about hunting dangerous big game, for example. Games of chance occur in situations where uncertainty is commonly addressed by appeals to religious or divinatory practices. And, finally, games of strategy occur in relatively complex societies with distinct social strata, higher levels of political integration, and relatively complex technology.

Third, games could be viewed as models of power. That, is boys (although not girls) were able to consistently categorize others as strategists, who lead through ideas, or potents, who lead through physical prowess. Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1970) reported that some of the power tactics used by siblings could be regarded as primarily strategic while others primarily involved physical ability. They argued that if the distinctions between strategic and physical approaches to

problem solving are present in general social behavior, they are also likely to exist in informal play. In a 1968 paper, Sutton-Smith suggested that there are “loose parallels” (50) between games of strategy and some daydreams, such as those that feature conceptual problem solving and abstract speculation. To some extent, this suggestion follows from the finding by Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1963) that folktales that have outcomes, in terms of winners and losers, can be examined in terms of their content involving physical skill, chance, and, especially, strategy on the part of protagonists. Among Western children, “Females prefer magical assistance (Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty); males prefer personal prowess (Jack and the Beanstalk)” (Sutton-Smith 1971:85). Based on this line of research, Sutton-Smith and Roberts expanded the argument that games are expressive models through which children, by participating in them, learn the power tactics of other individuals and their cultures more broadly.

While they coauthored summary chapters on games, sport, and play in 1970 and 1981, Sutton-Smith and Roberts produced no empirical collaborations after their 1967 study of tic-tac-toe. For his part, Roberts continued working on games, as well as other expressive phenomena, through the 1970s and 1980s with numerous other coauthors, including me. His work was heavily influenced by the theorizing about child socialization and games developed in his early collaboration with Sutton-Smith. In particular, he sought other contexts to test the conflict-enculturation hypothesis that they had developed, especially in expressive activities among adults. Sutton-Smith, while he did not drop his interest in games, spent more of his research efforts on children’s less organized activities (free play, folk games, jokes, rhymes, make-believe, folktales, teasing) and, importantly, more vigorously approached topics aligned with the philosophy of science, that is, how values cultural relativity undergirds how we have theorized play over the years.

Games as Ambiguous Agents of Socialization

Sutton-Smith’s collaboration with Roberts provided one source of empirical support for Sutton-Smith’s enduring interest in both how children are socialized for play and the power of play to socialize. Whether that socialization was for good or bad remained a question and an aspect of play’s ambiguity. This was an interest and concern for both Sutton-Smith and Roberts. In his book, *Child Psychology*, Sutton-Smith wrote “in games, children learn all those necessary arts of trickery, deception, harassment, divination, and foul play that their teachers won’t teach them, but that are most important in successful human interrelationship in marriage, business, and war” (Sutton-Smith 1973:356–57). Similarly, Roberts and Barry (1976) related combinations of game types to cultural complexity and to 13 traits inculcated during child training. In the cross-cultural data, they found evidence that, in societies where all three game types are present, obedience was emphasized over self-reliance or honesty. In contemporary American sports, for example, coaches have all but completely usurped decision-making. Hence, there is little need for players to be self-reliant. However, coaches value obedience and self-restraint. And, as for honesty, coaches teach how to shade the rules without getting caught. At both the University of Illinois and Penn State University, I have

had offensive and defensive linemen from the football teams in class. When asked how often offensive linemen are guilty of “holding,” defensive linemen respond “on every play” while offensive linemen answer, “never.” Obviously, there is a difference in perspective but also in training. Offensive linemen are coached in how to hold and not get caught. Roberts and Barry (1976) concluded, “If games build character, that character may be less than ideal” (59). As Sutton-Smith so often emphasized, ambiguities exist not only in how we study play but in play itself.

Summary: Games and the Rhetorics of Play

I chose to emphasize Sutton-Smith’s early studies of games in this essay, in part, because it is this area of his research with which I have the greatest familiarity. But I also selected it because I feel that these studies illuminated for him the notion that the nature of research on play, including his and Roberts’ studies of games, had long been deeply affected by what he came to term “rhetorics.” Finally, new methods, briefly described below, and updated data render the Roberts and Sutton-Smith cross-cultural studies of games and child socialization open to replication, something commonly done in the “hard” sciences but neglected in the psychological and social sciences (Schmidt 2009) or, when actually attempted, which results in a very high percentage of failure (Bohannon 2015).

Games are relatively easy to define and, therefore, identify. For the most part in his work, Sutton-Smith adopted the definition provided by Roberts et al. (1959), one that rather precisely denotes what is, and what is not, a game. In addition, and again for the most part, he adopted Roberts et al.’s (1959) classification of games based on the primary outcome determinant, that is, physical skill, strategy, or chance. And while he expanded the definition a bit when referring to game-like activities of young children, he maintained interest in activities involving skill, strategy, and chance. He observed that the way in which not only others, but also he and Roberts themselves, had examined the three categories of games reflected distinct rhetorics. That is, he and Roberts looked at games of physical skill—what we would commonly refer to as sports—in terms of the rhetoric of power wherein children learn not only the preferred power tactics of their culture as well as how to identify them in others. Indeed, at one point, he and Roberts contemplated writing a book, tentatively titled, *Games as Models of Power*. Unfortunately, their collaboration ended before the book was written although Sutton-Smith contributed a chapter by that name to a *Festschrift* for Roberts published in 1989. In “Games as Models of Power,” Sutton-Smith (1989) interpreted their research together as showing:

1. Games are in some way functionally related to culture. They are not trivial or unessential or random.
2. More complex cultures have more complex games and more types of games, and the various associations are merely an index of

general complexity—cultures with no competitive games are very simple; cultures with all types are the most complex.

3. There are meaningful structural relationships between each type of game and its patterns of association. Thus, chance is linked with responsibility, divination, nomadic habits, and economic uncertainty; physical skill is linked with the tropics and hunting; central-person games are linked with independence training and marriage; and strategy games are linked with class stratification and warfare.
4. The way to explain the linkages with child-training and variables and with cultural variables is in terms of the *conflict-enculturation hypothesis*, which says that conflict engendered by child-training procedures (one is both rewarded and punished for interest in certain behaviors), leads to a readiness to be aroused by symbolic systems (games), which configure the conflict (that is, transfer it) to culturally useful behavior.
5. The way to prove this pattern of hypotheses is to show that the same patterns hold within our own culture across variations in personalities as were found across variations in tribes in the original studies (*subsystem replication*). Studies of adult preferences for games and of children's play appear to provide support for the original patterns of relationships. See, in particular, the studies of Tick Tack Toe in *The Folkgames of Children* (Sutton-Smith 1972).
6. The way the *enculturation* aspect of this thesis works is through games acting as models of cultural power relationships, including those involving strategy, chance, force, or arbitrary status (4–5).

Sutton-Smith went on to critique these studies and their conclusions based on post-1970 research and theorizing. More important, however, is that he recognized that the studies themselves were grounded in the then-extant view that play is an ideal activity for children rather than one that is to be maligned and avoided as in previous times and other cultures (see Sutton-Smith and Kelly-Byrne 1984). Thus, with respect to games, “When Roberts and I called them models of power, we were becoming victims of our own and other males’ macho rhetoric [...]” (Sutton-Smith 1989, 13). Further, with respect to games, he claimed that

In their own strange ways, they embody tenderness in their affairs as well as toughness. They make players love each other, or love their coaches, or love their supporters, as much as they make them hate each other. What shall we call them: the games as models of toughness and tenderness? Perhaps games as models of Power and Pusillanimity? (13)

In his later writings, Sutton-Smith included his studies of games of strategy coauthored with Roberts under “play as rational power” (Sutton-Smith 1997:82). In tic-tac-toe, chess, or go, for example, each player assesses and anticipates the moves of the other with the winners doing so better than the losers. In a semi real-world context, military exercises, or “war games,” are at least as much about strategy as physical force. However, while Sutton-Smith (1997) allowed that research on play, including games, could involve more than one of the seven rhetorics, he did not delve deeply into the ways in which games of strategy relate to progress except as indicated in the quote above regarding children’s exposure to trickery, deception, and foul play. But learning about the unsavory aspects of life must be a form of progress lest one be constantly duped by others throughout life. Moreover, as Roberts and I showed in a 1986 study of the play of pool in western Pennsylvania barrooms, even in a game that would be classified as one of physical skill in the Roberts et al. (1959) scheme, the importance of strategy increases as expertise increases (Chick and Roberts 1986). Similarly, Roberts often claimed that players who treated poker as a game of chance were doomed when facing others who regarded it as a game of strategy. So, the nature of games themselves changes for players as their expertise increases. Learning about strategy and how to use it certainly seems to be adaptive even if it may not fit our everyday notion of progress being something positive and good.

Finally, the studies of games of chance by Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1962; 1966) fall squarely within the rhetoric of fate although, interestingly, he cites neither in his chapter on the rhetoric of fate in *The Ambiguity of Play*. This is a curious omission, particularly since he and Roberts derived the notion of player styles that include both fortunist and failure in these papers. To a significant extent this may be because Sutton-Smith distanced himself from his cross-cultural studies of games in the 1960s with Roberts. In part, he understood that “the correlational nature of these power findings makes the meaning of the empirical relationships discovered quite uncertain” (Sutton-Smith 1997:82–83). Moreover, he recognized that “the widespread and easy diffusion of all kinds of games in modern life strongly suggest that additional principles may be required to understand the ways in which games as models come into being” (1997:82). This latter observation is well known to cross-cultural researchers, particularly experts such as Roberts, as “Galton’s Problem.” In 1889, Edward Tylor presented a paper to the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland wherein he correlated data on forms of marriage and descent for 350 societies from the ethnographic literature. He interpreted the correlations as indicators of an evolutionary sequence. The statistician, Sir Francis Galton, who was in the audience, disagreed by pointing out that the correlations could be due to diffusion among societies or common descent rather than independent development. While this might reasonably be thought of as a problem for Tylor, it has come to be known as Galton’s Problem (Stocking 1968:175).

There are other difficulties with cross-cultural comparative research. The validity of the initial ethnographic descriptions must always be a concern as should both the validity and reliability of the codes developed from them. Missing data, which is very common in such research, is also a major problem. Fortunately,

Galton's Problem and the problem of missing data have recently been addressed, if perhaps not absolutely solved, in a series of publications by Dow and Eff (2009) and others by incorporating autocorrelation routines in multiple regression analysis to address the former and multiple imputation of missing data for the latter. While these techniques have not yet been used in an effort to replicate the studies by Roberts and Sutton-Smith from the 1960s, doing so seems like a worthy task. Updated ratings for both child training variables and games are coded for the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample (SCCS) (Murdock and White 1969) and the Dow-Eff software for conducting regression analyses of SCCS data is readily available.

Cross-cultural comparative research has the great advantage of being inexpensive to do. Many universities around the world have access to the electronic Human Relations Area Files (eHRAF), the cross-cultural database whose precursor Roberts and Sutton-Smith used in several of their studies and which has an excellent interface for keyword and other kinds of searches that greatly aid coding. This makes cross-cultural studies excellent vehicles for the initial testing of hypotheses. And, as indicated earlier in this essay, their cross-cultural studies led Roberts and Sutton-Smith to attempt to reproduce their findings in subsystem replications.

I believe that Sutton-Smith's great and enduring contribution is not that he once-and-for-all defined play or that he determined its origin, what it is good for, and so on. Instead, he is the theorist most responsible for showing that how we think about play, and therefore the kinds of data we collect and the sorts of theories we produce, is heavily influenced by our presuppositions, values, and culture. He summarized this well in the following quote:

The point of view taken in this work, however, is that all of the rhetorics, whether modern or ancient, are based on or are simulacra of play forms, and all should be taken into account in any truly empirical examination of the character and functioning of play. (Sutton-Smith 1997:53)

But, what of the series of studies that Sutton-Smith produced in collaboration with Roberts in the 1960s? Should they be disregarded, in terms of their empirical results, and simply be included as examples of the rhetorics from which they emerged? I, for one, think, as Sutton-Smith taught us, that understanding the theoretical context that gives birth to particular projects is of critical importance. As Sutton-Smith (1997) noted, this is similar to Kuhn's (1970) observation that science is not as objective or cumulative as commonly believed. Indeed, one could think of Sutton-Smith's "rhetorics" as quite similar to Kuhn's "paradigms." But I also think that the Roberts and Sutton-Smith studies of the 1960s can have a place in current thinking about play. Their field experimental studies of tic-tac-toe can still stand on their own and other research suggests that the trichotomization of power styles into *potent*, *strategist*, *fortunist*, along with combined forms, has predictive validity in terms of behavior in winning/losing at tennis (Widmeyer and Loy 1989), soccer (Roberts and Luxbacher 1982) and in automobile driving patterns (Roberts, Thompson, and Sutton-Smith 1966). Their cross-cultural studies

relating game types to child socialization variables could now be done with much greater confidence in the results. More recent cross-cultural research lends support to the physical skill-chance-strategy evolutionary sequence of game development (Chick 1998). Revisiting these studies seems warranted particularly when guided by knowledge and understanding of the rhetorics described by Sutton-Smith.

Conclusion: Brian Sutton-Smith and the Character of Play

The English word “play” has multiple meanings and is also commonly used as different forms of speech. These include as a noun (e.g., going to a play by Shakespeare, children’s play, a play on words), a verb (the children play hide-and-seek, the setting sunlight played over the surface of the lake), an adjective (a play house), and various derivatives of these (e.g., gerunds, participles). Sutton-Smith’s early goal was to make some sort of sense of all of this. What is play? What is its origin? How did it evolve? What is it good for? I believe that he addressed these questions relatively directly in his early work on games but paused in his quest later in his career in order to look instead at how play has been theorized over the years. In his magnum opus, *The Ambiguity of Play*, Sutton-Smith (1997) sought “to understand the general character of play theory” (12), as noted above, rather than the character of play itself, largely because of the ambiguity of play as well as the ambiguities in play theories. Both missions have merit but Sutton-Smith was surely correct in demonstrating that, without knowing where we have been, it is difficult to know where we are going. His work has lit the path. It now seems reasonable to retrace some of his early steps along it.

In 1992, I delivered my presidential address to The Association for the Study of Play (TASP), a group that Sutton-Smith, along with Roberts and others, helped to establish in 1974. My title was “Play as Science and the Science of Play” and, in the presentation, I stated

Scientists play with ideas, or at least they ought to, and children learn though play, though they do not always learn what we want them to. ... In my career to date I have had the opportunity to work with a number of bright and creative individuals and they all seem to share a player’s outlook on the world. Among my colleagues, John M. Roberts and Brian Sutton-Smith are the two most outstanding scholars with whom I have had the good fortune to work and to play. Each, a consummate player in his own way, brought or, in Brian’s case, continues to bring that worldview to their research. While my sample of two is small (even by interpretive standards), I judge that scientists must be players and, in their own way, children at play are scientists. (Chick 1993:99)

Sutton-Smith was one of the fortunate individuals who manage to retain a childlike curiosity as well as a playful personality well into old age. Because of this, he was able, based on his youth in New Zealand, his research as an adult, and his playful disposition, to examine the phenomenon of play as both an insider and

an external observer, or from *emic* and *etic* perspectives. It is difficult to imagine how a play theorist, researcher, and advocate could find himself in a better circumstance.

NOTES

1. The Fels Research Institute was founded in 1929 with support from the Fels Fund of Philadelphia. It housed a complex project known as the Fels Longitudinal Study which was devoted to research on the physical and psychological growth and maturation of children. Psychological data were no longer collected after 1974 and, in 1977, the study became a part of Wright State University's School of Medicine (Wright State University 2015).

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SUTTON-SMITH'S FIVE EASY PIECES

JAY MECHLING

Brian Sutton-Smith was a sprite. I searched my vocabulary far and wide and settled on this word, this reference to lively, mythological creatures among the fairies and elves. I never met anyone like him.

There is a long line of anthropologists and folklorists who have studied children's games and folklore, stretching back into the nineteenth century (Bronner 1988; Bronner 2011:196–247; McNeil 1988). Brian belongs in that scholarly history, of course, but he was also the sort of charismatic leader a scholarly field, especially an interdisciplinary one, needs to thrive. Brian was a founding father of the children's folklore section of the American Folklore Society (Sutton-Smith 2008:96) in 1978, and by the time I joined The Association for the Anthropological Study of Play (then TAASP, now just TASP, dropping the narrower disciplinary designation) in 1978, I could see in both organizations how his energy and personality and intelligence was at the center of both groups. He was the force behind the children's folklore section's collaborating on a first-ever "sourcebook" for the study of children's folklore (Sutton-Smith, Mechling, Johnson, and McMahon 1995).

I first met Brian at the meeting of TAASP at the University of Notre Dame (Indiana) in 1978. I came from an interdisciplinary home of American Studies, where I had all my degrees and my academic employment, and on the recommendation of an American Studies friend, Bernard "Barney" Mergen, I decided to try a TAASP meeting and present my first paper based on my fresh fieldwork with a troop of Boy Scouts. Thanks to folklorist Henry Glassie, who was a fellow with me at the Yale National Humanities Institute in 1975-76, I had moved my Boy Scout research from historical, documentary evidence to observational, ethnographic evidence in the field—in this case, the summer encampment of a California Boy Scout troop high in the Sierra Nevada. By the time of the TAASP call for papers and then meeting, I was ready to present my first paper based on that work (Mechling 1980).

At that TAASP meeting, I saw first-hand Brian's genuine love of and enthusiasm for the study of play, especially the play of children and adolescents. I am certain that my great affection for TAASP and for Brian was that first encounter, where he treated me like a colleague whose work was intensely interesting to him. There were no academic hierarchies or accompanying snobbism at those TAASP meetings, in part because everyone there was studying something thought "trivial" by disciplinary colleagues back home (see Brian's "triviality barrier" essay, discussed below) and partly because the gathering was so interdisciplinary. Someone there could be a famous giant in his or her home discipline but at TAASP people were unlikely to know that. You were just Brian or Barney or Garry or Jay.

I think the best way to honor the memory of Brian Sutton-Smith and his work is to give people unfamiliar with his work an easy way to access his thinking on the play of children and adolescents. I have selected five key essays which, if

you read nothing else by Brian, would give you a good enough grasp of what he had to say to us and why he is so important to the study of the folk cultures of children and adolescents. Some familiar with Brian's massive work might choose a different five; these are mine, essays I return to for ideas and a reminder of why we (I) pursue the study of children's cultures. And, seriously, I see something new in these essays each time I reread them. What more could you ask of an essay?

I do not offer here summaries of each essay. Instead, I provide something of a reader's guide that signals what I find to be important in the essay. I also show the connections between the essays. I refer often to my own work to testify to the fount of ideas I draw upon in each of these five essays. I take them in chronological order.

One final note. I have struggled with what to call Brian in this article—Sutton-Smith or S-S for short or simply "Brian." I have chosen "Brian," which is probably too informal for an article somewhere between a personal reminiscence and a scholarly discussion of his ideas, but "Brian" seems right to me.

I.

Brian Sutton-Smith. 1959. "A Formal Analysis of Game Meaning." *Western Folklore* 18:13–24.

Brian began his study of children's folklore with his dissertation, eventually published as *A History of Children's Play: New Zealand, 1840-1950* (1982). He had already published *The Folkgames of Children* in 1973. The 1959 "Formal Analysis" article reflects Brian's dissertation work and his attempt to take a scientific approach (as a developmental psychologist) to the study of children's games. Anthropologists and others had been collecting children's games since the late nineteenth century, but Brian wanted to establish a more systematic, scientific, reproducible approach to describing and analyzing meanings of games. In part he wanted to elevate the legitimacy of the study of children's games and children's folklore in general (see the "Triviality Barrier" article, below), but he also realized that the scientific approach would require the comparative study of games across cultures to see the ways cultures shape children's games and play.

To accomplish his goals and bring other scholars into the circle of those studying children's games, Brian's strategy in the "Formal Analysis" article is to describe, categorize, and analyze a single game called "Bar the Door" in New Zealand, but going by many names in the United States (perhaps "Red Rover" is the most familiar to American children). Brian describes the game briefly and then proceeds to analyze its play, proposing a system of "ludic analysis" based on five major game features: (1) the game challenge, (2) player participation, (3) player performance, (4) the spatial scene, and (5) the temporal structure. I will not reproduce his analysis here, but I do want to point to a few important points he introduces in his analysis.

First, Brian's analysis of this "central person game" (where one player has the power over many others, a central feature of "chase and capture" games like tag) shows his interest in the ways children's games reflect their lives in

formal and informal institutions, in this case their lives in families and schools, where children have little power in relation to the “central persons” (parents and teachers) in charge of those institutions. The reader might think that Brian’s point is that games are “anticipatory socialization” for their adult roles, and there is some of that here, but Brian goes beyond what he would consider a narrowly reductionist, sociobiological understanding of the functions of play. Brian always attributed more agency to children than do most adults, including many scholars who study children’s lives. No, Brian’s linking the “game challenge” in central person games like “Bar the Door” to their lives in institutions is in the service of understanding how children *experience* the game. Even when describing and analyzing the formal structures of a game and the meanings of that structure, Brian never considers the analysis complete (or even adequate) without some effort to understand the *experience* of the game.

The second thing to notice in this article is Brian’s attention (this early, 1959) to the effects of the mass media on children’s games and folklore. He notes that the earlier animal symbolism and fabulous characters in the play of their games has been replaced (in the postwar era of television) with “modern symbolisms of the mass media” (p. 19). He later picks up this appropriation of mass media by children in his 1981 book, *The Folkstories of Children*, and in his commentary on ethnographic observations by his students in preschool and elementary school play settings (e.g., see the “Playfighting” article, below).

Third, Brian is ever-attentive to the similarities and differences between the sexes in children’s play and folklore. I discuss his unique book chapter, “The Play of Girls,” below, but in this 1959 article he observes that the increasing mixing of boy and girls on the playground has meant that girls are as likely as boys to play games like “Bar the Door” and that the girls sometimes invent “feminine variants” of the game (p. 19).

Fourth, Brian’s portrait of both boys and girls at play far from romanticizes children; in fact, he understands fully that children’s play is sometimes violent, mean, aggressive, obscene, and profane. Chasing and capture (tagging) games provide children with the perfect frame (Bateson 1972) for expressing aggression, sometimes real aggression but more often stylized aggression (p. 20). The folklore of male friendship groups depends on stylized aggression as the alternative to real aggression, and one of the paradoxes in this stylized aggression in games and play in boys’ folk groups (e.g., rough-and-tumble playfighting) is that the stylized aggression is a signal of closeness and trust. Similarly, Brian sees value in the stylized fear in the chasing and capture games. “In the game,” he writes, “fear may be experienced and yet it is not limitless. It exists within a controlled setting. The players control the fear, the fear does not control the players” (p. 20). In fact, the play frame of the chase and capture game provides a safe place and time for the child to experiment with power and control; the central person game, for example, temporarily gives power to even the less skilled player (p. 21).

In the 1960s Brian collaborated with anthropologist John Roberts on the cross-cultural study of games, a collaboration Garry Chick discusses in this special issue. Using ethnographic evidence and at times the Human Relations Area File, Brian and Roberts formulated and tested with the available data hypotheses about

the ways games (e.g., games of chance, of skill, of strategy, and combinations of these) reflect the cultures represented in the ethnographies (e.g., Roberts and Sutton-Smith 1962). The connection is not simply anticipatory socialization, letting youth play at games that provide skills for their lives as adults in institutions, though there is some of that in the games. The relationship is more complicated. My own example from my work with a Boy Scout troop at their camp uses the Roberts and Sutton-Smith categories and thesis to understand some of the games the troop played, in particular their "Treasure Hunt" game and ensuing "Nugget Auction" at the evening campfire. In my analysis (Mechling 2001:254–57) I observed that, although the main message of the Boy Scout camp activities is the notion that hard work (skill plus strategy) yields success, a message in keeping with the ethos of capitalism, the game of Treasure Hunt and the Nugget Auction actually undermined that message by having luck play such a large role in both games. So although the games look like anticipatory socialization preparing the boys for a life in a capitalistic society, the games revealed (and disguised, the value of folklore) an ugly truth about capitalism. It is in folklore, like games, that young people can be schooled in the cultural contradictions of capitalism.

II.

Brian Sutton-Smith. 1970. "The Psychology of Childlore: The Triviality Barrier." *Western Folklore* 29:1–8.

If folklorists studying the play of children and adolescents know any piece of writing by Brian, it is probably this 1970 essay, a plea for scholars to take seriously what he calls "childlore." Advanced, industrialist societies like ours tend to value work foremost and play only for its temporary, restorative relief from work (as "recreation"). In such a society, Brian argues, "fun" (a main feature of play) is thought to be trivial. Work requires a "mature" attitude in contrast with the "immaturity" of play. People in an industrial, competitive culture like ours value instrumental behavior more than expressive behavior. And apparently so do scholars of play, argues Brian, in that those scholars tend to emphasize the functionalist interpretation of the instrumental behavior—play as anticipatory socialization for what skills the adult will need in that society, for example—rather than add to their analysis an understanding of the expressive pleasure of play. The child's play is "autotelic," self-sustaining, fun (p. 4).

A developmental psychologist himself, Brian makes the surprising complaint that psychology has "little to offer" in understanding these expressive dimensions of play. The humanists are the scholars who understand and appreciate the joyful, expressive, autotelic dimensions of play (p. 4). For this reason, Brian insists that the study of play must be interdisciplinary. There is room for the developmentalists, of course, but the literary scholars, the historians, the art historians, and the humanistic social scientists provide necessary views. Actually, Brian sees two new (in 1970) areas of psychological research that promise an understanding of expressive behavior—research on creativity, and observational

research (in Head Start and poverty programs) that temper the sociobiological enthusiasms of developmental psychology and show us that “there is no natural and universal language of lore for all children” (p. 5). Sociohistorical forces lead to different “expressive formal systems” in childlore (p. 5; see Goodwin 1991 for an example of the work by one of his students).

To demonstrate the power of an interdisciplinary analysis of the particular influences of culture on childlore, Brian offers an example from the work he did with anthropologist John Roberts studying children’s games cross-culturally (see above). The example is the game of Tick Tack Toe (pp. 6–8). I shall not reproduce that discussion here but want to note simply that understanding the cultural variants in playing this seemingly simple game, including the gender differences, require perspectives from anthropology and history.

III.

Brian Sutton-Smith. 1979. “The Play of Girls.” In *Women in Context: Becoming Female*, ed. by C. B. Kopp and M. Kirkpatrick, 228–57. New York: Plenum.

We have seen in the first two articles discussed here that from his earliest work Brian was interested in gender differences in children’s play and childlore. This interest was not unusual among developmental psychologists, but their studies in controlled settings (e.g., schools and labs) spoke only to issues of human development. Brian was rare among the developmental psychologists in that he wanted to study children in natural settings, where children exercise a great deal more freedom and agency than they do in classrooms and labs. He wanted to understand children’s lives as much as possible as they were experiencing everyday life, not through the controlled lenses of adults who themselves projected so much upon the children.

The scholarly and everyday cultural landscapes of the 1970s saw the rise of feminist theory and its challenge to the generalizations in psychology, history, and other disciplines based on the study of men’s lives. In psychology, perhaps the most influential book coming out of this era was Carol Gilligan’s *In a Different Voice* (1982), in which she sparred with Lawrence Kohlberg and his characterization of girls as “less mature” than boys in their moral reasoning. Not less mature, argued Gilligan, just different. The feminist research of the 1970s provided the ideas for the rise of interdisciplinary women’s studies courses and programs in universities.

The sociocultural landscape in the U.S. was changing, as well. The social movements of the 1960s challenged the patriarchy. The women’s movement and, after Stonewall in 1969, the gay rights movement challenged masculine, heteronormative understandings of gender and sexuality. Laws in cities, states, and at the federal level increasingly forbade discrimination based on gender, and although it failed to gain the necessary number of ratifications from state legislatures by the 1979 deadline, the proposed (in 1972) Equal Rights Amendment

("Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex") to the Constitution came very close to passing. What did become federal law was Title IX of the U.S. Education Amendments of 1972, a law of significant relevance to the play of girls and young women. Title IX forbids discrimination in school activities on the basis of gender, thereby opening to girls and women equal opportunities in organized sports. In many ways Title IX is the most important, empowering social experiment in the past forty years, and Brian understood that. His 1979 book chapter was published in that new world.

In an effort to push the study of play beyond the textual approach and into the realm of context, Brian here proposes that "*sports* themselves can be used as the metaphor for preliminary thinking about the context of play," and his communication approach to sports requires seeing the roles and performances of the "quadralogue": coach, player, co-player, and spectators (p. 231). Brian then proceeds to review the current research on the play of girls using this "sportive theory of play."

Here is what I find so significant about this chapter by Brian, apart from its being the first comprehensive survey of what we know about the play of girls (we need another). First, Brian shows how the arc of the history of girls' play is toward bringing it closer to boys' play. The games of girls shifted in the twentieth century from a focus on themes of status and marriage to themes of egalitarian competition (p. 233). Title IX accelerated that change in the 1970s, notes Brian, as girls and young women have access to team sports previously played exclusively by boys and men. Note that Brian added an "Epilogue" to this chapter just as he was preparing it for publication, an epilogue that discusses some research by one of his students on the advice manuals for professional women in the 1970s, advice manuals that recognize that one of the goals of Title IX was to give girls and young women a socialization in play and games closely resembling the socialization experiences boys and young men bring to the professional, bureaucratic, patriarchal organizations the women were entering in increasing numbers in the 1970s (pp. 251–54).

Second, Brian's survey of girls' play and games (always drawing comparisons with boys' play and games) introduces ethnic differences as another source of variation. Brian's chapter takes advantage of the new attention to ethnicity and social class in the 1960s and 1970s.

Oddly missing from this chapter is the attention Brian pays elsewhere to the influences of the mass-media (especially television) on girls' play and games. He and his graduate students at the University of Pennsylvania were paying attention to this influence at the same time (e.g., Sutton-Smith 1981).

It is important to recognize before leaving the discussion of this important chapter that Brian mentored a good many female graduate students and young female scholars, and they, in turn, have provided us with the close ethnography of children's play, especially the play of games and girls, which only female researchers can accomplish. I have in mind scholars like Diana Kelly-Byrne (1989), Linda Hughes (1993; 1995), Marjorie Goodwin (1991; 2006), and Felicia R. McMahan (2007), among others.

IV.

Brian Sutton-Smith and Diana Kelly-Byrne. 1984. "The Masks of Play." In *The Masks of Play*, ed. by Brian Sutton-Smith and Diana Kelly-Byrne, 184–99. New York: Leisure Press.

I return to this essay more often than to any other by Sutton-Smith. A fan of Bateson's work, I also recognize that Bateson's idea of the play frame and its paradoxes betrays an uncharacteristically romantic view from someone whose scientific credentials and rhetoric do not really prepare the reader to see that romantic notion. But Sutton-Smith, also a fan of Bateson's theory of play and fantasy, saw early the romantic streak in Bateson. Goffman's appropriation in *Frame Analysis* (1974) of Bateson's notion of frame recognizes what Bateson apparently did not—namely, that not all players are in the frame voluntarily, that players bring to the frame different power, and that some players can use the play frame for ulterior motives. Hence, Goffman argues that *all* social reality is constructed, maintained, and repaired using the same communication devices as one finds in the confidence game, a social constructionist view that I have embraced and used since reading Berger and Luckmann (1967) in the early 1970s. Sutton-Smith and Kelly-Byrne's (hereafter S-S/K-B) way of making this point is to provide a typology and examples of the ways people mask other motives with the play frame, as when a sibling uses the "I was only playing" defense when using the play frame to hurt a sibling more than necessary in a game.

I have found the idea of the masks of play, including the "deep play" Geertz writes about, endlessly useful in my writing (e.g., about deep play by warriors and veterans—see Mechling 2012; Wallis and Mechling, in press). On re-reading the essay for this occasion, though, I have seen some things that are there—some things that have always been there—that have slipped my mind. For instance, S-S/K-B take a gentle swipe at all the authors in the volume they edited, a volume of papers first delivered at a TAASP meeting. It seems to S-S/K-B that despite all the research on play presented at the conference and in this volume, the "most general strategy for *not* studying child play seems to be to write articles on their functions and pretty much to ignore the detailed moment by moment description of the experience itself as if we already know what that experience is" (1984:186). Ouch. That sentence summarizes beautifully and accusingly the purely functionalist approach to play, a critique S-S repeatedly made throughout his career. He did not deny that play has functions, but why (he asks here and elsewhere) stand so far away from play that the scholar cannot attempt to express the inexpressible, the pure joy and fun that the player experiences when entering that state of FLOW described by Csikszentmihalyi (1975)? Amidst all the analysis in *The Ambiguity of Play* (1997), Brian's point in that book is that is that we need to understand that play is not merely instrumental, that it is expressive, consummatory, joyful, and fun. This is why Brian appreciated so much the research that somehow approached the child's experience of play, not an easy task for adults trying to access the "experience" a child is having while playing.

It may seem contradictory that, immediately after making the point that a functionalist analysis of play may be a necessary but not sufficient moment in understanding play, S-S/K-B begin their catalog of ways play masks motives and ways other frames mask play, a "function" of play. But S-S/K-B are alert to the pleasures of these masked activities, most of which boil down to the pleasure of exercising power in a situation. "Children would rather argue the game than play it. The joy is the power of control rather than the play" (1984:190). Note how between Brian's earlier interest (with John Roberts) in the structures and functions of games and the 1984 "masks" essay, Brian has come to see more interesting the pleasures of power children experience in playing and arguing the game. The example S-S/K-B use in the section of this essay on "Masks for Power" is childhood initiation rites, a topic of great usefulness to me as I have explored folk initiations in Scouting and in fraternities and sports teams (Mechling 2008b; 2009; see also Bronner 2006; 2012). Usually the players in children's folk initiations, both those being initiated and those doing the initiation, are enjoying the event, though a few of those doing the hazing or initiating may be using the ritual or play frame as a mask for other motives.

S-S/K-B recognize that a great deal of the power play in children's and adolescents' folk initiations puts forbidden parts of the body and taboo functions (urination, for example) at the center of the invented initiation, just as they are in much of children's lore (Mechling 1986). Brian understood that children's lore is profane and "dirty"; I think that is why he appreciated my first TAASP paper on the game of Poison Pit played by the Boys Scouts I studied, a game involving urine and references to menstruation (Mechling 1980; 2001). When Geertz (1983) outlined the qualities of "common sense," a type of knowledge deeply implicated in the study of folk ideas and folklore, he added "earthy" after a list that includes "naturalness," "practicalness," and "immethodicalness." "Earthiness" is Geertz's (1983:93) polite term for transgressive, profane, obscene, and taboo. As far as Brian was concerned, if the scholar clings to the romantic view of the child and ignores the fact that children enjoy forbidden, obscene, profane, and cruel play, that scholar has no hope of understanding the child's experience of play.

In my own work I have found very useful the S-S/K-B discussion of play as a "mask for danger," recognizing the thrill and pleasure of risk-taking. They make room for what Geertz (1973) calls "deep play," a phrase originated by Jeremy Bentham for play in which the stakes are so high (loss of fortune, health, or life) that the play is irrational from the utilitarian standpoint. S-S/K-B had their college students give accounts of their own experiences with dangerous, "deep play," and the authors reproduce several examples (college students continue the patterns of adolescent play). Even without the irrational risk, "dark play" (with death, for example) carries pleasure. I see this in the sorts of vernacular photography (snapshots) by warriors (Mechling 2012) and in the accounts of dark play in warriors' memoirs and fiction (Wallis and Mechling, in press).

S-S/K-B, near the end of this chapter, come back to their critique of the scholars of play, and their surprising turn is to accuse even Bateson of creating a metamask. Put briefly, they focus on Bateson's point (in his "Theory of Play and Fantasy," the foundational essay on play frames) that "the peculiarity of play ...

is that it is a mixture of primary and secondary process (S-S and K-B 1984:195; Bateson 1972:185). S-S/K-B fault Bateson for dwelling only on the secondary (conscious) process of play's psychodynamics while neglecting the primary (unconscious) process:

Because his [Bateson's] own concern was largely with communication and metacommunication, he has made it easier to talk about the logic of play than about its illogic. Unwittingly, he has contributed to the idealization and bowdlerization of play, which has been a part of the twentieth century's "scientific" approach to play. (Sutton-Smith and Kelly-Byrne 1984:196)

The corrective prescribed by S-S/K-B is to bring to the analysis of play both "Bateson's paradox" and "Freud's disguise," to see the ways play both is like a dream (the title of Bateson's essay is "Toward a Theory of Play and Fantasy," after all) and not like a dream; play both is about reality and not about reality (p. 196). The authors propose that we who study play "combine the Freudian view of ambivalence with the Batesonian attitude to paradox" (p. 197), and they suggest the neologism *play as paraguise* to capture the "scientific unidealized study of play" they hope for.

V.

Sutton-Smith, B., J. Gerstmyer, and A. Meckley. 1988. "Playfighting as Folkplay Amongst Preschool Children." *Western Folklore* 47 (3):161–76.

When teaching and writing about Bateson's frame theory of play and fantasy, I have always found playfighting to be the best example of framed communication where the messages exchanged within the frame (ruled by the metamessage "this is play") do not mean what they would mean outside the frame. Most recently, John Paul Wallis and I found in Bateson's paradoxical playfighting frame the key to understanding why soldiers and Marines in combat zones engage in rough-and-tumble (R&T) playfighting, a surprising example of deep play when played in an active combat zone (Wallis and Mechling, in press). As Brian and his co-authors note, playfighting has been of interest to scholars of play for a long time, but what Brian's team of graduate students brings to the topic is access to Philadelphia preschools and the ability to record actual instances of playfighting in "natural settings," in context.

Brian and his co-authors plunge into the 1980s debate about "war play" and whether children should be allowed to play with toy guns, a debate that rages today (Mechling 2008a). This is a topic of great concern to parents and teachers, sometimes to politicians, and to the general public. The death of a twelve-year-old boy, Tamir Rice, in Cleveland on March 2, 2015, shot dead almost instantly by a police officer arriving on the scene and taking the boy's pellet gun for a real one, is only one among many tragedies and near-tragedies involving children's play

with toy guns. So the debate Brian and his students entered in the 1980s is far from old and far from trivial.

What Brian's team of graduate students can contribute to this debate is actual ethnographic description and analysis of children's playfighting. Brian gave his student researchers two tasks in their fieldwork in the preschools: "to look for the relationships between playfighting and aggression and for any distinctions between them, and to look for the influences of television and of the teachers upon the children's play" (p. 164). With this assignment, the researchers worked in nine preschools, taking notes on the play of two hundred children aged three to five years.

As in my discussion of the first four "easy pieces," I shall not summarize the findings here except to say what I find so useful in the article for my own work. First, boys' drive to play with guns is almost impossible to extinguish, even in those schools (e.g., university-related schools and Quaker schools) where the anti-gun, anti-wartoy policies were most strict (p. 169–70). The power of that drive obviously is something scholars and policymakers need to be able to understand.

Second, most of the aggression in these playfighting games is stylized aggression, often cloaked literally in the folk-contrived costumes suggesting superheroes and fantasy characters the children observe on television and in movies (p. 168). While the authors do not explicitly make the points I draw from this observation, I want to make the connections here. I concur with Jones (2002) that children need early experience with stylized aggression, especially as an alternative to real aggression. In fact, Brian's students discovered cases where the children actually controlled and contained the real aggression of a player by making him abide by the rules of the fantasy play and stylized aggression (p. 174).

Third, and still on this topic of stylized aggression, the researchers found what was to them a surprising degree of folk-imposed sex segregation, and it was primarily (by far) the boys who participated in the playfighting (p. 171). Looking back at Brian's "The Play of Girls" and his brief discussion of the changes wrought by Title IX, one wonders where and how girls and young women acquire the skills of stylized aggression they will need to perform in organizational cultures that still resemble the culture of the male friendship group as honed on playing field.

Fourth, I value the ethnographic confirmation in this work that television programs aimed at kids clearly influence the playfighting. And the fieldwork observations should put to rest (but they won't—this is a resistant belief) adults' worried view that aggression and violence in children's television programs results in real violence and aggression in children. What the ethnographic evidence shows is what I found to be true in the Boy Scout troop I studied, namely, that children and youth appropriate from mass-mediated, popular culture those symbols and narrative themes they find useful in their own folk cultures, their own folkplay. Put differently, those adults who still believe in the direct influence of popular culture on children fail to appreciate the true agency of children and youth. And the only way to appreciate fully that agency is to observe carefully and for prolonged periods of time the actual ways children play.

Conclusion

The most recent of the Sutton-Smith "Five Easy Pieces" I have recommended here was published in 1988, very nearly thirty years ago. Brian continued writing through those years, and luckily for us he wrote a substantial memoir about his life and work in 2008 for the newly launched *American Journal of Play*. That memoir, "Play Theory: A Personal Journey and New Thoughts" (2008), recounts the phases of his thinking about play and sketches his journey from naughty play in his New Zealand youth to the project he was working on in his last days, a book that was to be titled *Play as Emotional Survival*, ideas which he presented in his keynote address at a TASP Conference in 2007 at the Strong National Museum of Play (which holds the Sutton-Smith Papers). In that address Brian explained that (as the handout outline for his address puts it) the address and book would be "my response to my deconstruction of play theories without providing an alternative in *The Ambiguity of Play*, 1997." What is clear from Brian's lecture is that he was drawn more and more to a Darwinian explanation for the power and durability of the play instinct.

Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio's 2005 book, *Descartes's Error* (see also Damasio 1999) gave Brian scientific support for his belief that within us is a dualism, a struggle between the "primary emotions" of fear, anger, happiness, and so on, all expressed in play one way or the other, and the "secondary emotions" (pride, envy, guilt, shame), which "act as basic play regulators from rules to referees" (keynote lecture abstract 2007). Play's evolutionary role, argues Brian, is "to bond all of these opposites (a synergy) into this new form of behavior" (keynote lecture abstract 2007). In evolutionary terms, as animals evolved from the "reflexivity" of reptiles to the "reflectivity" of mammals, play emerges as a behavior that enables mammals "to balance these two adaptive systems [reflexivity and reflectivity] without choosing the wrong one on any given occasion" (keynote lecture abstract 2007). Play is "an alternative theatric synthesis of reflexive and reflective response systems (which is supported in neural terms by the interaction between amygdala and frontal lobes)" (keynote lecture handout 2007). In terms of my own research, for example, the stylized aggression in playfighting among male warriors in combat zones provides a "theatric synthesis" of the two adaptive systems, reflexivity and reflectivity, under stressful circumstances (Wallis and Mechling, in press).

Brian did not live to complete this work, but he left us enough of a trail for us to follow him toward a theory of play that incorporates the most recent thinking in evolution and brain science. In the 2008 article he called this his "third theory of play" (the first being "play as a viability variable" and the second being "culturally relative play forms") and he outlined the theory in terms of four "adaptive layers" (2008:113–17). It is up to us to see where Brian's third theory of play leads us in understanding the play experience in children, adolescents, and adults.

In all of Brian's work, then, from early to late, you can find the distinct perspective he began with, i.e., a commitment to understanding children's play as experienced by the children, a firm confidence that children's experiences can be studied scientifically without losing the magic of their play, a respect for

the agency of children, a refusal to romanticize the child, an understanding that children can be mean and obscene and profane, a commitment to championing children's right to free play, and an insistence that functionalist analysis of play must be complemented by analysis that understands the autotelic nature of play.

Sadly, what has changed is the flow of ethnographic work directed by and inspired by Brian. It is difficult to see whether the decline in ethnographic studies of the folk cultures of children and youth is due to waning interest by scholars or to the cultural and legal difficulties of studying children in "natural settings" rather than in classrooms and laboratories, controlled settings subject to the governmental and institutional rules for studying "human subjects." There are occasional bright spots, like Clark's *In a Younger Voice* (2011), and Clark shares Brian's views of how to study children (see also Clark 1995). In gatherings of folklorists and others who know the unique value of ethnographic study of children's lives, though, scholars often exchange stories and laments about the difficulty of getting their university IRBs (Institutional Review Boards—those committees that approve research with human subjects) to even understand the nature of qualitative research on children in natural settings, much less approve the research. Usually staffed by natural scientists and social scientists who take seriously the word "scientist" in their field and only rarely staffed by the lone humanist or two, most IRBs see our fieldwork with children as unscientific and maybe dangerous. Indeed, another genre of stories shared by male folklorists who have attempted to study children in the natural settings of playgrounds and neighborhood streets and beaches is the "the time mothers on the playground called the police when I was trying to talk with their kids" story. Parents' concerns are understandable, if overblown (see Best 1993), but a combination of the difficulty of getting a research project approved by the IRB and then, if approved, the difficulty of getting adults in those natural settings to understand and accept the research methods of fieldwork with children has meant that many folklorists find it much easier to abandon the ethnography of children's lives altogether. This is a great loss.

Brian's grand project, passed down to his students and to those like-minded colleagues who knew him, and the principles guiding his project are in danger of being extinguished. I do not have a solution to the IRB problem or to the problems in American culture that nurture fear for and over-protection of children (e.g., witness the recent debate over "free range children" parenting practices and the actual legal trouble for parents who let their kids roam free). We will always have our own children and grandchildren and nieces and nephews to study and write about, but that "sample" is limited and skewed. I wish, for example, that we had enough fieldwork based on the play of girls in formal and informal settings that someone will write an updated version of "The Play of Girls."

Brian never accepted the ways adults (parents, teachers, coaches, politicians) project their fears onto children or the many ways adults try to contain and control the play of children. My wish is that this very personal review of five of the essays by Brian that I return to again and again will recruit readers to Brian's "project," that there are enough sprites or even sprites-in-training reading this that we will

conspire somehow to continue Brian's work, even against the bureaucratic and cultural forces against us. For the children.

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INVENTING THE DISCIPLINE WHILE YOU BREAK IT ALL DOWN: AN ESSAY IN MEMORY OF BRIAN SUTTON-SMITH

ANNA BERESIN

After I stumbled across his 1986 book, *Toys as Culture*, in a bookstore in Boston, I moved to Philadelphia to study with Brian Sutton-Smith. Jointly appointed in the Department of Folklore and at the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania, he ran the Interdisciplinary Study of Human Development program with a giddy seriousness that kept students at the edge of their seats. His reading lists there were the most varied I ever encountered, and this essay offers a miniature reading list in order to share the breadth of his genius.

Psychology, particularly Freudian psychology and cognitive psychology, was the base discipline in my independent studies with him. As admirers of D.W. Winnicott, Erik Erikson, and Jean Piaget, he had all of his students challenge psychology's assumptions by reading ethnographies of Mead, Benedict, LeVine, and Whiting. For our children's culture bible, we had Schwartzman's *Transformations: The Anthropology of Children's Play*, and with it, the folkloristic historical collections of Iona and Peter Opie, along with William Wells Newell's paradoxes. Folklore and anthropology were his answers to the erroneous, wide brush strokes of psychology, the neatened, expurgated versions of actual childhoods, the boredom of the textbook approach to child development. We would share fart jokes. As important as reading widely was to him, so were his reminiscences of his own childhood. His favorite New Zealand recipe for guaranteed farting: fish and chips and raisins.

Trickery itself, to be found in the study of the festival, from Bakhtin to Falassi to Stallybrass and Whyte, emphasized to Brian that the core of play is dialogic, paradoxical, a "world turned upside down" (Stallybrass and White 1986). Bateson was our guide to meta-communication, Foucault our mirror to meta-historical analysis. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) introduced the very idea of the invention of tradition, Huizinga (1949) the magic frame of play, and Goffman (1959), the idea that as one plays within a frame, one plays the frame as well. The message: challenge assumptions, study real children and their folklore for counter narratives, ask who is being served by the adult perceptions of reality. Play with the form of research. Study animals; examine evolution. Keep an eye on the playground and on video games. They keep us honest.

One of Sutton-Smith's own essays that deserves more attention than it has been given is the seminal "Games of Order and Disorder" (1972). He had described games as "models of power," yet games were no simple copies of adult culture. Through his eyes we see play emerge as a methodology of inversion. And so he began to use inversion and dialogism as a way to break down the very field he was crafting. The game of academia was not just increased knowledge, but disordering the lot as you build it.

Challenging Huizinga, Sutton-Smith noted play is not always voluntary. Sometimes you play the game everyone else is playing, because you must, in

order to play at all. Answering Caillois, he demonstrated that game text in one culture could be in a totally different genre in another.

Dueling Piaget, he cautioned against pitting assimilation over accommodation. Piaget's model did not account for destruction; it was too focused on a limited concept of progress. Hollering at educational catch phrases, he observed that the opposite of play is not work. He hated the line, "Play is the child's work." It is far more complicated than work, or not work. It is what children do. A child who does not play is a child who is ill. Play is more like dreaming, than work. Play is more like art or religion, a symbolic field of communication that makes life worthwhile and mysterious. He noted that play's opposite is not work; it is depression. Examining the idea of play as progress, he stated that children are not "the future." They are in their own time, and their time here and now deserves to be playful. We can say he built a discipline of play while challenging his own and everyone else's assumptions. Play was "ambiguous" as was the very enterprise of knowledge building. To be human is to live in ambiguity, and adapt to new contexts.

Brian loved bad jokes, old songs, fast footwork, and children's stories. There were worlds within worlds in children's folk arts, and he wrote about things that others found trivial with the zeal of the art collector. His mission was to protect children's right to be surreal, incorrect, and off-center, and to honor error as a path to thought, art, and vitality. For his best writing, see his 1961 novel, *Smitty Does a Bunk*, and learn more about his childhood adventures with his very real, very loved brother. The novel centers around the adventures of brothers Brin and Smitty; Brian was clearly the younger Brin, his brother, the elder Smitty. Brin continuously sang and most of all wanted to be included, an observer of childhood within a children's story.

Brian often recited excerpts of his *Folkstories of Children* (1981), rapturously quoting the children's words when he wanted to demonstrate the skill children offer within their folklore. It seems fitting to take us here, words he collected from a four-year-old:

Once upon a time the once upon a time ate the once upon a time
 Which ate the once upon a time
 And then the once upon a time which ate the once upon a time
 Ate the princess once upon a time with the king
 And then the once upon a times died
 Then the end ate the end
 the end
 the end
 then the end died
 then the end died
 then the end died
 then the end died
 then the end died
 and then the end the end the end died
 the end with a the end
 the end
 the end (Sutton-Smith 1981:114)

Yet the end of a life is not the end of a life's work. Brian particularly loved Rabelais, that 500 year-old writer of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, or as I like to think of Rabelais, as the precursor of Jonathan Swift and the inventor of Cookie Monster. Although these words were written by French scholar Denis Saurat as an introduction to Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel*; every word rings true for Brian (note the present tense):

As for his mind, there is none better: he can argue with the subtlest ... On education, we still go to him; and his criticism of the education of his day still largely holds good against ours today. Against useless erudition he is splendid ... His enthusiasm for science is still an inspiration ... Look at the absurdity of things and of men: and do not take it seriously: laugh. (Saurat 1945:iv)

What Rabelais is for the adult carnival, Brian is for the festival of children's folklore in all its complexity, in all its grotesquery, in all its variation. A privilege to have studied with him, to have dueled with his brain, I have come to think of Brian as the most intelligent, most well-read 11 year-old that ever lived. Like Rabelais, "As for his mind, there is none better."

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BRIAN SUTTON-SMITH (1924-2015)

ELIZABETH TUCKER

Brian Sutton-Smith was not only a giant in the field of folklore studies and a pioneering scholar whose vision shaped the interdisciplinary study of play, but also an extremely kind, generous person who vividly remembered his own childhood in New Zealand through insightful works of fiction and vigorously defended children's rights. His studies of the dynamics of play, games, storytelling, and other expressive forms have contributed immeasurably to the study of children's folklore. As a scholar, colleague, and teacher, he has greatly enriched our field.

Brian received New Zealand's first Ph.D. in education in 1954 and traveled to the United States as a Fulbright scholar shortly afterwards. His teaching career began at Bowling Green State University (Ohio) and continued at Columbia University and the University of Pennsylvania. His legendary productivity includes more than fifty books, including *The Ambiguity of Play* (1997), and numerous articles. At the Strong Museum in Rochester, patrons can now learn about his work by visiting the Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play.

I first met Brian when he gave a lecture about children's storytelling, based on stories told by children aged two to ten that his team of students had collected in New York; these narratives became the foundation for his *Folkstories of Children* (1981). Before presenting his analysis, he read several stories told by two-year-olds. With careful intonation and facial expressions, he read Alice's story:

The cat went on the cakies
The cat went on the car
The cookie was on my nose
The cookie went on the fireman's hat (1981:48).

What a fantastically mobile face he had! As he read Alice's story, Brian became a convincing facsimile of a two-year-old storyteller: excited, repetitive, and poetic. He took young storytellers very seriously and found parallels between their stories and the stories of adults. In the preface to *The Folkstories of Children* he observes, "The caricature of children's stories, as of adult soap operas, is not unlike the behavior of otherwise sophisticated persons caught in situations of stress and ambiguity" (1981:xi). One of his greatest gifts to children's folklore studies has been his insistence on perceiving play and other expressive forms as vital *human* experiences, rather than experiences limited to the young.

Working closely with his students and colleagues, Brian helped folklorists and scholars in other fields learn about children's culture. In 1977, at the request of Sue Samuelson, his first teaching assistant, he considered the need for more serious attention to children's folklore. His solution to that problem was the formation of a Children's Folklore Society (now the children's folklore section) within the

American Folklore Society. I joined the steering committee for that new society and have participated in the society in a number of ways since then. We owe Brian sincere thanks for the Children's Folklore Society and for *Children's Folklore Review*, which has been published for more than thirty years.

In 1995, *Children's Folklore: A Source Book* was published, co-edited by Brian and other children's folklore scholars. This innovative volume discusses interrelated genres and takes a close look at the complexity and transmission of children's folklore. While writing and revising the book's chapter on narratives, I enjoyed receiving letters from Brian, who was always insightful and positive-spirited. One of the book's most valuable chapters is its last, titled "The Past in the Present: Theoretical Directions for Children's Folklore." I have often reread that chapter, which poses a provocative question: "how is it that our adult culture so typically suppresses the power-related aspects of children's lives so clearly represented in this present document?" (McMahon and Sutton-Smith 1995:308). This question and others raised by Brian's work deserve careful consideration.

When Brian retired from the University of Pennsylvania, my husband and I were invited to attend his retirement party. On a bone-crackingly cold January day, we drove to Philadelphia and arrived just in time for the dinner. It warmed our hearts to find that each plate held a special gift: a toy! Mine was a miniature yellow tractor. I wish I still had that tractor, but I gave it to my son, and it disappeared in his tangle of miniature vehicles. I remember the tractor with pleasure and will always remember Brian, who was a remarkable scholar, a great teacher, and a true friend. His thoughtfulness, brilliance, and appreciation of play will stay with us as we move toward new forms and meanings of children's folklore.

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**“CHILDREN HAVE THEIR OWN WORLD OF BEING”:
AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES
ON THE DAY OF SARASWATI PUJA**

SEMONTEE MITRA

Apart from Diwali¹ and Durga Puja,² few Hindu religious festivals are organized and celebrated publicly in the United States. Saraswati Puja is one such festival. Saraswati Puja, also known as Vasant Panchami, is a Hindu festival celebrated in early February to mark the onset of spring. On this day, Hindus, especially Bengalis,³ worship the goddess Saraswati, the Vedic goddess of knowledge and wisdom, music, arts, and science. She is also the companion of Lord Brahma who, with her knowledge and wisdom, created the universe. Bengalis consider participation in this puja⁴ compulsory for students, scholars, and creative artists. Therefore, Indian American Bengali parents force their children to participate in this festival, whereas they might be lax on other religious occasions.

As a participant-observer of this recent Indian festival in Central Pennsylvania, United States, I found that the cultural scene—the collective, communal celebration of Saraswati Puja—was not as simple as children of foreign-born parents following a transplanted tradition and gaining ethnic identity. On the contrary, I noticed that Indian American Bengali children typically indulged in activities such as games that are not traditionally part of the religious observance in India. Their interactions, both in and out of the social frame of a religious ritual, especially Saraswati Puja, reveal that in America the festive day has taken on the function of a children’s day of freedom from parental rules and ethnic regulations. Thus, the day of freedom raises the following critical questions: Why have these children’s agency and cultural practices emerged? How has it affected the performance of this festival in Central Pennsylvania?

This article analyzes the ways in which Indian American Bengali children separate their activities from the religious festival while defining the festival as an adult observation, and use the given space and religious-cultural setting to create their own world of fun and freedom. In addition, I analyze the various kinds of games and activities chosen by different age groups. These groups of Bengali children not only indulge in traditional games like singing games or chasing or tagging games, but also use technology to play games, for example different kinds of video games including strategy games. These children also participate in what I call “adventure tripping,” an act which involves no age or gender division unlike other games and activities. These trips originate with a mystery and a prolonged discussion about it, thereby encouraging every child to know the unknown, see the unseen, and enjoy the thrill of participation through a process that shares a structure and function very similar to legend tripping. I examine how all these games and activities reflect the changing meaning of religious festivals for second generation Indian American Bengali children and also their social and psychological developments through these games.

Saraswati Puja Setting: The Socio-Religious-Cultural Frame

Saraswati Puja is an indoor ritual that only recently has been organized by Bengali organizations in the United States. *Sampriti*, the Bengali Community of Central Pennsylvania, began organizing observances of the festival in 2012. Other organizations in metropolitan areas, including Philadelphia, New York City, Baltimore, have sponsored public celebrations only since the late twentieth century or early twenty-first century. From the viewpoint of central Pennsylvania organizers, Saraswati Puja serves two purposes: an occasion for socialization and handing down Bengali traditions to second-generation Indian Americans. In 2013, the year I participated and observed the festival, it was organized in the community hall of West Enola Fire Company. The hall was divided into five parts: the stage (for cultural program), puja area (where the goddess was placed and also the space used for the sit-and-draw event), an audience zone, dining area, and storage area (to store extra tables and chairs). The storage area was separated from the rest of the space with a temporary partition wall. There was also a large kitchen where the members of the association, including men and women, cooked lunch and dinner. The children who took part in the dance program used another separate space beside the stage as a dressing room. Though the area was divided, the children occupied the entire space, except the kitchen. They were strictly forbidden, however, to get close to the deity or enter the storage area.

Thirty children attended the puja along with their parents. Most of them came in early with their parents in Indian ethnic dress: frocks, salwar kameez,⁵ and kurta pajamas.⁶

Age group	Girls	Boys	Total
4 years	3	0	3
5-7 years	5	2	7
8-12 years	6	6	12
13-14 years	4	2	6
15-17 years	2	0	2
Total	20	10	30

Once inside the building, they were on their own because their parents were busy with the ritual. As fostering tradition is one of the main objectives behind organizing this puja, a cultural program was planned for the children, where they were the performers. They enthusiastically performed Indian dances and songs wearing traditional attire. A “sit-and-draw” event was also organized for children under the age of fourteen. They were given a sketch of goddess Saraswati that they had to fill in with colors. They shared the colors among themselves which gave rise to small clusters of children within the larger group of children. Their paintings were later exhibited on one of the walls of the hall, which became a topic of conversation among the children between the ages of six and nine. The

sit-and-draw event was followed by a cultural program. It started with a short speech on the goddess Saraswati by Dr. Jeffrey Long, professor of Hinduism at Elizabethtown College (Pennsylvania), and member of Sampriti. During his speech, Dr. Long mentioned that on the day of Saraswati Puja, all academic and creative materials, including books, notebooks, laptops, pens and pencils, and musical instruments, should be left with the goddess for her blessings on those materials. He also explained that to excel the rest of the year, students should *not study* on the day of the puja. Children took the "no-study day" as the essence of this religious ritual.

Children in India, especially in West Bengal, also look forward to this day of Saraswati Puja as a "no-study day." On this day, many children visit their schools and colleges in ethnic dresses (girls wear saree or salwar kameez and boys wear kurta pajama), as many schools and colleges (only in West Bengal) organize and host this puja. Children feel free from all restrictions as they dress up like adults, go to schools with their friends, have elaborate lunch provided by the schools, then visit friends' houses or meet other friends and spend the whole day together. Many children, who have the puja at home, spend most of their time helping other female members in ritualistic arrangements. While talking to Bengali children in India, I learned that they fast (until the morning ritual is over), pray, and help their mothers to organize the puja at home because they feel that if they can prove their devotion to the goddess on this day, they can achieve success in the next academic year by putting in some hard work on their part. Apart from the religious fervor, Indian Bengali children also associate this day with freedom, but their freedom is quite different from that of Indian American Bengali children. Indian Bengali children have the freedom of space as they go to school and visit friends.⁷ They usually do not indulge in any kind of games on that day, while Indian American Bengali children are accompanied by their parents and surrounded by adults all the time. However, Indian American Bengali children find out ways and indulge in activities that are not supervised by adults.

Given the license to organize themselves without parental supervision, Indian American Bengali children engaged in various games and activities either individually or in groups. Due to the variation of children's ages, their games and activities also varied. They formed their own groups based on their ages. Though they were in a religious ritualistic environment, their engagement with the ritual was limited to what their parents asked them to do. By their actions, they understood the festival to be a children's day of freedom that served as a stark contrast to their everyday lives as well as other occasions.

The use of games and activities within the frame of religious festival raises the question of how the meaning of play within the religious festive frames changes. Indeed, the establishment of the children's frame within the adult controlled frame of religious festival has caused tensions at the border of children's frame because adults, who surround these children, expect them to be a part of the festival so that they can hand down Indian tradition to them. But, as mentioned earlier, these children consider this day to be the day of their freedom. Therefore, in the context of Saraswati Puja, participating children are primarily redefining the meaning of not only the religious event, but also the space through their activities.⁸

As a guide to ethnographic observation, I gave attention to the play frame formed by different groups of children. The idea of the play frame used as a strategy of boundary-maintenance in cultural situations in which tension exists between groups in hierarchical relation to one another points to folklore, such as the performance of games, as key evidence of addressing such tension in symbolic forms. According to folklorist Simon J. Bronner:

The act of framing captures a narrative as well as action that have a bearing on the perception of the event from the perspective of the participants and assorted viewers. Consequently, frames refer to the ways insiders and outsiders comprehend activity as a deep cognitive structure in addition to viewing, and strategizing, what occurs behaviorally. (2010:275)

In my observation, children framed activities that designated social boundaries by age, and in their games separated themselves from their parents. Although these children were involved in the religious rituals, they, through play frames, variously projected their interests as well as complexities in the scene as children with little or no experience of the homeland.

Children's Activities

Right after finishing their dinner, the children went for a short trip into the storage area (behind the dining area separated by a temporary partition wall), which was strictly forbidden. Another children's activity, which was common, was playing video games on portable devices. Children formed groups based on their ages to chat and play together all day long. Girls, up to the age of four (a group of three), were playing "Ring Around the Rosie" until lunch. Five to seven year olds formed a different group. This group had both boys and girls. They played a variety of games. Chasing and/or tagging games were the most favored. They were the most active group as they always engaged in some kind of running game. Children who were between eight and thirteen years old formed two groups, one of boys and the other of girls. Boys were either engaged in playing video games, spinning tops, fighting, or simply chatting throughout the day. The group of girls (ages eight to ten) was playing tag games, video games, chatting with one another, or most importantly was trying to eavesdrop on the conversation of their older sisters (ages twelve to thirteen). Boys and girls above thirteen years sat together and talked about various matters (school, news, fashion). Some of the boys (between twelve and fourteen) played with spinning tops. Boys between eight and twelve years also joined them. The two adolescent girls were seen mostly sitting and chatting.

A question raised by this observation is the continuity of the games played by children with Indian and American traditions. Beginning with William Wells Newell in the nineteenth century (1884), scholars believed that traditional games were on the verge of being extinct. In the twentieth century folklorists posited that in contrast to a view of children as passive vessels of static traditions, they actively adapted traditions and changed them and that is evident in my observations

as children performed various games without a clear distinction to their ethnic sources (Bronner 1988:12). There are a variety of reasons for these changes. First, I noticed an interchange between girls' and boys' games. For instance, games like tag and spin tops have gained more favor with the girls and the boys with time (Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg 1961:21). Second, many games reflect trends in the larger surrounding American society. For example, violent and/or strategic video games were considered standard fare. Third, expanding technology has brought a major change in the tradition of games. The advent of television and the increasing preference for suburban living have influenced the children to separate from each other, and appear to have "conspired toward considerable desuetude in traditional children's games" (Sutton-Smith 1961:37). Keeping these in mind, I will discuss all the games and activities that Indian American Bengali children participated in on the day of Saraswati Puja.

Singing Game

Children, especially girls, who were four years old, played "Ring Around the Rosie" all day long. The last line "We all fall down" was the most exciting part for them as they were trying new gestures for falling down every time. For example, sometimes they jumped before falling down, and sometimes they just sat down; after falling down on the floor, they stayed on the floor for a few minutes (sometimes rolling and sometimes simply lying) and then started playing the game afresh. But, every time, the falling down was accompanied by smiles and giggles.

Folklorist Leah Rachel Clara Yoffie (1947) observed that children at the end of the nineteenth century played more traditional games than at the time she collected lore in the 1920s, which follows Newell's devolutionary view. But this does not hold true in my study. All the four-year-old children were engaged in playing the traditional singing game of "Ring Around the Rosie."⁹ The game never disappeared, although the stigmatization of tradition as American society modernizes might contribute to a perception of its displacement (Bronner 2011:27–36).

However, on the day of Saraswati Puja, this game was played in a highly collaborative manner and with mutual support and fussing about the rhyme, body movement, and falling down. Simon J. Bronner mentions that "rhymes can appear especially playful and colorful" and through the innocent enactment of children many "real-life issues are raised in rhyme" which the children are completely ignorant of (1988:51). This is so true for this singing game:

Ring around the rosie,
Pocket full of posies,
Ashes! Ashes!
We all fall down

This rhyme, according to some scholars like Peter and Iona Opie, refers to the Great Plague that happened in England in 1665 or with the Black Death in England that happened earlier in 1347-1350 (Opie 1985:221–22). A rosy rash was

said to be a symptom of the plague and posies were the herbs that were carried for protection. The final "all fall down," interpreted as death, actually happened as a result of the plague (Opie 1985:365). But the four year olds playing this were completely ignorant of this gruesome and somewhat dated popular interpretation.¹⁰ More relevant for their purposes was the use of the rhyme as a recognizable American tradition to socially engage one another. The rhyme and the rhythm made them giggle and encouraged them to have different body movements. Bronner contends that the actions of standing and falling down became a creative performance, a celebration of youth identity for them (2011:199).

Chasing and Tagging Games

Children belonging to the most active age group, five and seven years old, formed a separate clique of their own. This group had both boys and girls. They played a variety of games. Before lunch, they were all engaged in chasing or tagging game. After lunch and the sit-and-draw event, they were engaged in looking at what others have painted. All their games included some physical activity, for example, a chasing game, or tagging game. It is significant to note here that the chase was led by the boys and followed by the girls. No girl was ever followed by any boy at any point of time of the game. This is a reflection of the patriarchal society that permeates contemporary American life. Even in Indian society, men are considered superior to women. A male member is usually the head of the family and is expected to earn the bread for the family; women are considered unequal and in need of care and protection by the male members. Women usually obey and follow their fathers and husbands when making major decisions. Perhaps witnessing this at home, these children have understood this to be the way of the world and that girls should follow boys, especially when they are playing a game that includes following somebody.

Girls between eight and twelve also played tagging games (freeze tag), but they did not include the children younger to them in their game. They considered themselves to be grown-ups, so they did not even care to include "babies" (a term used by an informant to describe any younger children) in their group or games. In his book *American Children's Folklore*, Simon J. Bronner claims that by indulging in "the non-singing variety of game that involves running and chasing," children develop their thought processes as well as their bodies (1988:175). Brian Sutton-Smith and B.G. Rosenberg have similarly observed the crucial role that chasing games have played throughout in their study of sixty years of games. Arguing that the physical activity of running and chasing, "the theme of pursuit and capture," is one of the basic motifs of the American culture (1961:25).¹¹ Therefore, it is evident that tag has historically been more popular among girls, but more recently has found equal favor among both boys and girls. Chasing and tagging games are quite popular among children because they can involve a large number of kids and can be played anywhere.

These games are popular because in lieu of such games, children get the opportunity to explore new territories and interact with one another, especially boys with girls and vice versa (see Bronner 1988). The "it" figure in the game

is significant because "it" is the one with authority. The children run away from "it" but they also invite the authority figure to chase them in order to bring them back to base or within their boundaries, which reflects parental guidance and control (see Schwartzman 1976). But the question that arises here is whether the "it" authority scale is more Indian in which there is a strong parent and expected obedience by the child or American in which there is a weak parent emphasizing independence by the child. I claim it is both for these children. Living in America, Indian American Bengali parents appreciate the importance of independence and value it, allowing their children to do things the way the children want to do. At the same time, because these parents grew up in Indian society, they cannot give away the authoritarian part of parenthood. Many of these children go to Sunday schools at the temple to take classes on Indian languages, classical dance, and music. These children also have to live up to their parents' expectations when it comes to studies and choosing a career, which underscores my participants' frequent display of independence and authority displayed throughout their games.

Spin Top, Video Games, and the Fight

Boys thirteen years and above, indulged in playing with spinning tops. Boys between eight and twelve years also joined them. Some of the girls of various age groups also joined them, but as viewers. The girls did not participate in the games. Spin top was played and enjoyed more as a competition and not as any other game.¹²

Video games, on the other hand, were played by almost everybody, regardless of age or gender. Not all of the children brought their gaming consoles, so they took turns at holding the electronic devices. It is significant to note here that although the boys were sharing the gaming devices, the girls had individual devices for themselves and so no sharing was required. A fight broke out all of a sudden between two boys (ages thirteen and nine) who were brothers. The reason behind the fight was not known initially, but later on an eight year old girl informed me that the fight and the eventual crying were strategies to attract the attention of the parents and get the device back by manipulating the authority of the elders.

Education and technology scholar Royal Van Horn notes that video games have won a major share of the children's toy market and have become a major pastime for boys between eight and eighteen years of age (1999:173). Other researchers, including Simon Gottschalk (1995), claim that prolonged exposure to video games, especially violent video games, can result in aggressive behavior increasing feeling of anger or hostility, and a decrease in pro-social behavior. Along the same line, the non-electronic activities that I observed resulted in more socialization and less aggressive behaviors.

Although some scholars argue that video games are the major pastime activity of the boys, I claim that it occupies the girls as well and have been integrated into traditional play, considering the fact that video games played on electronic devices are distinguished from other folk activities by their proprietary individualistic characteristic. The games played by boys and girls may vary, but they are

equally prevalent between both genders. The fight that broke out between the two brothers might be more than just a way for the younger brother to get the device from the older brother. I contend that such a behavior is a reflection of the aggression that happens due to prolonged exposure to violent/strategic video games (see Anderson and Bushman 2001). On the other hand, I noticed that the parents used time on the devices as "bribes" to their children. I witnessed parents making a deal with their children on the day of Saraswati Puja; for example, a mother told her son, "If you finish up your lunch quickly you will get to play video games, but you have to finish everything on your plate before that." This indicates that video games have gained relevance in society which is more than just a pastime or a distraction; it has become coinage in a token economy for children and has become distinct from other forms of play that have more of a reference to social and traditional usage.

Chatting and Gossiping

Teenagers between thirteen and seventeen years of age were mostly engaged in chatting and gossiping. They were mostly talking about fashion, style, career paths they would like to take, teachers, rumors, and television shows. Children between eight and thirteen formed two separate groups: a boys' group and girls' group. While the activities of the boys' group were the same, the girls' group had a further division. The girls between eight and ten were not included in any of the discussions of the girls between eleven and thirteen. The former group (sub-group) was not even allowed to be near or around the latter group of girls. But it was completely opposite with the boys. Boys talked and chatted either with other boys irrespective of age, or with girls of their own age or older. However, girls between eight and twelve were very interested in the discussions of their elder sisters who were young teenagers. As they were not allowed to be a part of the latter's group, these young girls always tried to sit as close to their sisters as possible only to eavesdrop on their conversation.

One of the major topics of discussion among the girls between eight and twelve was speculation about what their elder sisters were saying in their absence. Then one of them would comment, "I know they talk about nail art" or fashion or music videos. This not only reflects the curiosity that these young girls have, but also the impact of mass media on younger generation. Their world is no longer limited to dolls and fairy tales; they are more eager to grow up and do adult activities.

The discussions about career path and objectives reflect that these young adolescents are highly encouraged by their parents for higher degrees and are thus, goal oriented. It also reflects their family's economic status and the peaceful and happy relationship that they share with their parents (see Schwartzman 1976). Healthy relationships between parents and children promote the ability to make desirable choices and a greater ability to sustain those choices and achieve desired goals.

Adolescent Activities

One of the two young adolescent girls, whose parents are separated, spent her entire time either helping her mother or talking to her friend, another girl, in the puja. Both the girls took care of the children during their lunch and dinnertime. It was their responsibility, as all adults were busy with puja, to see what the children needed and they also helped young kids to finish up their food properly.

Psychologists Sandra L. Hofferth and John F. Sandberg argue that children living with a single parent tend to take household responsibility earlier than is done by children living with both parents (2001:297). They further argue that such children exhibit lesser degree of participation in any religious or secular activities. But my participants were very involved in religious as well as secular activities, in the sense that they were always eager to help their mother.

Adventure Trip

After finishing their dinner, the boys between eleven and fourteen decided to make a trip to the forbidden area of the hall, the storage unit. Both adolescent girls followed them. Girls between eleven and thirteen followed the adolescents and their sisters (eight to ten years old), always curious about their elder sisters, also followed them. When everybody went inside, the younger children also wanted to peep in to see what was going on inside. Thus all the children became a part of this adventure tripping. The children remained unnoticed even after their entry into the storage unit until there was a loud thud sound. Being a storage room, it had piles of tables and chairs, and somebody did something inside and a few chairs fell down to the ground. With this crash, their "trip" came to an end. While the younger kids were frightened, the older kids were embarrassed and tried to put the blame on the little children as it attracted the attention of their parents and adults came running to them to check if anybody was hurt.

This mystery-shrouded adventure trip shares structural and functional aspects with legend trips that are well defined by folklore scholars Elizabeth Bird (2004), Bill Ellis (1989), and Patricia M. Meley (1991). Structurally, a legend trip is divided into three parts: the introduction where children/adolescents discuss about the place they are about to visit; the second part consists of the actual visit and discovering things unknown and unseen; the final part involves telling and retelling of the experiences at the site. For the children, I observed, the storage unit was a part of their discussion since morning due to three major reasons: first, it was a forbidden zone; second, they did not know what was inside it; third, they wanted to find for themselves what was inside it and why it was forbidden. The children successfully made the trip and later on, they discussed their experiences. Thus, like all other legend trips, this adventure trip also shares the tripartite structural pattern of legend tripping.

Referring to the functional aspects of legend tripping, Bill Ellis states that adolescent "legend trips" is in part a "ritual of rebellion" in which they escape the authoritarian world (1983:64). Patricia Meley (1991) claims that the function of

legend tripping is "primarily recreation" (6), noting that such trips have a "social aspect" associated with them in which children do things together (11), and that "a 'typical' trip almost always includes a mixed-sex group of adolescents" (17). I identified all these characteristics closely associated with the adventure trip that the children under my observation made to the storage unit. The boys between eleven and fourteen actually initiated the trip, thereby portraying traits of "rebellion" against authority. Though it was an act of rebellion, Meley notes that through ritualization of the rebellion the children make their challenge to the adult authority manageable and comprehensible and so is not considered as a delinquent activity (1991:21); this stands true for my participant children as well. This trip also acted as an escape from boredom for the children as they spent their entire day within that demarcated indoor space and wanted to do something exciting that would rid them of their boredom.

Interpretation of the Activities

Based on the discussions so far and limited by lack of comparative ethnographic material on Indian children's activities in an American society, I have some general interpretation of the children's activities I witnessed on the day of Saraswati Puja. The adult-enforced context of religious ritual limited children's activities, but children, nonetheless, controlled the space within the hall by engaging in activities of their choosing. They could not play outdoors as they were not allowed to by their parents. But this does not mean that they did not play outdoor games. The entire space became their territory and through their various activities throughout the day they exercised their freedom and blurred the space boundary.

As the group of thirty children was a mixed group with children belonging to various ages and gender, I observed the following. The children formed several small groups based on their age and gender. The girls had separate groups based on their ages and inter-mixing of those groups was very limited. The younger girls were always either eager to emulate the activities of older girls or eavesdrop on their conversation. They also indulged in cooperative games like "Ring Around the Rosie" or simply sat and chatted. Unlike girls, the boys' activities were not restricted to any specific age and they always tended to play in a larger group. The games that the boys played (spin top and video games) encouraged competition, so the more the number of competitors, the intense the competition grew. The boys' games (especially video games) continued for a longer period of time, despite the fight, as compared to the girls. However, only chasing or tagging game involved both boys and girls.

There are several reasons behind such divisions and distinctions of the games played by the boys and the girls. The games the boys played continued longer because they could resolve their differences quickly and resume the game without having any ill feeling. For example, the two brothers, who fought for one video game, were playing together sharing the device once their mother resolved the fight. Thus boys quarrel all the time, but not at the cost of terminating the game. On the other hand, the girls could not continue with one game (tagging for example) for long because either they easily got bored or could not resolve the

disputes that arose while playing. As the girls' games did not give rise to disputes, they "gain[ed] little experience in the judicial process" (Lever 1976:483). Even when problems arose, they put very little effort to resolve quarrels or problems, and their games broke up abruptly.

The games and activities of the boys and the girls can also be interpreted in terms of social and psychological development. Boys' reflected their organizational skills necessary to coordinate the activities in a group of large number and diverse people. Furthermore, their experience in controlled competitive situations tended to improve their interpersonal skills and their ability to handle competition and competitors. Girls, on the other hand, who either played in small groups or tried to emulate their sisters or adults in general (when discussing about fashion trends and beauty tips or helping their mothers or taking care of other kids), tended to develop social and emotional skills. They reflected more socially constructed feminine traits of nurturance, spontaneity, and cooperation. Restricting themselves age-wise and sharing secrets bound them together and made them emotionally dependent. Therefore, any breach or quarrel disrupted such bonds and they stopped playing altogether.

Conclusion

No matter where the children are or with whom they associate, they establish a boundary around themselves with play that can be called, as anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1999 [1972]) originally suggested, a "play frame." The children separated their play from the religious festival and defined the festival as an adult observation, even though the festival allowed the play frame to form. The point of tension occurred when an altercation occurred and the adults had to intervene. It could have undermined the continuation of the frame but after its resolution, the frames resumed. In effect, the children redefined the meaning of space and religious ritual by their activities. The engagement with tradition by the children, even if different from the way the adults perceived it, allowed the children to sustain their separateness and freedom from regulation, even if temporarily. They redefined the space by blurring the boundary between indoor activities and outdoor activities. Though they were restricted indoors, their activities were not just indoors. They played outdoor games indoors. They also controlled the entire space by the end of the day through their adventure tripping.

Moreover, redefinition was not only restricted to space; the children gave a new meaning to the religious ritual itself. I claim this because the children I observed were in a tricky situation. They were surrounded by adults throughout the day who expected them to be a part of the religious festival so that Indian culture and tradition are handed down to them. But they used the religious framework in a different way to exercise their own will. Taking advantage of their busy parents (due to the religious ritual and social gathering), they used this day as the day of social freedom from ethnic filial piety. Or in other words, the children converted the meaning of the ritual to one challenging hierarchy. To a casual observer, this claim might seem paradoxical because the children appeared to be dressed more in line with Bengali tradition, but their "framing" activity served to communicate

a different role to one another. My interview with them revealed that they did not get such an opportunity in other social gatherings mostly because they did not get so much of time together (as the social gatherings are restricted to one afternoon or evening unlike this one which was an all-day event). Another paradox is that this freedom is in a context of being more spatially restricted than in other religious festivals. Children in other religious and social gatherings are given a separate space where they can indulge in their activities.

Finally, the children not only did change the meaning of the ritual, but also reflected various behavioral traits passed on from one generation to another. It is perfectly clear how their games and activities portray their psychological development, their relationship with their parents and the society in general. The increasing popularity of this festival indicates more complexities as it portrays a celebration of Americanism for second generation Indian American, while first generation adults get to reflect upon their homeland roots.

NOTES

1. Diwali is a Hindu religious festival celebrated during autumn every year. It is popularly known as the “festival of lights” because it signifies the victory of light of darkness.

2. Durga Puja is a Bengali religious festival that celebrates the worship of goddess Durga. It is a five days’ festival celebrated with great pomp and show. This festival signifies the victory of good over evil.

3. Bengalis are an ethnic group of the Bengal region (now divided between West Bengal, India and Bangladesh). It is said that they have evolved from a mixture of Aryan race and Austro-Asiatic people. Their native language is Bengali and they are concentrated mostly in the states of West Bengal and Tripura of India and Bangladesh.

4. Any religious ritual performed by Hindus is called a “puja.”

5. Salwaar kameez is a traditional outfit worn by women all over India in different styles. It originated in south and central Asia. Salwaars are loose trousers with narrow ankles. Kameez is a knee-length top with varying neck patterns.

6. Kurta pajama is a traditional outfit worn by Indian men. Much like salwaar kameez, kurta pajamas are also worn in different styles. Kurta is a loose knee-length shirt-like outfit worn by men. Pajama is a loose trouser.

7. Recently, this festival has taken the shape of Valentine’s Day in West Bengal as teenagers go out on dates all dressed up.

8. To study the whole cultural scene (Saraswati Puja celebration) I adopted certain methods. As a non-participant observant, I witnessed the children in all their activities and noted down the games they were playing. I tried to be as close to them as possible, but the moment they realized that an adult is around them, they changed the subject of discussion. This is truer for the teenage girls. Boys did not feel much bothered whenever I was around. The younger children had no time to sit and talk, so I observed their play. During my observation, I asked children about their activities that day. The younger children avoided answering, but children between eight and ten eagerly responded. Being unable to listen to

the conversation of the teenage girls, one of my informants provided information on her elder sister's conversation with her friends. I separately interviewed the adolescent girls. The purpose of my interview, in general, was (1) to find out what role *Saraswati Puja* played in their lives (2) the difference from other holidays when they also get a chance to play and spend time with friends and (3) their rationale for choosing particular activities.

9. Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1961) have provided the rank of this game: "54th (1896), 41st (1898), 25th (1921), 89th (1959)" (24).

10. Many folklorists have reasonably argued that the nursery rhyme "Ring Around the Rosie" was not created because of the "Black Plague" that hit western Europe in 1347 and had killed nearly one third of its population by 1350. Though the rhyme has elements referring to the plague, yet the plague was not the reason for its creation. There are several other versions collected by Charlotte Sophia Burne (1883), William Wells Newell (1884), and Alice Gomme (1898), which do not indicate any connection with the plague. Additionally, this rhyme was first published in 1881 by Kate Greenaway (illustrator) in *Mother Goose or The Old Nursery Rhymes*; folklorists in favor of this argument disagree with the fact that children recited this rhyme continuously for over five centuries, yet no one felt the importance of mentioning it between 1347 and 1881.

11. They further claim that with few exceptions girls show higher ranking in these games between 1856 and 1959: girls ranked tag game 3rd in 1896, 1st in 1921, and 3rd in 1959; for boys tag was 7th in 1896, 4th in 1921, and 2nd in 1959 (Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg 1961:25).

12. In "Sixty Years of Historical Change" Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1961) mention that with time spin top has lost popularity among the boys; it ranked 12th in 1896, 10th in 1898, 15th in 1921, and 133rd in 1959 (27). They further state that girls have developed keen interest in such games and perhaps this is the reason for the decreasing interest of the boys in spin tops (21).

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CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE SECTION: 2014 ANNUAL MEETING

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO, NOVEMBER 7, 2014

Jared Rife, president/convener, opened the meeting.

Attendance: Those in attendance were Trevor J. Blank (State University of New York at Potsdam), Monica Foote (Indiana University), Lisa Gabbert (Utah State), Spencer Green (Penn State University, Harrisburg), Sharrae M. Hayes (Michigan State University), John McDowell (Indiana University), Rivanna Miller (Center for Creativity in Education in Cultural Heritage), Priscilla Ord (McDaniel College), Jared Rife (Penn State University, Harrisburg), Kate Schramm (Indiana University), Libby Tucker (Binghamton University), and Simon Lichman (Center for Creativity in Education in Cultural Heritage).

Finances: Priscilla reported that as of September 1, the section had a balance of \$4,788.00 in the general fund, and the endowed funds were as follows: Life membership, \$1,442.00; Newell Prize Fund, \$8,138.00; and Opie Prize Fund, \$3,016.00 with the funds having increased at a rate of 3%.

Since the Stephen Fossler Company has been bought by Deluxe, the price of Aesop and Accolade seals have gone up from \$.10/seal to almost \$.12, so under new business we will need to decide if we should continue to charge the original prices and absorb the increase or raise the prices for the seals.

In the endowments we are good for nearly \$12,600. If we did not have corporate or university sponsorship for the journal, we could probably handle it. At present, neither the Newell fund nor the Opie fund is actually used for the prizes, which are instead being charged against the general fund.

Children's Folklore Review: Trevor stated that we need to look for a source of funding; his university is not able to help out much. He is working to get partnerships between various campuses, and his university program has a grant program available for collaboration. One partnership he mentioned was with SUNY Press. It would count as part of the grant's "network of excellence."

This opened up questions of partnering with university presses. Kate suggested that we contact Moira Marsh and Michael Foster regarding their relationship with a university press. There were also questions of ongoing support with shifts of editorial leadership.

Trevor stated that the ideal situation allows journal to be independent, not beholden to anyone. He also did not want to see journal go completely digital.

Libby mentioned that once the funding had been granted at Binghamton, it was easy to continue getting it, but Trevor said that SUNY Potsdam is in budget constraints; the likelihood of funding from it is unlikely. Libby said that the next journal is going to be great.

For funding, Kate made an “unserious” suggestion that we have a Children’s Folklore Section Calendar. Considerable joking ensued, and Trevor suggested that a better idea would be to make a calendar that is children’s folklore specific.

Trevor suggested the need to set up deadlines for submission to the review. There is also a need for a book review editor. There is currently a dearth of reviews.

Newell Prize: Semontee Mitra’s paper, “‘Children Have Their Own World of Being’: An Ethnography of Children’s Activities on the Day of Saraswati Puja,” will be published in the next issue of the *Children’s Folklore Review*. There was no prize awarded this year. Some wondered what we should do about this. It was suggested that we need to email Fernando Orejuela for students to submit a paper. We need to spread the word to graduate students’ organizations.

Opie Prize: It will be awarded next year. John McDowell and Libby Tucker are presently assembling a list.

Aesop Award Committee: There were questions about how big the committee should be. Could it be up to five people or should it max out at four? Both Kate and Spencer were added to the committee for the next year.

Communication: Concerning communication Jared said that we need to push to communicate using AFS central tools. We have accounts on *Facebook* and *Twitter*, but they only are used around AFS time. Both would be useful to send out calls and information.

New Convener Election: Jared described the many perks, as well as responsibilities, such as updating AFS website and getting section sponsored panels together. Priscilla nominated Kate, and all agreed. Kate is now the convener.

New Business: Priscilla noted that Trevor is eligible for membership in the Council of Editors of Learned Journals (CELJ). The members meet at many, various conferences and know how to secure funding. His dues will be paid for by the section. The benefit is that our journal would then be displayed at all conferences where CELJ meets. He needs to join personally, and he will be reimbursed from the treasury. Chip Sullivan found it quite useful.

Once again there was a suggestion for printing shorter papers in the *Review* with commentary, perhaps calling it “Children’s Folklore Notes.” Jay Mechling suggested this last year. It would be a means of presenting works in progress or ongoing research, what were good papers at AFS, etc. We can get papers from people on CFS sponsored panels. Another idea was to include a list of dissertations completed on the topics in the field. We could work also to incorporate people in other sections/fields who are doing work with children that may speak well here too. We need to outreach!

On the topic of book reviews, it was suggested that we incorporate books, not specifically on children's folklore, but also in accompanying fields.

Irene Chagall could not be here, but we need to find a reviewer for the documentary video she has completed on international girls handclapping, *Let's Get the Rhythm!* Spencer pointed out that we could review other media, exhibits, websites, etc. Trevor said that that would really emphasize the REVIEW aspect.

Aesop Prize Seals: Priscilla stated again that the seal price has gone up and asked do we raise price for winning individuals and presses? The people who make foil seals of the quality that we have will not negotiate. It was suggested that we possibly phase in price increase. She also mentioned that with large orders we cover postage and handling. She sends letters to winning presses, plus the price list.

Book Review Editor: Trevor asked how we want to get that up and running? Jared said that we will send out the request to membership. Lisa thought that it would take lots of one on one contact.

Priscilla suggested that for next year we should ask that our section be on day that is NOT when the Folklore Fellows also meet. When it is, we automatically miss having Simon Bronner, Bill Ellis, Gary Alan Fine, John McDowell, and Jay Mechling in attendance, all of whom either are or have been members of the section.

Jared asked for a motion of adjournment. Kate moved to adjourn, and Spencer seconded.

Editor's Note: My thanks to Kate Schramm and Priscilla A. Ord for generously transcribing and providing these 2014 CFS meeting notes for inclusion in this current issue of Children's Folklore Review.

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Newell Prize

The Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society annually offers the William Wells Newell Prize (which includes a cash award) for the best student essay on a topic in children's folklore. Students must submit their own papers, and published papers are eligible. Instructors are asked to encourage students with eligible papers to enter the competition.

Papers must be double-spaced and submitted as a Word document. On the first page, include the author's name, academic address, home address, telephone numbers, and e-mail address. Deadline for this coming year's competition is September 30, 2016. Please submit papers electronically to Dr. Brant Ellsworth, brant.ellsworth@psu.edu.

Book Reviews

Children's Folklore Review is seeking book review submissions for its next issue, to be published in December 2016. This is an excellent opportunity for graduate students interested in building their writing credentials and demonstrating breadth in folklore, literature, and childhood studies. Books are selected for review in *Children's Folklore Review* according to their relevance to the field of children's folklore and their year of publication (usually within the past three years). If you would like to request a book for review, please contact the book reviews editor, Brant Ellsworth (brant.ellsworth@psu.edu).

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