

F. J. J. Buytendijk's untranslated work on play that Csepregi has now introduced to Anglo-American play scholarship, which he tells us is "the best analysis of play we have" (p. 10). Following Buytendijk, Csepregi argues that a pathic attitude recognizes the dynamic possibilities in things around us through an "affective, sensual, and personal relation with the world" that is characteristically a "youthful way of perceiving and acting" (p. 45).

The ensuing chapters clarify ways of expressing the play attitude, with chapters devoted to ease, risk, humor, and *gratuité*, ending with a chapter on the play attitude and the art of life. Some of the ways of expressing a play attitude will seem evident enough, for example, using humor (jokes and joking around) and taking risks (putting oneself in situations that have uncertain outcomes, such as in games or taking gambles).

The topics of ease and *gratuité* may seem less familiar initially, but they refer to well-known play phenomena. The discussion of ease notes that play often involves little effort or a retreat from effort that is familiar in play. *Gratuité* refers to play's separation from useful everyday activity (and I would add its often apparent irreverence toward it), which is also something familiar. After an introduction to *gratuité*, Csepregi spends the chapter on drinking wine and taking aimless strolls or walks, which is a fun way to conclude the substantive applications of the attitude of play. While I was reading this chapter, I imagined *flâneurs* with no particular place to go strolling the streets of Paris with bottles of good wine, baguettes, and a suitable variety of cheeses. Csepregi is right that the play attitude has many things to commend

it, which he outlines in the final chapter and epilogue. He concludes that "the transient adoption of play attitude [...] offers one of the best ways to enjoy life" (p.124).

Despite Csepregi's insightfulness and good humor, his lack of engagement with recent Anglo American scholarly work on play shows up particularly in these final chapters. There has been recent discussion in this journal on idleness as play that covers ground similar to Csepregi's discussion of ease and *gratuité* (the French word for stroller, *flâneur*, that I have just used is also a synonym for idleness). The gratuitousness of play, including its often irreverent and subversive qualities (which also include humor and risk), has been emphasized extensively in the works of the seminal play theorist Brian Sutton-Smith and others. More generally, Robert A. Stebbins' introduction of "casual leisure" into leisure and play theory twenty-five years ago to encompass play activities also recognizes ease in play and attitudes of play that are expressed beyond traditional boundaries of play.

Nevertheless, Csepregi's emphasis on the attitude of play and its related elements seem useful and undoubtedly complementary. A good scholarly probe would discover how these projects might learn from each other. This is one way, I am sure, readers already savvy to the study of play will benefit from Csepregi's excellent book.

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Research through Play: Participatory Methods in Early Childhood

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Twenty years ago, my colleagues and I suggested that play in early childhood classrooms could be framed as hermeneutic texts for understanding children, development, and learning. This was a process of inquiry that would require teacher-researchers and academic researchers to note context, consider multiple perspectives that included the children's interpretations of play, and engage in deep reflection about teaching and research. Our 2004 suggestion in *Social Contexts of Early Education, and Reconceptualizing Play* was a recognition of the complexities of making meaning of children's play. Since then, we have seen various attempts in early childhood qualitative research to continue this search for meaning. The text *Research through Play: Participatory Methods in Early Childhood* edited by Arnott and Wall carries on this rich discourse regarding theoretical and methodological considerations of including children in research, primarily through play.

The purpose of the text is to expand the practice of including children as research partners by using methods based on the principles of early childhood and with respect for children's rights. Thus, the authors assert that, if children are involved in research practice, participatory research methods should include children's lived play or playful experiences.

This text is an excellent introduction to using play as a form of research meth-

odology for graduate students, academic researchers, and teacher-researchers in early childhood education. The authors and contributors are researchers and educators predominantly from the United Kingdom, Europe, and Australia, each drawing upon their own experiences of researching with children in educational contexts.

The text is divided into four sections, beginning with part 1's "Founding Principles for Playful Research Approaches." In this section, theoretical and ethical principles of early childhood education are outlined as the basis for this type of participatory research. In chapter 1, Elizabeth Wood and Liz Chesworth acknowledge the complexity in understanding and even defining play. They call for clarity in articulating the theoretical and methodological perspectives used to interpret play. Although young children's play has traditionally been framed as self-directed and freely chosen, it is evident that play in educational settings, influenced by national policies, is used for adult-selected learning outcomes. In chapter 2, Jane Murray shows that the concept of children's participation in research is situated firmly in a "rights-based" framework drawing on the United Nations's Convention on the Rights of the Child—particularly the articles on the right to play and on freedom of expression. The Young Children as Researchers project, she makes clear, demonstrates the link between play and research behaviors, specifically, by finding solutions and basing decisions on evidence, conceptualization, and exploration. In chapter 3, Sue Dockett outlines the ethics of sharing information—how to seek consent from children and how the roles

of adults influence play-based research. The commitments of the international project Ethical Research Involving Children offer guidance, reminding the reader that researchers and adults should consider children as competent participants and provide space in research methods for ethical exploration.

Part 2, “Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks for Playful Research,” discusses the methodologies, paradigms, and data analyses that help shape participatory research through play. In chapter 4, Kate Wall, Lorna Arnott, and Elaine Hall demonstrate how practitioner enquiry as a form of professional learning aligns with reflexive research methods. Thus, the authors consider skilled researchers those teachers exploring their own questions by systematically collecting data and seeking to improve their practices with an understanding of children. In chapter 5, Jane Merewether and Alma Fleet draw on the “pedagogical documentation” practiced by Reggio Emilia, Italy, and on the Mosaic Approach designed by Alison Clark and Peter Moss. In these approaches, artifacts such as photographs and artworks are created through or around play. These provoke conversations between teachers and children in an effort to create meaning and understanding together, a coconstruction of knowledge. This process becomes a multimodal, multiperspectival research method. The analysis of the documentation and conversations also requires special attention as outlined in chapter 6. Here, Cathy Nutbrown notes that, while interpretations of play can be messy and full of tensions typical of qualita-

tive research in general, there is a need for transparency in the process between data collection and reporting findings. As a guide, she offers reflective prompts that consider the faithfulness, integrity, and trustworthiness of the process.

Part 3, “Adapting Play-based Pedagogies as a Research Method,” includes chapters 7 through 12, in which case studies are shared for various aspects of using a play-based methodology including creative ways for informed consent with children, using drawing, observing embodied movement of the very young, engaging in arts-based research, employing a digital app to help interpret imaginary play, and enlisting methods for learning about digital literacies.

Part 4, “Research Resources from Early Childhood Education,” gives practical examples of research proposals. Both parts 3 and 4 provide the reader with details of research with children by adults who grapple with the messiness, problems, positive outcomes, and ethical dilemmas that offer a sense of possibility and potential.

The text presents a fine balance between directing researchers through various methods while also cautioning against falling under unexamined prescriptions for methods and urging consideration of the ambiguity and fluidness of research through play. In general, the book provides inspiration and a guide for others in different countries, broader contexts, and through other play pedagogies to engage in participatory research with children.

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