as commercial BDSM (or bondage, dominance, submission, and sadomasochism), fan fiction, and shopping. For example, in Chappell's essay on immersive, role-specific dinner theaters, he demonstrates how boundaries between play and work become quite permeable in the performances of dinner theatre employees. These employee performances illustrate the problem with manufacturing a play experience that relies on distinguishing itself from real life. There are moments where the dinner theatre draws attention to itself as a constructed space, which invites the players to question particular choices in performance; for example, what does a performance say about issues such as cultural belonging, and what it might mean for audiences and players involved?

In addition to discussing the challenges presented by play's structures, many of the essays in the collection maintain that play is a positive and enabling activity. The authors must carefully negotiate between the transformative possibilities of play and the institutional structures that may constrain it. For instance, Kane Anderson's chapter on costume play at Comic-Con recognizes that what began as a safe environment for fans to gather, has been co-opted by the mainstream for its marketing potential, revealing the "ongoing battle for social equality between fandom and the mainstream that exists outside of the con" (p. 106). Terry Dean similarly demonstrates that stunt running, where participants dress in costume and perform a stunt (like juggling) while competing in a road race, has the potential to create its own anti-institutional practices while simultaneously being subject to institutional agendas. For example, race organizers have begun to cultivate the audience appeal that stunt runners bring to a race by offering some runners perks such as free registration. There is also the reality that for most types of play discussed throughout the collection, there are some institutionally set rules that cannot be broken, or the play will no longer be possible. While there are no obvious or easy ways of resolving the tensions between play's structures and player autonomy, the collection does a fine job exploring the consequences of both.

By recognizing that play has real consequences, the collection situates play as an experience that matters beyond the play itself. Performance studies is a productive approach to both connecting play with the outcomes of everyday performances and for pushing the boundaries of what we consider play. As Omasta and Chappell phrase it in the volume's afterwords, "A lens of performance recognizes play never truly ends. We are always performing in daily life, even when we think we are beyond the boundaries of a played-through experience or performing as another" (p. 158). The collection will be useful to both play scholars and performance studies scholars, especially those who are interested in questions such as who governs play, under what conditions are playful performances permitted and encouraged, or conversely discouraged and restricted, and ultimately toward what end?

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From Playgrounds to PlayStation: The Interaction of Technology and Play

Carroll Pursell
Baltimore: MD: Johns Hopkins
University Press, 2015. Notes,
suggestions for further reading, index,
and images. 200 pp. $28.95 paper.
ISBN: 9781421416502

Imagine some friends are sitting around and trying to make up the most outrageous extreme sport. What would it be? Full-contact golf? Synchronized bowling? Extreme ironing? Wait, that last one is real! It consists of people taking ironing boards to remote locations and ironing items of clothing. Originating in 1997, the sport, as one of its progenitors explains, "combines the thrill of extreme sport with the satisfaction of a well-pressed shirt" (p. 136).

Extreme ironing plays only a minor role in Carroll Pursell's fascinating book, but it epitomizes his theme of the interaction between technology and play in American culture. In seven fact-filled chapters, Pursell, a prolific author on the role of technology in American life, guides the reader through a panoply of amusements including toys, playgrounds, amusement parks, hobbies, games and sports, electronic games, and, yes, extreme sports. In each chapter, he provides historical background and illuminates some of the most influential people—almost all of them male—who applied technical ingenuity to some item or activity that became important to some kind of playful pastime. Whether the person was A. C. Gilbert, inventor of Erector sets; Nolan Bushnell, founder of Atari, which created *Pong*; or Frederick W. Taylor, designer of both tennis rackets and golf clubs (who knew?) as well as exponent of scientific management; Pursell provides insights into all kinds of inventive minds who changed the course of commercialized play in the United States.

The book is more than just a catalog of toys, games, equipment, how they developed, and who developed them. Although these topics are important, Pursell also tries to extract cultural meanings and changes. For example, he shows that traditional gender roles determined how toys and games were both used and designed (nothing much new here), but also how amusement park rides were sites for heterosocial interaction, a consequence sometimes overlooked. In addition, Pursell observes that early amusement parks such as Coney Island, where the "commodification of risk" contributed to an active engagement by patrons, have evolved into theme parks such as Disneyland, where "a certain passivity characterizes the consumption of pleasure" (p. 77). He stops short, however, of taking the point further into an explicit critique of whether consumerism and its accompanying technology have turned America into a society of entitlement.

In a relatively short book that covers so much so quickly, it would not be fair to fault Pursell for not giving attention to issues that lay beyond his purview. Still, he might have noted in passing, or in a bit more space, a couple of important points. First, for many of the topics that Pursell addresses, such as amusement parks, miniature golf courses, and the do-it-yourself hobbies, capital investment was just as important as technology in promulgating a leisure-time activity. Second, he might have recognized more fully how children and adults have applied their own creativity to inventing their own toys and games.

He does point out that youngsters made playgrounds out of places where adults did not want them to be, such as "streets, dumps, railroad yards, and harbor fronts," but play is as much a product of improvisation as of technology (p. 34). Third, Pursell might have touched on the ways fear of technology has affected play. For example, a few years ago, the Consumer Product Safety Commission forced Hasbro to recall the classic Easy-Bake Oven for fear that children might suffer burns by inserting hands into the toy's front opening. Safety concerns also have restricted designs of playground equipment and amusement park rides. Technology provides hazards as well as wonders to an increasingly risk-averse society.

Well-researched and including a helpful list of works for further reading, *From Playgrounds to PlayStation* is a useful and engaging book, suitable for both academic and general readerships.

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Works of Game: On the Aesthetics of Games and Art

John Sharp
Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015.
Preface, notes, bibliography, works cited, images, index. 146 pp. $19.95 cloth.
ISBN: 9780263039070

On March 5, 1968, just under seven months before his death, French Surrealist artist Marcel Duchamp and his wife Teeny (Alexina) joined American experimental composer John Cage in performing *Reunion* in Toronto, Canada. *Reunion* consisted of a stage performance of two chess matches played by Cage, Teeny, and Duchamp on an electronic chessboard designed by Lowell Cross. The chessboard selected and distributed electronic sounds across the performance space based on the moves made by the players. *Reunion*'s fusion of art, performance, and games challenged assumptions about each and suggested numerous questions about the relationships between.

Are games art? Can works of art be considered games? How might we describe games that are produced by artists and artworks created by game designers? By what aesthetic and critical standards might we assess these works? And how might such game and art hybrids meet and surpass the values of both the game and contemporary-art communities? As an associate professor at the New School's Parsons School of Design and an active game designer, John Sharp is ideally suited to address these questions. His incisive *Works of Game* seeks to do just this, while simultaneously offering a useful three-part framework through which to consider the intersections of games and art: "game art," "artgames," and "artists' games." *Works of Game* discusses both video and nondigital games, and its scope includes games that have been featured as part of museum exhibitions and permanent collections (such as the work of Cory Arcangel), as well as games more readily available for free download (such as games by Jason Rohrer). Sharp's book fits neatly within the small but growing number of monographs and collections that examine the relationships between games and artistic practice, a domain which includes