

from Resnick a deeper critique of the evolution of LEGO products and the choices behind development of the gendered LEGO Friends and abandonment of LEGO Creators. But ultimately this is a book about projects, passion, peers, and play, not the roots of corporate decision making. This was the one section that left me wanting more from *Lifelong Kindergarten*.

Although Resnick name-drops distinguished learning and play scholars like Henry Jenkins, Yasmin Kafai, Sherry Turkle, and Seymour Papert along the way, his text is approachable and makes an easy read for a wide variety of audiences. One does not need to be steeped in the literature to grasp the meaning he translates from the works of these authors. Some of his mentions involve crediting ideas (like Howard Wolf and Dennie Gardener's concept of children as patterners or dramatists in play) back to the source, but more often Resnick is telling personal stories here. His rich history of collaboration and interaction with luminaries in the field are presented as a friendly resource, and they are the kind of anecdotes that might never make it into a peer-reviewed journal article. Our work as researchers of creative play means little if it is not distributed to the practitioners that determine what play looks like for youth. It is a relief Resnick can afford the time to write this book and share it with a broader community of teachers, parents, educators, and learners. *Lifelong Kindergarten* accomplishes the mission of disseminating knowledge on creative thinking. How we as mentors decide to use it is another matter.

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### **Aggression in Play Therapy: A Neurobiological Approach for Integrating Intensity**

*Lisa Dion*

New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2018. Foreword, introduction, final thoughts, acknowledgments, references, and index. 218 pp., \$25.95, cloth. ISBN: 9780393713190

A small volume and easy to read, Lisa Dion's book is packed with clinical wisdom. Written primarily for play therapists, it is of interest to scholars of play, child-development and mental-health practitioners, and early-childhood educators. The author has built on the groundbreaking work of Bonnie Badenoch (who wrote the foreword to the book) to provide play therapists with a clear and highly understandable rationale for integrating interpersonal neurobiology into their work in the playroom. Theresa Kestly's *The Interpersonal Neurobiology of Play: Brain-Building Interventions for Emotional Well-Being* (2014) also deserves mention for its contributions on the literature about the interpersonal neurobiology of play.

The book places considerable emphasis on regulating the nervous system of the child as well as the therapist in the play session. If a parent is included in the session, the therapist takes responsibility for regulating the nervous system of all three. Dion offers specific suggestions for moderating the hyperarousal typically seen in youngsters who act out aggressively in play sessions, but she also offers ideas about how to handle the other end of the spectrum when children manifest hypoarousal. A strength of this book is the author's ability to drill down to the practical level to

provide play therapy students and even experienced practitioners clear suggestions about how to handle therapeutically the wide range of nervous-system arousal encountered in children when they are playing out highly emotional issues.

I commend the author for taking on the challenge of instructing play therapists regardless of experience about how to respond to one of the more evocative behaviors encountered in the playroom. Sexualized behavior is the other challenge that can easily cause dysregulation for the play therapist. The author deserves great credit for making it clear that if we are unable as therapists to regulate our own hyperarousal or hypoarousal in the face of these challenging behaviors, we are not likely to succeed in helping children regulate their nervous systems.

Some compelling features of this book include a list of key points at the end of each chapter that I found helpful in terms of summarizing the important elements. I also loved the insertion of “reflections” strategically throughout the chapters that stimulated thought about the deeper meaning of the material. The book is well written, well edited, and well illustrated with numerous case examples from the author’s extensive clinical experience. In my judgment, the author has succeeded in making the concepts of interpersonal neurobiology understandable and highly relevant to the work of play therapy. I have always admired the pioneering work of Allan Schore and Daniel Siegel in developing the research and theoretical base for interpersonal neurobiology, but their synthesis of findings from a wide array of disciplines including the biological and neurological sciences, genetics, and cul-

tural anthropology, makes for dense reading. The genius of Dion, and before her Badenoch and Kestly, is to make the rich implications of their monumental work available to the mainstream of psychotherapists including play therapists.

It is not easy to pinpoint a weakness in this book because of its rich and practical teaching of play therapists in handling aggression in the playroom, but I was disappointed with the rather meager explanation and description of the synergetic play therapy model that Dion created and teaches. In an approximately one-page description of the model, the author states, “Synergetic Play Therapy combines the therapeutic powers of play with nervous system regulation, interpersonal neurobiology, physics, attachment theory, mindfulness, and therapist authenticity. Its primary play therapy influences are Child-Centered, Experiential, and Gestalt theories” (p. 13). Since I always feel more confident when I am standing on solid theoretical ground, I would have enjoyed more explanation of how each of the above listed influences contributes to synergetic play therapy (e.g., physics). I found it a minor disappointment that, although attachment theory concepts were prominently in evidence in many sections of the book, particularly in the treatment of ruptures and repairs (chapter 10), attachment theory itself was not highlighted. In fact, attachment theory does not appear in the index, though to the author’s credit, there is a citation of the work of attachment researcher Edward Tronick, who has for decades written about ruptures and repairs in attachment relationships.

Aside from these minor disappointments, I give high praise to this book,

which I believe will be immensely helpful to play therapists, students, and child development and play scholars for years to come.

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**Slantwise Moves: Games, Literature, and Social Invention in Nineteenth-Century America**

Douglas A. Guerra

Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. Introduction, notes, index, and acknowledgments. 253pp. \$69.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780812250619

“Games are about invention itself.” Douglas A. Guerra puts this proposition to a rigorous test in *Slantwise Moves: Games, Literature, and Social Invention in Nineteenth-Century America*. By drawing from the careers of preeminent game designers such as Milton Bradley, William Simmons, and Anne W. Abbot, Guerra reconsiders several landmarks of midcentury American literature as archives of social performance—Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* (1855), Herman Melville’s *The Confidence Man* (1857), *The Autobiography of P. T. Barnum* (1855), and Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *Blithedale Romance* (1852). In many ways, this is a book less about games than about how games can illuminate the social meaning of literary works. Readers expecting a detailed survey of nineteenth-century board games and parlor games will likely be frustrated; at times, the author is more engaged with

critical theory than with the relevant historiography and material culture. Yet Guerra’s approach not only enriches our understanding of the cultural history of nineteenth-century games, it yields a productive—if unwieldy—framework for extending the field of game studies beyond the material culture of formal game play.

Guerra argues that books, no less than games, provided Americans with opportunities for social experimentation. Both offered exercises in “how to arrange yourself, your friends, and various associated objects in order to produce a specifically contoured performance space” (p. 11). By shaping how people performed such “procedural orientations,” games and books alike register an otherwise overlooked history of slantwise moves: the unlikely social configurations that people create when they play—and read—together.

Guerra situates his analysis historically during the consolidation of market capitalism in cities like Boston and New York during the middle of the century. Of course, how Americans fashioned social selves during the antebellum market revolution is a deeply familiar pursuit for scholars of American culture. In five chapters, Guerra offers a new approach by pairing a popular game with a contemporary work of literature. His method is “contrapuntal.” He plays the game—its materiality, its rules of play, its “performance space”—off the text’s narrative to throw light on the social subjectivity at stake in both cultural artifacts.

In the bravura first chapter, Guerra uses Bradley’s best-selling Checkered Game of Life (1860) to discern in *Leaves of Grass* a “playfield” where the poet of “The Song of Myself” created an interactive