childhood intruding on adulthood. Discussions include instances of blurring age boundaries, provide examples of growing sideways as an alternative way of growing and being, and disassociates the idea from rigid age categories—all suggesting that growing sideways is as valid as growing up. The monograph explores whether power structures around gender affect possibilities of both upwards and sideways growth. Focusing on children's literature, television series, films, and participatory events, the author provides new models for understanding and navigating growth, exploring how strategies for sideways growth might operate. Sideways growth, she suggests, is a broad cultural phenomenon, traced through alternative cultural practices, altering affective and other meanings of bodies, clothes, behaviors, attitudes, and spaces.

Sideways growth is a broad cultural phenomenon, and this research contributes to linking other research on age and children, while endeavoring to expand age studies to concerns other than gerontology. By deconstructing the idea of a grand narrative of the dichotomy between childhood and adulthood, growing sideways, then, evokes improvised, rather than rule-governed growth. Through an exploration of power structures around age and gender, the alternative of growing sideways as a distinct alternative discourse about human growth provides a fresh perspective for supporting young people mostly unfamiliar with the idea. This monograph effectively destabilizes the boundaries between childhood and adulthood by examining a range of social and political phenomena and a variety of cultural forms. The author maintains that this monograph could be considered "a toolkit for identifying, contextualizing and investigating alternative ideas of growth" (p. 196). With a strong theoretical approach and a thoroughness of investigation, the book clearly meets, if not exceeds, its intent. Anyone researching sideways growth or who supports children and youth comfortably negotiating the process of growing up will find this monograph informative and useful.

—Betty Liebovich, *Goldsmiths University, London, United Kingdom*

The Infinite Playground: A Player's Guide to the Imagination

Bernand De Koven with Holly Gramazio; Celia Pearce and Eric Zimmerman, eds.
Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2020.
Foreword, introduction, what-if-ing, a lack of conclusion, further reading, contributors. 186 pp. $29.95 paperback. ISBN: 9780262044073

The Infinite Playground proposes that playful thinking and collective imagining can have a transformative impact on the world. Bernard De Koven taught, designed, and preserved play for over fifty years. His seminal work, *The Well-Played Game* (1978, 2013) continues to inspire students and designers with its focus on designing for the play community. *The Infinite Playground* continues his interest in play and community by examining how collective play and imagination can transform the world into a space of possibility.

The volume aims to aid "people in the fields of game design, film, multimedia,

science, art, architecture, and literature, to join in the collective effort to create new, and concurrently imaginary, invitations to playful learning" (p. 5). To address this diverse audience, the text draws from game studies, educational theory, the arts, theoretical physics, and the perspectives of professional sports and TV personalities to complement the author's personal experiences and observations of play in action. Interstitial essays from leading figures in the play and games community close each section of the text, providing invaluable examples of the transformational impact of De Koven's ideas within academic, design, and personal contexts. Perhaps the most successful aspect of this book is the exemplification of core ideas within twenty-six games that position the reader as player and provide space for the reader's ideas and reflections on the text to emerge through the act of play. One example, Prui, demonstrates the power of being within a collective by asking players to wander around a room together and seek to gather everyone into one big Prui (or group) through simple social interactions all while they keep their eyes closed.

Following the introduction, the "Fundamentals of Play," section 1, introduces De Koven's well-played game (a concept where players work together to make the game fun), play community, and views of social politics in play. Play, he argues, is one of the best ways to access the imagination because play is "presence and responsiveness, lightness and attentiveness, improvisation and creativity, a willingness to let go and become part of something new" (p. 22). Play takes on the broadest possible definition, and often we promote playfulness rather than more formal play

forms (such as games) for engaging with the imagination.

Section 2, "The Private Imagination," discusses playing inside one's own imagination and how this can reshape perspectives on the world and allow access to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's often referenced state of flow. The discussion of empathy and flow states are particularly persuasive regarding the social power of play. De Koven argues that play allows access to the experience of being someone else and can evoke empathy. It is therefore a "failure of the imagination" (p. 57) if players do not try to empathize with others; empathy is always accessible because play is always accessible. Flow is introduced as a social concept, through an applied game of Blather (p. 59). In the game, players must speak a flow of consciousness without fear, alone or together. De Koven argues that playing this game, and its multiple variations, promotes a social state of flow and empathy.

Section 3, "The Shared Imagination," extends the social reading of flow theory by introducing "coliberation" (p. 82), the relationship between "we and me" in group play to reach a state of positive social play and collective imagining. The social politics of playing together are expertly considered throughout the text thanks to the inclusion of game variations and techniques to engage players—for example, by designing for a "well-timed cheat" or permission to stop. Too often game design focuses on rules and constraints rather than the (social) experience of play. The text provides an alternative and invaluable set of design approaches for player-centered social collaborative play.

Section 4, "The Working Imagination,"

showcases the manifestation of playfulness under different guises within scientific, business, and education workplace settings. This leads to the final and most ambitious section, "Being in the World," which focuses on transformational potential by arguing that basing the world on collectively imagined constructs and systems provides us all with the power to reimagine such systems if we so wish. The section provides examples of how ecological and moral issues may be addressed through collective reimagining. As a result, a transferable playful framework for collective reimagining can be formed by the reader with a little imagination. The book closes with "a lack of conclusion," a poignant reflection on a life dedicated to play.

The Infinite Playground is fundamentally about playing in the world together and how playfulness can shed light on our social selves and communities, the systems we collectively coproduce to govern and shape our society, and how these can be reimagined through play. The core ideas complement James P. Carse's *Finite and Infinite Games* (2013) and Miguel Sicart's *Play Matters* (2014) and make a valuable contribution by promoting ambition in the use of play and imagination within a range of contexts while providing guidelines for enlivening this ambition. The text will interest students, academics, and practitioners in play, games studies and game design, performing arts, business, and social sciences, and it is an ideal introduction to the work of De Koven and other leading practitioners in play and game design.

The book is part game studies text, part game design manual, part "something to play," and part love letter to the work of its author. It reaches out its hand, whispers Prui, and invites you to join the play community.

—Lynn Love, *Abertay University, Dundee, United Kingdom*

Making Games: The Politics and Poetics of Game Creation Tools
Stefan Werning
Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2021. Introduction, notes, references, and index. 158 pp. $25 hardcover. ISBN: 9780262044837

The assumption behind The MIT Press Playful Thinking series is "video games are such a flourishing medium that any new perspective on them is likely to show us something unseen or forgotten" (p. vii). As a part of the series, *Making Games: The Politics and Poetics of Game Creation Tools* by Stefan Werning provides such a new perspective.

The goal of the book is to "make sense of the increasing abundance of game-making tools and to conceptualize their influence on both the politics and aesthetics of digital games" (p. 6). Werning goes on to explain that game creation is a dialogue among the game designer, the development tools she uses, and the broader social context in which she designs. This "sociotechnical system" (p. 5) view of game creation provides much of the fodder for the new perspective found in the book. From this view, tool use is not just a creative practice but also "a cultural and communicative practice" (p. ix).

The first chapter, "Making Sense of Tools," highlights a major theme: making