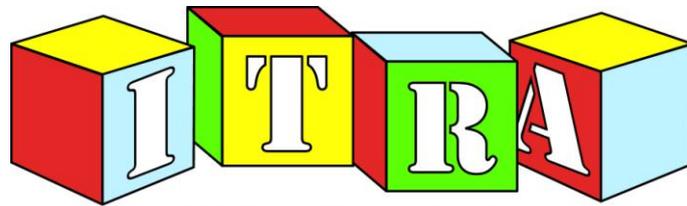


ITRA NEWSLETTER

International Toy Research Association

Vol. 20 No. 1 Spring 2016

<http://www.itratoyresearch.org>



**INTERNATIONAL TOY
RESEARCH ASSOCIATION**

ITRA Newsletter Editors

Suzanne (Suzy) Seriff
University of Texas at Austin
Dept of Anthropology
3705 Laurelledge Lane
Austin, Texas
78731
USA
seriff@aol.com
itranwsltr@gmail.com

Mark Allen
Serious Fun Research Labs
VCT E2 Fair Oaks
Chobham
Woking
SURREY
GU24 8HU
UNITED KINGDOM
m.allen-uk@hotmail.co.uk
itranwsltr@gmail.com

PROLOGUE

The International Toy Research Association Newsletter is designed to keep members up to date with research in the fields of toys and play. In this issue, readers will find a note from our President, a Member's Profile, the Members' Forum, various publications, conference and exhibition previews and reviews. The newsletter has been formatted to allow the document to be read in either printed form or as a soft copy, which can be found on the ITRA website.



The ITRA website (<http://www.itratoyresearch.org>.) covers the following: a description of ITRA, a brief history of the association, how to become a member, and a catalogue of downloadable newsletters.

Those of you who promised material that never arrived... send it again. For those who made contributions, without which there would be many more blank spaces, a massive thank you.

Enjoy the Newsletter.

CONTENTS

Prologue.....	1
Greetings from the President of ITRA.....	2
Member Profile – Jean-Pierre Rossie.....	3
Members' Forum.....	5
Conferences & Exhibitions.....	6
Future Conferences.....	6
Past Conferences.....	6
Current Exhibitions.....	6
Future Exhibitions.....	7
Publications & Books.....	8
Miscellaneous News.....	10
ITRA 2016 Fees Notice.....	11
Epilogue.....	12

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT OF ITRA

Dear ITRA colleagues and friends,



Since our last communication, in no particular order of importance, the United Kingdom held a referendum, the Rio Olympics were run, and I have been in contact with the Turku University, Rauma, organizers of the 8th ITRA conference.

Päivi Marjanen and Kati Heljakka and their team at the university report that preparations of the scientific and social program are progressing according to schedule and that we are heading toward an exciting and important worldwide event. The conference theme is “Toys: Tradition, Technology and Innovation” and will take place at the Turku University, Rauma, Finland from 22nd – 24th August 2017. The conference organisers plan to issue the Call for Papers and the draft program over the course of the next couple of months. A full description of the conference, including logistic details for lodging and travel, will be included in the winter edition of the newsletter, which will be in your boxes by late-December.

The ITRA Board will assist the conference organizers’ hard work and will see that ITRA members remain up to date throughout this period via the ITRA website (<http://www.itratoyresearch.org>), e-mail and newsletter.

Mentioning the EU referendum may, on the surface, appear a little random, especially in an ITRA newsletter. On the morning of the 24th June, the UK woke to discover, mostly, it would seem according to the media, with a sense of disbelief, that the United Kingdom had voted to leave the European Union. Analysts appeared from out of the woodwork and unfurled their SWOT charts – which produced flashbacks from my industrial design undergraduate days – predicting opportunities for the brave and threats for the faint hearted. Research colleagues have ruefully commented since the referendum that collaborative research funding and projects have been put on hold due to the uncertainty of what a ‘Brexit’ would actually involve. It appears generally, that UK academic institutions fear the worst, which will have an effect on toy and play research funding already hit by austerity cuts and a devalued British Pound - not to mention effects on the toy industry as a whole. I suppose, it is times like these that ‘opportunities’ are to be found.

While the British media digests the fallout from the referendum, a short article caught my attention from the 2016 Olympics. One sport in particular had written into its rules that a soft toy would be put into play when a competitor’s coach challenged a refereeing decision. This created a peculiar juxtaposition as the sport was Greco-Roman wrestling. Picture the scene: a large yellow plush toy would be flung by an angry coach into the ring while a couple of burly wrestlers were attempting to do whatever it is that wrestlers do. Apparently a debate raged within wrestling as to the suitability, or otherwise, of a plush toy! From an ITRA point of view, one might argue that it is never possible to have too many toys....

On that lighter note, I would like to wish the ITRA family an enjoyable summer and may it be filled with plenty of opportunities and toys. Remember to keep an eye out for updates regarding the 2017 ITRA conference.

Mark Allen
Serious Fun Research Labs
Woking
SURREY
UK

Email: m.allen-uk@hotmail.co.uk

MEMBER PROFILE – Jean-Pierre Rossie



Jean-Pierre Rossie is a founding member of ITRA, and has enjoyed a long and fruitful career as toy researcher, fieldworker, educator, author and scholar. He served on the executive board of ITRA between 2008 and 2014, and in 2007 was nominated as a member of the Advisory Board of the UNESCO/Felissimo Social Design Network. Jean-Pierre is currently a member of the Centre for Philosophical and Humanistic Studies of the Catholic University of Portugal, Braga, and affiliated researcher with the Foundation for Science and Technology of Lisbon.

Born in Gent (Ghent) Belgium, Jean-Pierre studied social work and African ethnology at the State University of Ghent and was awarded a PhD, in 1973. Following fieldwork on children's socialization among the semi-nomadic Ghib of the Tunisian Sahara in 1975, Jean-Pierre has devoted himself to research on Saharan and North African play and toy heritages, children's socialization, cultural and social aspects of children's play and toys, communication in children's toy-making and play activities, material culture.

He is the recipient of the Belgian Foundation for Vocations Prize, Brussels, in 1967, and the prestigious Brio Prize from the Lennart Ivarsson Scholarship Foundation awarded in 2004.

In 2005 Jean-Pierre became an associated researcher of the Musée du Jouet, Moirans-en-Montagne, France and donated about 700 toys from the Tunisian Sahara and Morocco to the museum and in 2014 all his visual and written documents were placed in the museum's documentation centre.

Jean-Pierre has published numerous books and articles, in both French and English: *Toys, Play, Culture and Society. An anthropological approach with reference to North Africa and the Sahara* (2005), and a collection of eBooks on *Saharan and North African Toy and Play Cultures: Children's dolls and doll play* (2005), *The animal world in play, games and toys* (2005), *Domestic life in play, games and toys* (2008), *Commented bibliography on play, games and toys* (2011), *Technical activities in play, games and toys* (2013), *Donation to Centro per la Cultura Ludica in Turin* (2015), *Donation to Musée du Jouet, first part: dolls and toy animals* (2015), *Donation to Musée du Jouet, second part: toys related to domestic life* (2015), and co-authored *Make-believe play among children of the Moroccan Anti-Atlas* (2016). These books and articles are available on

- *Academia.edu*: <https://independent.academia.edu/JeanPierreRossie>
- *Scribd*: https://www.scribd.com/jean_pierre_rossie
- *Sanatoplay*: <http://www.sanatoplay.org> (publications)

Jean-Pierre believes his interest in play, toys, children and specifically sub-Saharan Africa was kindled during his early childhood through his involvement in the Boy Scout movement – initially as a scout and later as a scout master. He recalls being around fifteen when he became fascinated by Africa, especially Black Africa. This was his motivation, after school, to commence studies in 1958, as a social worker, with the specific intention of entering social services in what was then called the Belgian Congo (today: Democratic Republic of the Congo).

As fate would have it, in 1961, the year Jean-Pierre concluded his studies for a diploma in social work, the Belgian Congo gained its independence, thus ending this venture. Wanting to go to Africa, Jean-Pierre wrote to the embassies of a number of African countries and some international institutions. Jean-Pierre noted that he received almost no responses; however, a letter from UNESCO indicated that a degree was required, rather than just a diploma. This letter drove Jean-Pierre to commence studies in the ethnological section of the department of African Studies of the State University of Ghent in 1963. However, to Jean-Pierre's dismay, he found that these culture-oriented studies offered few possibilities to go to Africa, so he decided to get involved in scientific research. Jean-Pierre was accepted by the Belgian National Foundation for Scientific Research and, in 1973, completed his doctoral thesis on "*Child and Society. The Process of Socialization in Patrilineal Central Africa.*"

While Jean-Pierre's thesis was extensively based on original documentation, he felt it imperative to carry out fieldwork. However, due to familial, financial and political reasons, carrying out research in Central Africa was unfeasible, so he asked his friend and colleague Gilbert J. M. Claus, who was preparing his thesis on the Ghib semi-nomads from the Tunisian Sahara, whether or not he could join him on one of his trips. It was during Jean-Pierre's first three month stay amongst the Ghib, in 1975, that he realized the importance of children's play and playgroups not only as a means to gather data on childhood but, more importantly, a means to become accepted by the children and their families. Subsequently, he concentrated on Ghib children's culture and in particular, making detailed descriptions of their play activities and toys, illustrating these with slides and in short films.

After eight years of research, Jean-Pierre needed a career change and in 1980 established, together with a Turkish colleague, the first municipal social service for Turkish and North African migrants of the City of Ghent. Jean-Pierre realized his collection of Ghib children's toys and games was at risk of simply gathering dust. As a result, he started doing bibliographical research on North Africa and Saharan children's games and toys. In 1982, while visiting the Musée de l'Homme, Paris, he saw toys on display from Tuareg children and contacted the archive department. The museum had a large collection of toys from North and Saharan Africa ranging from the end of the 19th century through to the 1960s. During the 1980s Jean-Pierre analysed this collection in detail.

It was during the 1970s that a change occurred in Jean-Pierre's scientific affiliation. Until that point he focused on African and Oriental studies, but found himself isolated within his field of research and decided to look for new contacts with which he could share his research and collaborate. In 1987 Jean-Pierre started attending the International Council for Children's Play (ICCP) congresses and it was during one of these congresses that he met Brian Sutton-Smith. It was Brian, in 1993, who proposed Jean-Pierre become a founding member of ITRA.

It was via ITRA, in 1996, that Jean-Pierre met Krister Svensson, and in his own words, "found a scientific haven", first within the Nordic Center for Research on Toys and Educational Media (NCFL) at Halmstad University in Sweden and then from 2002 onwards in the Stockholm International Toy Research Centre (SITREC) at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. It is with the assistance of these two centres that Jean-Pierre has been able to make his data on Saharan and North African children's play and toys available to the scientific community. Furthermore, Jean-Pierre is in no doubt that this change in scientific affiliation from associations and researchers with specific interest in African studies and ethnology to the fields of child and play studies, has stimulated his endeavour to relate the play and toys of Saharan and North African children to the theoretical and pragmatic approaches of Western and non-Western play and toy scholars.

Jean-Pierre recalled that in the early days of ITRA, few scholars researched non-western children's toy and play heritages; however, this has gradually changed and the numbers and variety of research topics have steadily grown. While Jean-Pierre stressed having found much inspiration in comparing his research results, for finding new research topics in talks with and publications of several ITRA members, he would appreciate the representation of more researchers from Africa and other non-western countries. However, he concedes that financial limitations seem to be the major obstacle.

In 1990, Jean-Pierre left the social service for migrants intending to write a series of books on Saharan and North African children's toy and play cultures and to engage in further fieldwork. This led him to conduct research in several Moroccan regions and, in 2002, he settled in a popular quarter of the small southern Moroccan coastal town of Sidi Ifni. Since then, Jean-Pierre has been collaborating with Boubaker Daoumani and Khalija Jariaa both living in the Anti-Atlas Mountains and speaking Tachelhit, the local Amazigh (Berber) language, and Moroccan Arabic. Jean-Pierre speaks almost no Tachelhit and although he masters Moroccan Arabic reasonably well he cannot understand playing children's dialogues. One reason Jean-Pierre settled down in Sidi Ifni was his encounter with Boubaker Daoumani, a primary school teacher in a nearby mountain village. Boubaker was the first Moroccan showing strong interest in research on children's play and toy making activities.

Jean-Pierre remains a social worker at heart and, being a longstanding volunteer of the Ghent Committee for UNICEF, he is keen to investigate means by which he can make his data, photographs and toy collection useful to a wider audience, on both a social and pedagogical level. This has resulted in developing what he calls "a playful approach to the intercultural." With this title he refers to the use of Moroccan children's toy-making to stimulate the creativity of children and young adults living in high tech societies. At the same time, he is pleased that this playful approach offers Westerners a more positive view of African children who are mostly depicted by Western media in problematic and dangerous situations. These concerns also stimulated Jean-Pierre to donate toys to a number of select museums, socio-cultural associations and to collaborate in establishing exhibitions related to the donated toys.

Jean-Pierre has found research in Morocco to be easier than in a Western urban context at least once local families accept the foreigner in their midst. An advantage for observing children is that they play outside their homes from the age of about three years. However, he also finds that some adults tend to doubt the meaningfulness of children's toys and games as a focus of scholarly interest. To overcome this initial suspicion, Jean-Pierre has developed a research protocol of asking his adult subjects how they came to be involved in their domestic or economic activity. Invariably he finds that this question leads them to mention a childhood experience—frequently involving a play activity or toy—that helps them understand the importance of play and toy making in the ethical and social development of children.

When asked about what the future holds, Jean-Pierre, who turned 76 this August, confesses that the time left to remain active as a researcher may be limited. However, thanks to the collaboration of Khalija Jariaa and Boubaker Daoumani, new information and photos on Anti-Atlas children's play, games and toys continues to be made available to him for his ever-growing documentation project. Jean-Pierre is concentrating on completing the final books in the collection *Saharan and North African Play and Toy Cultures*, namely two more catalogues of the toys which he donated and the volumes *Make-believe play among children of the Moroccan Anti-Atlas* (already partially available) and *Games of skill and chance*.

Through the interview process, Jean-Pierre's care for people was clearly evident. It is this love for people, toys and play that he has brought to ITRA and research in general. Jean-Pierre may have quipped about his number of remaining years, but we trust he will have many more to share his research and affable nature with us at ITRA.

MEMBERS' FORUM

Please remember when you do send items for inclusion in the Newsletter to send them in a downloadable form.

NORWAY

Tore Gulden writes:

I just wanted to share my newly published article which is based on the work presented at the ITRA conference held in Braga. Generally it would be nice if we could share articles among members in ITRA, as I remember that there were several presentations in Braga that I would like to see the development of.

Here is a link to my article:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/a6sbsdARpaTGZfZsXfXr/full>

Kind regards

Tore Gulden

USA

Greta Pennell writes about events she has spotted:

1) 2016 Chicago Toy & Game Fair, Navy Pier in Chicago, IL USA, 19th – 20th November.

Billed as the “biggest” toy and game fair in North America, the Chicago Toy & Game Fair is open to consumers as well as trade professionals. The fair features a Young Inventors Challenge and special events/pricing for educators, librarians, and Scouts young and old.

For a summary of the 2015 show see:

<http://www.chitagfair.com/new-page-2/>

2) International Spielwarenmesse Toy Fair in Nuremberg, Germany, 1st – 6th February 2017.

A special networking event, Women in Toys Dinner, premiered at the 2016 show.

For more information about the Women in Toys organization see: <http://www.womenintoys.com>

And to get a taste of what the Nuremberg Toy Fair had to offer, check these videos from the 2016 fair in January:

General Overview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Et7jDQfp7MU>

Focus on Model Trains: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tHyOqMEbbRc>

3) ToyFest West, Las Vegas, NV USA, 5th – 7th March 2017.

Hosted by Western Toy and Hobby Representative Association (WTHRA), this trade show plans on featuring more than 600 manufacturers of toys as well as products for infant/toddlers, museums, educational and costume markets.

For more info see: <http://toyfestwest.com>

CONFERENCES & EXHIBITIONS

This section covers current, up-coming and past conferences and exhibitions. Hopefully mentioning past events will not induce depression as to what you may have missed, while we trust previews of future events will whet your appetite to attend. Previews and reviews of conferences are sought for the next edition of the ITRA Newsletter.

FUTURE CONFERENCES

September 2016

4th UIA Round Table Asia-Pacific, to be held at the Paradise Hotel, Haeundae, Busan, Korea, 28th – 29th September.

The UIA Round Table is an educational seminar where associations meet to learn through networking and through practice, to meet other international associations and to share experience and knowledge.

For further information see:

<http://www.uia.org/roundtable/>

September 2017

The International Play Association Conference will be held in Calgary, Canada in September 2017

The theme of the conference will be *Unleashing the Power of Play*.

For more information visit:

<http://arpaonline.ca/events/ipacalgary2017/>

PAST CONFERENCES and EXHIBITIONS

February 2016

The Digital Kids Conference on Toys, Learning and Play: Technology Makes Learning Fun, took place at the Javits Convention Center, New York, USA, 15th – 16th February 2016.

For more information on the conference visit:

<http://digitalkidscon.com/>

April 2016

The US Play Coalition Conference - The Play Conference 2016: Rebooting Play, was held at the Clemson University, South Carolina, USA, 3rd – 6th April 2016.

For more information visit:

<http://www.playgroundprofessionals.com/news/events/play-conference-2016-rebooting-play309>

August 2016

Hot Wheels: Race to Win Special Exhibit at the Indianapolis Children's Museum. Indianapolis, USA 14th May – 14th August 2016.

In honour of the 100th running of the "Greatest Spectacle in Racing," the Indianapolis 500, the Indianapolis Children's Museum hosted this behind-the-scenes look at the thrilling world of racing. As with all the museum's galleries, this interactive exhibit put visitors young and old into the design and driver seats to investigate the scientific process for designing super-fast cars, experiment with relationship between power and performance using Hot Wheels.

For further information see the following website:

<https://www.childrensmuseum.org/about/book-traveling-exhibit/hot-wheels-race-to-win>

Through October 9th, 2016

Clangers, Bagpuss & Co., V&A Museum of Childhood, Bethnal Green, London, UK, 19th March – 9th October. The exhibition explored the original puppets used in the well-known British children's TV series from the 1950s, as well as film sets, and filming equipment and stop-frame animation techniques.

For more information visit:

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/moc/exhibitions/clangers-bagpuss-co/>

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

Until November 2016

Playing with politics, The Strong, National Museum of Play, Rochester, New Jersey, USA, until 14 November 2016.

The display showcases the satirical side of campaigning and includes:

- White House-inspired paper houses and puzzles sets, such as a Donaldson Brothers paper set from 1896
- Barbie for President dolls
- Political-party-inspired board games, playing cards, and jigsaw puzzles, such as the Stockmann Manufacturing Company's Reganomics game
- Presidential-themed paper doll sets and games featuring the Bush, Kennedy, and Reagan families
- Humorous President Nixon toys and games, including table tennis paddles and a ring toss game

For more information visit:

<http://www.museumofplay.org/exhibits/playing-politics>

August 2016 - through January, 2017

Doc McStuffins Special Exhibit at the Indianapolis Children's Museum, Indianapolis, USA, 6th August 2016 - 22nd January 2017.

This special exhibit is the first partnership between Disney Junior and a museum. According to the museum, "Children and families will be transported to Doc's backyard clinic to learn about staying healthy, caring for others, and problem solving—all through imaginative play!"

For further information see the following website:

<https://www.childrensmuseum.org/exhibits/doc-mcstuffins>

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

November 2016 until January 2017

Jingle Rails: The Great Western Adventure, at the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, 19th November 2016 – 16th January 2017.

Nine model trains, primarily G-scale/gauge on over 350 meters of track wind through intricate layouts depicting modern and historic Indianapolis as well as national parks of the American West, passing legendary sites, including grand railway lodges, Northwest Coast Native villages, and U.S. landmarks such as Mt. Rushmore, Hoover Dam, and Yosemite Falls.

For further information see the following website:

[https://www.eiteljorg.org/explore/exhibitions/jingle-rails-the-great-western-adventure-\(2016\)](https://www.eiteljorg.org/explore/exhibitions/jingle-rails-the-great-western-adventure-(2016))

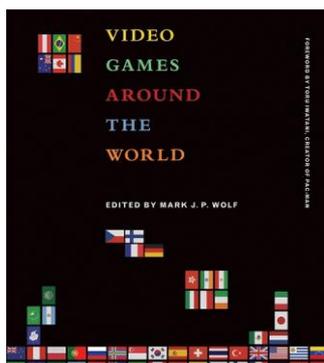
PUBLICATIONS & BOOKS

Book reviews, or book recommendations, are sought for the next edition of the ITRA Newsletter. Please submit these to the Editorial Team at itranewsltr@gmail.com. This edition also includes calls for papers on upcoming publications.

Wolf, M. J. (Ed.) (2015). *Video games around the world*. MIT Press.

Reviewed by L. van Leeuwen (University of Gothenburg, Sweden)

Mark Wolf from the World Building Institute at the University of Southern California edited this book which approaches the history of video games as a complex, situated and global phenomenon. As a spin-off from his Encyclopaedia of video games (2012), this book charts the diverse national histories of the gaming industry. The project for this book is unusual in the academic realm in so far as it breaks with the single specialist professional perspective and allows a diversity of voices and professional approaches which become comparable, to a degree, by the scaffold of topics provided by the editor. The reading results in an intriguing mosaic of information, more systematic on the business end and less so on the cultural end.



Authors from 37 countries around the globe describe their national emerging video-game industries in terms of the complex interplay of technological and business infrastructure, know-how in IT and computer graphics, as well as economical and political conditions. In a less prominent and consistent way the interplay of national heritage, gaming cultures, and indigenous game content has been addressed. Part of this historical information is published for the first time in English.

While it is impossible here to provide a comprehensive review of all aspects of the book worth mentioning, I will address a number of aspects that make this book stand out in my view due to the multitude of perspectives it provides.

Wolf summarizes in his introductory chapter the main tensions that are met by all national video game industries as those between

- Indigenous vs. foreign inputs
- Legitimate industry vs. piracy
- Mainstream vs. independent productions
- National vs. global market place
- Video games vs. other media

Comparing the respective historical contexts, including political and historical conditions and events, makes apparent their role as catalysts or obstacles to the rise of national gaming industries with more or less unique characters. At the same time, it highlights the immense influence the above-mentioned tensions exert on the opportunities and directions in which national gaming industries, develop. It also highlights the effects these historical contexts have on the inclusion or exclusion of specific populations in the industry itself.

What becomes apparent is that black and white assessments of how and when various gaming industries develop are only possible in a few cases, such as those that chronicle the development of the industry based on the nation's availability of electricity. More often, developments emerge from multiple interdependent causes. An example of such intersectionality is demonstrated through a discussion of the changing legislation regarding the control of piracy in the development and support of fledging national industries (e.g. China, Poland). At the same time, as Thomas, H. Apperley writes in the context of Venezuela, "Piracy cannot simply be understood in a proprietary manner. In a global economy based on knowledge and networks, exclusion equals poverty and in some cases, piracy enables inclusion in the economy"(p 623). Another example focuses on national preferences for playing games as social gatherings or individual play. The different national accounts show how those preferences can't be understood as consequences of simplified categorizations like collective vs. individualistic societies. Many other factors, such as the availability of platforms to play on, can diversify or even reverse preferences. Mobile phones and individual computers reduce the need to meet at places where gaming is possible. However, the popularity of large computer game rooms (e.g. PC Bang culture in South Korea) which are visited by groups of friends, are still popular in highly developed as well as in developing countries. While

MMPORGs were developed first in South Korea, their attraction is phenomenal for players from western countries alike.

Another aspect which, when compared over time and/or countries, demonstrates the dynamic, (i.e. unstable) nature of interdependencies between national interest and national video game industries, has to do with the appropriation of games for educational, propagandistic, health or marketing purposes. According to Wolf, this type of appropriated secondary use is second only to market-driven developments. For example, in China, the importance of games as a means to achieve computer literacy in children was recognized, early on, although in more recent times, such games were banned for children in order to minimize the influences of their foreign content, which were depicted by the government as ‘electronic heroin,’ and ‘spiritual pollutants’ for adolescents. At the same time, the national interest in video game revenue caused the government to support the development of national content which brought forward Chinese values. Another example is the rise of E-sport games in tandem with health agendas of many governments supporting the industry. In contrast, independent small companies are more likely to develop games that address more bottom up controversial topics stemming from subcultures in society. A variety of ways in which the interplay of global, national, subcultural and individual interests influence gaming platforms and content development emerges from the chapters.

Overall, though, the multiple influences of national histories and cultures do not garner a lot of explicit attention in the majority of the chapters. One aspect that is mentioned often is the fact that locally produced games gained popularity through the use of national events – often battles from the country’s ancient and recent history, as well as narratives and characters following legends and myths associated with the respective nations. Whether this is a matter of mere surface characteristics, or larger features affecting the course and goals of the games, is still a matter of debate. Instead of an overview I want to give one example here. Ahmad Ahmadi from Iran gives one of the few more in depth accounts of the way in which Persian history and culture affects game content in his country. He describes the influence of Iranian culture on video games in four dimensions: 1) the cultural heritage and identity of Iranians, and the forwarding of the monarchy and mythology; 2) the presence of Iranian identity and faith in the game content; 3) the forwarding of traditions, customs and rituals in which Iranian crafts and music are included; and 4) a continuous comparison of contemporary Iran with Europe, and its effects on the changed self perception of Iranians in the modern age. He shows how these dimensions contribute to the unique character of game content in everything from the types of characters, narratives and mission goals, (historical as well as more recent topics), to the age old famous art of storytelling, and the iconography and graphic styles that emerge in the games. His description could inspire a more comprehensive analysis of the role of national cultures for indigenous game development. Interest in the question of the role of games for national and individual identity formation is already high. Ahmadi’s chapter could add new perspectives to that discussion. At the end of the book it would have been helpful to include a chapter which undertakes some synthesis of the overwhelming material in order to arrive at some systematic comparisons. This would help to fulfil the huge potential of this book to formulate truly original research questions for many disciplines.

This is a pioneering book not because it provides a universal picture but because it breaks this universal picture down to discover global diversity.

The International Journal of Play: Call for Papers

The journal welcomes: reports on research projects; papers concerned with theory-practice links; policy critiques and expositions; reviews and analysis of contemporary and historical publications; essays, memoirs, and other forms of reflective writing; writing that builds on the experience and voices of children and young people; and, theoretical position papers. The International Journal of Play will appear three times a year and the contents of the first issue can be found at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rijp20/current>



MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

- 1) Amazon unveils most wanted toys for Christmas 2016 with robot pets and the FURBY.
<http://www.vam.ac.uk/moc/exhibitions/clangers-bagpuss-co/>
- 2) This toy 'hospital' is fixing toys and spreading awareness about an important issue.
<http://www.heart.co.uk/news/quirky/toy-hospital-spreading-awareness/#e47hEs1Vz420YoOX.97>
- 3) Child's play: Wrestling coaches use stuffed toys of Olympics mascot Vinicius as challenge flags to question referees' decisions in Rio 2016.
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3742088/>
- 4) Newcastle business that sells unwanted toys announces £10m revenue goals.
<http://www.chroniclive.co.uk/business/business-news/newcastle-business-sells-unwanted-toys-11768331>
- 5) Toys 'R' Us wants to hire a kid to professionally test toys.
<http://fortune.com/2016/07/26/toys-r-us-kid-test-toys/>
- 6) Life at sea? A look at the future of Toys-to-Life.
<http://www.toynews-online.biz/business-analysis/read/life-at-sea-a-look-at-the-future-of-toys-to-life/047166>
- 7) Toy firm may face in-depth competition probe.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-37117542>
- 8) Toy Library opens in Apopka.
<http://theapokkavoice.com/toy-library-opens/>
- 9) Big toy makers clash with the inventors they depend on.
<https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2016-toy-inventor-lawsuit/>
- 10) Steam-powered toys are now highly prized.
<http://www.epworthbells.co.uk/what-s-on/out-about/steam-powered-toys-are-now-highly-prized-1-8060677>
- 11) Design graduate invents toy system to fill “severe gap in autism toys market.”
<http://www.toynews-online.biz/news/read/design-graduate-invents-toy-system-to-fill-severe-gap-in-autism-toys-market/047100>
- 12) EWA teachers are using a new STEM tool: toys.
<http://www.thestarpress.com/story/news/education/2016/08/19/ewa-teachers-using-new-stem-tool-toys/88991664/>
- 13) Are gendered toys harming childhood development?
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/may/28/toys-kids-girls-boys-childhood-development-gender-research>
- 14) Parents have been warned about toys that could present potential hazards to children
http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/dangerous-toys-for-kids_uk_57739c6fe4b02d11d8d381d6
- 15) The toy smuggler of Aleppo: how one man brings joy to the faces of Syria's children
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/10/the-toy-smuggler-of-aleppo-how-one-man-brings-smiles-to-the-face/>
- 16) Will smart toys make parents lazy?
<https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2016/mar/29/smart-toys-lazy-parents-internet-of-things-hello-barbie>
- 17) Railway campaign reunites lost toys with owners.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-35706970>
- 18) Infants prefer toys typed to their gender, says study
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/07/160715114739.htm>



ITRA 2016 Fees Notice

Please note that, according to the ITRA Board's decision in Alicante, 8th August 2005, conference fees cover ITRA membership fees until the following conference. This means that conference participants who paid full registration fees for the 7th ITRA conference in Braga, Portugal 2014 have been exempted from paying ITRA dues for the years 2015 through 2017.

If you were not able to attend the conference in Braga, you must submit your annual membership fee for 2016 to remain an ITRA member in good standing.

Annual membership: €50
Retiree// Student membership: €25

Payments may be made

a) through bank transfer to the following account number

International Toy Research Association,
National Bank of Greece, Pal. Phaliro branch 175
Account number: 175/480074.53
IBAN Number: GR16 0110 1750 0000 1754 8007 453
SWIFT: ETHNGRAA

b) by sending an International Money Order, payable to ITRA, to the Treasurer at the following address:

Cleo Gougoulis
73 Terpsihoris St.
P.Phaleron
17562 Athens
Greece

Please notify the ITRA Treasurer, Cleo Gougoulis, by sending an e-mail to: cleogougoulis@yahoo.gr, when you send your fees to the bank. It is important to mention what amount and in which currency you paid.

EPILOGUE

If you attended a conference this year - toy related, preferably - have anything to say, whether about yourself, publications you have read or would like to recommend to the ITRA membership, events, research or just anything, or would like to propose an ITRA member we could profile, do not hesitate to contact either Suzy or Mark, via itranwsltr@gmail.com. We intend to publish a winter edition in December 2016. This edition will contain a Call-for-Papers for the upcoming ITRA conference in Finland, and all pertinent logistic material related to the conference. In the meantime, the editors of the newsletter would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue of the ITRA newsletter.

We would encourage you to feel free to send the editors articles, which we can share with the rest of the ITRA members. If English is not your first language, please do not let this be a hindrance to contacting the Editorial Team; we are more than happy to assist in editing items from contributors.

Regards
Suzy & Mark

We do not stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing.

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)