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**From the Streets of Wellington to the Ivy League:  
Reflecting on a Lifetime of Play**  
An Interview with Brian Sutton-Smith  
Conducted by Fraser Brown and Michael Patte

This interview came about because Brian Sutton-Smith was invited to deliver a keynote address at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary International Play Association (IPA) Conference in Cardiff, Wales, but due to failing health, he was unable to attend. The conference organisers were keen to have input from Brian and delegated Fraser Brown to conduct an interview during the 2011 conference of The Association for the Study of Play (TASP). In collaboration with Michael Patte, the President of TASP, questions were framed for the interview and shared with Brian in advance. However, those who know Brian will not be surprised to hear that on the day of the interview he simply checked that the camera was rolling, and then started talking. He stopped about an hour later, having delivered a presentation of the highest quality. Those who were present felt privileged to have been there.

The interview took place in the *Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play*, at the Strong National Museum of Play, on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011. An edited DVD of the interview was shown at the IPA Conference on Thursday July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011, and is available to download from: [www.ipa2011.org](http://www.ipa2011.org).

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**Fraser Brown & Michael Patte:** Would you like to start by sharing some of your memorable childhood play experiences from Wellington, New Zealand?

**Brian Sutton-Smith:** Sure, I'll tell you some of my own ways of playing. We used to like to go past the grocery store where there were eggs outside on sale. We'd steal a few eggs and then walk about a hundred yards along the road where there was a big advert for the movies – flicks we called them. And we'd take the eggs, I'm afraid we were very sexist, and we'd try to hit the beautiful women's faces. We did that a few times. The last time was when the proprietor came running out and chased us. I was running up the street that was very shady, and I lay down in the gutter because there was no light there and it was dark. He came hammering past but didn't catch me. I stopped taking eggs from then on.

Another one was a wonderful game involving cow pots. Now a cow pot is a big round cow poop that dries on the surface but is still soft and sloppy underneath. And we had fights. You put your hand on top, scoop it out on the dry part, and then throw it at each other's faces. It was difficult as it would break and get on your clothes and your mother would go nuts. That was combined with horse dung grenades; use your imagination.

One of the other great childhood New Zealand amusements happened in the forest. After World War I a lot of people were out of work and so they were put to work planting pine trees. So, all round the hills were pine trees. When we started exploring the pine tree forests we found that these were the places where lovers went. If you went quietly through the trees you could find lovers doing their thing. We would be laughing and we couldn't stop ourselves. We'd take pinecones and throw them at the lovers. Several times we'd have great contact, and a pinecone would hit the back of the man doing his thing. Sometimes it would be ok, but sometimes the man would get up and chase us full of anger and we would run screaming down the tracks. They had tracks going through these pine trees and we would disappear lying behind a tree and hoping we didn't get caught. We didn't do this very often because it was too dangerous. I'm giving you the sort of flavour of New Zealand play.

**Brown & Patte:** How did you first get involved in studying children's play?

**Sutton-Smith:** In New Zealand, I first started studying play because I was a teacher. We went through three years of training and in the last year you had a classroom of your own. What I found almost immediately was that there were no stories for children written in New Zealand and about New Zealand. They were all about British stuff, so I started to write. At that time I was a teacher in a Standard 3 School in Wellington, New Zealand - down in a big valley, down to the beach, raining all the time. I thought – okay I know all about this, and this is where the books that I wrote came from. 'Our Street' was my first book. It came by the end of the year; the others came later. I felt I was doing okay as the childhoods of the boys in my books were like my childhood. My stories reflected my own experiences. The kids loved them and I was doing well with them.

At that time they had journals for each age level with reading material in them, but never anything about New Zealand. A friend who was a teacher too was able to persuade the Education Department in Wellington, who were responsible for the journals to include my chapters and produce one each month, which for me was real glory. So

they did, but there was an awful argument that came from the Headmasters Association about the slang that was being introduced to children via these stories, and the rather dubious morality of children stealing and things of that kind. In fact the issue got into the New Zealand parliament, and the conservatives (the National Party) argued that my stories should not be allowed, because they were full of slang, and gave a disgusting representation of the nature of New Zealand childhood. So they were banned, and I was sitting there thinking, what the hell is going on here? That's when I started to become famous. The Education Department stopped recommending the chapters, but of course they got published immediately. So they became famous in their own way, and because the books were banned they sold pretty well. In subsequent years, I wrote two more.

That interest in play became central to my life. All this happened at a time when I was completing a PhD. I'd done a Masters degree at Victoria University, Wellington, and then the PhD. With all the happenings in the school, I decided to make the PhD about games and play. During that time I travelled all over New Zealand and I found play everywhere. I didn't have enough money to travel so I used to travel with physical educationalists. They were very positive with me because I was into play, which was their life. I would go with them to different schools and ended up visiting about 30 of them. I slept much of the time in their car at night and it was frosty and wet. It was a hardship; I got quite sick at one time which was part of the art of doing this thing. I got all this data and put it together as I found it, and the kids' jokes are a part of it.

**Brown & Patte:** Can you provide some background to the stories you wrote for the children in New Zealand?

**Sutton-Smith:** To my surprise the famous anthropologist Robert Fagen came up with a discussion of the three storybooks I had written about childhood in New Zealand. One was called 'Our Street', one was called 'Smitty Does a Bunk' (that means runs away), and finally 'The Cobbers' (that's about fights between different groups and so on). What he said, I would never have had the gall to say myself, but it goes this way.

In Sutton-Smith's Wellington play is earthy, physical, rough-edged, mischievous, subversive, competitive, occasionally cruel, not always fun, rarely lyrical and sometimes violent. Protagonists Brin and Smitty and their friends are real children, not idealised figments of romantic fantasy, they love to fight and squabble and slug it out. Their playful feistiness propels them into impromptu and organised sports, and through it all they manage to deepen their friendships, to grow and to mature and to hold on to some of their dreams. The boys build forts, have spitting contests, play pick-up versions of cricket and rugby, chant rude rhymes, visit the zoo and go to the movies where they yell, throw papers and apple cores and surreptitiously turn down seats so that their occupants fall flat when they try to sit down. Sutton-Smith recounts gritty wondrous truths of play as play close up and personal in the streets and backyards of depression era Wellington. His books, revolutionary children's literature in their day, remain nothing short of outstanding. And later in non-fiction works Sutton-Smith further illuminates the play histories of his native New Zealand.

What am I to think of this? It's quite exciting, and gives us an idea of how variable play can be in some situations. The difficulty of saying that this is how play is in New Zealand is that the girls are left out. In my book, 'Games for New Zealand Children', I have a lot of female play.

The cover of the three kids books has a cartoon, and the characters are supposedly myself, my elder brother, who was always bashing me, and Horsey. Horsey's opinion was always his opinion; getting him to move was a pain in the arse. And there's Smitty, my brother who doesn't look especially brutal but he was a champion boxer who won his weight every year; so I thought I had to do that too. So I tried and I got beaten most of the time, but I did win one year. I was a welter-weight boxing champion for the year so that was kind of nice. I didn't go round punching people like my brother did, but nevertheless some imitation was afforded. Then there was Gormy, whose house it was. In New Zealand everything is on a hill, you have to find places to get the sun. Gormy's house had a front door porch, and we used to congregate there, trying to decide what we would do in the afternoon; trying to decide all those things that you have often heard me talk about. New Zealand is permanently windy and a little bit on the cool side and it rains all the time, so as a kid you run to school through the rain, and you have to run like hell. Anyway, these are the four kids on the cover of the book, and they are trying to get it together and have some fun. They engage in the kind of play that people don't want to acknowledge some of the time, but it is pretty central to many street boys.

**Brown & Patte:** Tell us about the importance of folklore studies in shaping your thinking about play.

**Sutton-Smith:** The really exciting thing that came my way was the work of Peter and Iona Opie. I met Peter in a bar in England, when I first went to England in the early 1950s. He and his wife had written books about the history

of literature for children. Apparently there was literature for kids to read way back for about a thousand years. He and I got talking, and I had just finished my thesis, 900 pages of the games of New Zealand children, and he said "We don't have anything about play", so I talked him into doing play and the Opie's came out with the book *The Language and Lore of School Children*. It came out in 1959, and I came out with *The Games of New Zealand Children* at the same time, nowhere near the status of theirs of course. What excited me was the contents in their book that fit the six or seven categories that I've been talking about. Wow! The way they related the emotions to particular kinds of behaviour derived from their information which had come from all over the British Isles, and mine was mainly from New Zealand. This was a validation that hit me over the head with a big bang.

So, I joined the folklore people. Actually I co-created the Children's Folklore Society because I found that I could learn more about gangs talking to folklore people, than to psychologists. Psychologists are trapped by their own need for an experiment. Good or bad as it may be, it doesn't take you to the world, whereas folklore is about traditions wherever they are.

**Brown & Patte:** Can you share some examples of children's jokes that you collected?

**Sutton-Smith:** When I got a Fulbright scholarship to come to America, England, and elsewhere I travelled the world looking for play and for the arguments about play. So you go to Freud and Piaget of course, but I found some great folklorists who were really most helpful sending me stuff from all over the world. I'd written these books about kids play as they really were. That's what kids were like. People didn't want to think that they were like that, but they were - rough and ready.

When I got to Bowling Green State University as a Professor of Educational Psychology I had my own Masters students go out and find what jokes the 11 year olds in Ohio told. So here we go with some of the jokes from Ohio. If I was in trouble before...!

*Mrs Jones, Nancy was run over by a steamroller. Oh just slide her under the door I'm taking a bath.*

*Mother can I go ice skating? No you cannot. Why not? The skates won't fit your crutches.*

*Mummy can I go up in the elevator? No your iron lung won't fit.*

*Mummy I don't want to go to China. Shut up and keep digging.*

*Mummy can we have a dog? Shut up and keep barking.*

*Mummy why is father running across the field? Shut up and reload the gun.*

*Hey mum why does dad always loose his head? Shut up and sharpen the axe.*

*Mummy why can't we get a garbage disposal? Shut up or I will flush it again.*

*Mummy it's dark down here. Shut up and put that pillow in place.*

*Mummy can I lick the bowl? Shut up and flush it like anyone else.*

*Mummy, mummy daddy is throwing up all over the bathroom. Why are you crying son? Because my sister is getting all the big pieces.*

*Oh mum I hate grandpa's guts. Shut up and eat what's put in front of you.*

*Mummy, mummy my little brother is on fire. Then hurry and get a marshmallow.*

*Mummy I want out of the closet. Shut up we don't want the fire to spread to the rest of the house.*

*Mummy, mummy I'm tired of running in circles. Shut up or I will nail your other foot to the floor.*

This was the beginning of my interest in humour. There are lots of them. Here are some more - verbal insults:

*Your nose is like a faucet. Drip, drip, drip.*

*Your arse is grass and my fist is a lawnmower.*

This is wonderful stuff, nobody else had ever, as far as I know made this available to the ordinary population.

*Fatty, fatty, 2 by 4, can't get through the bathroom door. So we went all over the floor, licked it up and went some more.*

*Green, green gods of juicy grimy gopher guts, mutilated monkey feet chopped up a paraquet. Eagles eyes and a great big bowl of puss and me without a spoon.*

*Do you know what is 4 feet long and hangs in the trees in Africa? Elephant snot.*

Deformity jokes:

*What is the name of a man with no arms and legs in the water? Bob.*

*What's the name of a man with no arms and legs coming in the mail? Bill.*

It's this kind of material (and I have a lot more of it) that makes me think if we are trying to understand play we'd better try and understand humour. This is free floating stuff; these kids are making it up. We always say that play gives you the freedom to make things up, to do what you like – free play anyway. Now this seems to be happening in the humour, so what are the parallels? I'm not trying to answer that just yet, but this is the sort of thing I'm aiming for.

By the way there was a lot of nice African-American stuff too.

*Listen my children and you shall hear of the midnight ride of diarrhoea. Hasten Jason get the basin, oops plop get the mop.*

*You're ma, you're pa, you're orphan Annie, you're greasy granny, you're Frankenstein with a black behind, you're Cleopatra, you titty-snatcher.*

This is more mature stuff as you can see:

*A girl from Kansas City:*

*There's a girl from Kansas City. She's got meatballs for her titties. She's got scrambled eggs between her legs. That's the girl from Kansas City.*

*I like coffee, I like tea, I like a coloured boy and he likes me.*

*Step back white boy cos you don't shine. I'll get a coloured boy to kick your behind.*

That's a brief group that indicates there is a lot of humour around, managed by children. What I'm trying to do is to say how do I put it with those games to identify common attitudes and so on.

**Brown & Patte:** Can you share some examples of children's stories that you collected?

**Sutton-Smith:** When I moved to Columbia University in New York I got my MA students going on children's stories, and we collected hundreds of them. They're all collected in a large book. I should tell you a few.

Here's a 2 year old:

*The cat went on the cakie; the cat went in the car. The cookie was in my nose; the cookie went on the fireman's hat. The fireman's hat went on the bucket, the cookie went on the carousel, the cookie went on the puzzle; the cookie went on the doggie.*

Not bad for two years of age. That's Alice.

*The dog went on the popa; the popa went on the house; the house went on the pigeon.*

Here's Beatrice, another 2 year old:

*She makes pee on the floor. Then she goes with her mum to the Ferris wheel. Now she went home and saw her dada. And now the daddy went away. Now her grandpa is dead. Now she crept into her bed. Now she had a new baby. Her mother said no babies allowed. Now all the people were stuffy and had medicine. The end*

These are 2-year-old kids in pre-schools in New York City. I told my students to take the kids into the corridor and say, "Can you tell me your stories - I'd like to hear your stories" and the kids loved it. Anyway that's 2-year-olds and I have a lot of them like that that are more perceptual - going from a to b to c to d.

These are from 7-year-olds:

*Now there was a parked car boo boo. There was a dog do do. And you didn't like dog do do. Then there was a man named snowball, and he didn't like snow cha cha, choo choo, cha cha, choo choo. I named dog do do, Christopher say do do do. Then there was a boy named Torsor, oh do do. Then there was a Captain Bluper he had a hook and he was very bad and it hurt him. Then there was a blue pa pa pa, there was superman coming and you heard both him knees and then they were flying and they went right into the ocean and he got a bite from a shark and he didn't like when he got a bight from a shark, then Clark Clark to to, te ta.*

This is the world upside down and it was published by the University of Pennsylvania Press. I was a double professor at The University of Pennsylvania. They made me a Professor of Folklore as well as a Professor of Developmental Psychology – and they courageously accepted all this stuff.

Felix:

*A baby was walking down the street making trouble and when the baby saw a man passing her she said you suck your buggers two times yeh yeh. Then they went to a music studio and they heard "keep coming in a b c, a b c, 1 2 3" And then the baby said "I can do the whole alphabet abcdefg ... tuvwxyz, that's how". Then the baby said I spit at you. And then she spitted in the air. Then the baby said abc my bugger. Then the baby said I think I'm so smart just because I have one more tooth out. Then the baby said I am superman you can't hurt superman.*

This goes on for a couple of pages so if you forgive me we can stop. Here's an 8-year-old:

The gerbil:

*Once upon a time there was a gerbil and it liked to play. He always sticks his nose out of the cage and I tickle it. Sometimes he bites me but I don't care because it doesn't hurt that much. He has a nice bottle that he sleeps in that's full of colours that shredded cardboard. He always tries to climb up the water bottle I love him. The end.*

This is very relevant to the way we should go.

This is a 9-year-old:

*It's about a murderer and use swords, daggers, knives, spears, nun chucks, and different types of stars. He pokes people's eyes out with files and daggers. He pokes people's eyes out with chick blocks. He beats people up in their stomach with nun chucks with three sticks.*

Pretty good when you're 9 years.

Olive 10 years:

*Henry tick.*

*Chapter one.*

*A few years ago Henry Tick lived in a hippy's hair but he got a crew cut so Henry had to move. He went to the dog pound but it was closed. He went to the pet shop but it was closed too. He finally found a nice basset hound so he moved in. He got a good job in the circus jumping 2 inches in the air into a glass of water. One day he jumped but*

*there was no water. He was rushed to the hospital. They put 12 stitches into his leg. Well he never went there again. The end.*

You're getting quite mature stuff here. It's wild, isn't it? I'm glad I'm reading it to you. I hadn't realised how wild it is. This is fantasy, and I think all of this is making pretend into a function a bit like any other function. I think we tend to assume pretend is functional in more rational kinds of ways, and that's a big mistake.

**Brown & Patte:** What were you trying to find out when you began working on *The Ambiguity of Play*?

**Sutton-Smith:** When I began to talk seriously about play I collected every kind of play I could, and I found play that was of different kinds. There is solitary play, mind play, playful behaviours, informal social play, various audiences' play, performance play, celebrations and festivals, contests, games and sports, risky or deep play – in fact I found 308 different types of play. So what is one going to do with that? There is just an incredible amount of it and that's what I am going to struggle with today.

In 1997 I published a book called '*The Ambiguity of Play*' trying to come to grips with the question 'what the heck is play'? How can it be all these 308 phenomena? And I came up with what I call the rhetorics of play, which are basically the major forms that people argue in favour of. In the *Ambiguity* book I included plays about progress, plays that are about fate, plays that are about power, plays that are about identity, plays that are about the imaginary, plays that are about self, and plays that are about frivolity. I made these the seven major ways that play is. What good was that? Well, you discover when you look at all these that there are modern forms and there are ancient forms.

Modern forms are the ones where people talk about the psychological development that is going on in the play form whereas in a more historical and literary stance there are those that seem to be talking about play as types of imagination. Back in Kant's time there was a great change in science that had been orientated towards perceptions until that point. Instead, he suggested that imagination was always involved; hypotheses that were created were the result of imagination, which could be positive or negative. So the fifth rhetoric is about play that is imagination. The sixth rhetoric is really about the self - a modern preoccupation with ontology. This play is about the subjectivity of the agent. That's a couple of the modern ones.

Then we get the ancient ones, which have been around much longer. The main one is all about contests, and the winners and losers. That's the big one in most cases, but also there are play forms that are about membership, and that's what you get in festivals and that sort of stuff. Then there is another one about risk; that's about gambling, and jumping off mountains and parachutes and so on. And finally there is nonsense and that's for the tricksters.

So, I had myself seven rhetorics three modern and four ancient but where did that get me? Well I had a real breakthrough when Antonio Damasio, a neurologist, said there are several types of emotion - and I've got seven rhetorics of play. Now I've got to make that work, so I began to look at his emotions. Damasio said there are two types – primary and secondary. The primary emotions are shock, anger, fear, disgust, sadness and joy. And then there are the secondary emotions, which are empathy, pride, envy, embarrassment, guilt, and shame.

And then we get people like the famous neurologist Panksepp, who was at Bowling Green State University. I knew this guy was doing something interesting, but I had no idea it was going to be as good as it was. He was able to locate the primary emotions in the amygdala area, in the centre of the brain, and the regulative emotions at the front of the brain, the conceptual part of the brain. The primary emotions are called reptile emotions, universal emotions, survival emotions, amygdala dominant emotions, first-year-of-life emotions, negative emotions, involuntary emotions, reflexive emotions, and destructive emotions. Now we're starting to get complicated, but these things can all be fitted to the primary emotions. The secondary emotions are sometimes called mammal emotions, cultural emotions, familial emotions, neo-cortical and dominant emotions, seventy-year onward emotions, positive emotions, voluntary emotions, social emotions, and compassionate emotions.

So what am I going to do now? I find that the rhetorics sort of match these primary and secondary emotions. How do I match Damasio's emotions with the phenomenon of play? For example, anger: what sort of a play fits that? Children's insults, gangs, jeers, torments, mean play, spoilsports, cheats, bullies, school rivalries, paints, jewels, food fights, riddles, jokes, tic-tac-toe, checkers, chess, video games, rough and tumble, play fighting of all kinds; also adult's games of physical contest such as football, wrestling, boxing, ice hockey, basketball, baseball and

symbolic contests such as board chess, checkers, video and computer games. They are all governed consciously or otherwise by anger, by the design of attack, to defeat, to win. So that's the contest phenomenon. Now I can do the same sort of thing with fear, disgust, sadness, and joy. It gets assimilated into the world of play.

What do I do then? Well, I went around trying to match some of the other things. The world was suffering from all kinds of people's other ideas. Take Kant who talks about player's imagination; Schiller who talks about aesthetics; Groos who talks about orderly work; Spencer who talks about lower faculties; Freud who talks about instinctive or regressive expressions; Ericsson who talks about true or pseudo play; Winnicott who talks about instinctive or scaffolded play; Piaget who talks about cognition distortion or assimilation; and so on and so on. There are all these other forms of looking at play; they're all available. So my job is to hang in and make it go the way I suggested it could go.

**Brown & Patte:** How has your thinking evolved since publishing *The Ambiguity of Play*?

**Sutton-Smith:** My general mental attitude now is that we won't be able to understand play until we at least understand play and humour, and play and narrative. I'm making these statements because throughout my career I have collected lots of evidence. There may be other big bags of variables, but these three are all the sort of things that children do. At the very least I'm trying to find similarities across what are otherwise thought to be very different disciplines. What I will try to communicate to you is an answer to what play is really about. I think we can only really understand it if we take play and humour and stories (which are three things I've spent a lot of time on), and find mutual frameworks across them. It's only when we do so, that we really understand what we are doing.

I have worked up a pending book called '*Play as Emotional Survival*'. I will argue in that book that if we want to think about play we have to think about it as more of a mythology. Now a mythology has all sorts of movements and all sorts of angles and there's usually a spiritual aspect. I began to play with that idea and it gradually came to me that if I want to understand play I also need to understand stories and narrative. Children do that too; they make up stories as part of their play; but even more important they make up jokes and humour. So if I could find the pattern that goes with play as myriadly described, and humour which is of all kinds, and the narrative which is stories, then we might have a grasp of this mythology, whatever it is, and the way the emotions are shared across it.

I feel the model for these stories and jokes is dreams. We keep on finding models for the other things that children do from other human actions. I've got to work this out a bit more clearly of course. The kids start from their dreams; they start from the way the mind can do anything, anything they've ever thought. If they told their mothers about some of the stuff they thought they would get it in the neck. We've not paid enough attention to night dreams. If you want to know what the source of these stories and jokes is, it might just be the night dreams.

The play forms are the light of day. They are more conditioned; they are more our language. We like studying them because we can make them more rational, but is it really so rational? Take a look at people at soccer matches. If you look at the stands, there's thousands of people yelling and screaming. The game allows them to be angry. I remember a student I had once who was going to basketball. He said "It's the only time I get to scream." We don't in ourselves recognise that there are many daytime things that are as bad as the bad dream-time. It's kind of the basic nastiness the basic earthiness is to be found in the dream-like world. The mind can do any damn thing it likes in a dream, and the earliest statements that imitate this are found in children's play.

Not all children's play is nasty; it gets educated and gets trained. When I was a teacher you had to go around the playground because some play was just nasty as hell. Kids who were playing marbles had a hell of a hard job saving them. In the game of scragging one kid is in the middle and everybody else comes charging through the middle and he's got to catch one and bang him three times. Then you were in the middle and you were allowed to bash them in the back, bang, bang, bang. We had a playground field that was not as big as a football field but it was a long run and gradually the group in the middle got bigger and bigger as you got caught. Finally no kids could get through and they got scragged. Some kids weren't allowed to play because their shirts got ripped. But most of us wanted to be rugby players, so scragging was a good game.

This is near to primitivism, and I would give dreams the root credit for the fact that the mind can do any damn thing, and you are taught not to have those sorts of dreams. My wife would wake up screaming in the middle of the night. She would completely lose it. Her screaming and yelling was all part of the foundry of the dream life.



Jokes are like that too. You get more freedom from a joke and you can go to hell in one way or another. So when nice people try to understand children playing the forces of nature are against what they want to do. I'm not saying we should give way to all this sort of stuff, but we might allow a certain amount of wildness. I think that what I'm advocating here is that pretend play is not just make-believe in a sweet way. It's much more important than we realise. We need to investigate pretend play more than we have done - the madness of pretence, not just the rationality of pretence.

Now this is an advocacy that would not be very popular. I suppose that civilisation says we should fight against all that kind of thing, but maybe we shouldn't. For that sort of thing, particularly in play terms, we have to make a very large allowance. I haven't quite got it stated correctly yet. There has to be limits I realise, but we try to make these things rational somehow, and that doesn't quite do them justice. There are places where the madness of the human mind is expressed – take a look at those madmen in those audiences. People go on like crazy.

I should write a novel actually, nobody's going to believe this anyway. They're not going to know what to do with it except have a lot of fun I hope.

So earlier when I was talking about my wife screaming in the middle of the night lost in a dream, I learned that if I leaned over and took hold of her arm or what piece of her body was available, she would stop. Just a touch in the night on the arm or leg and the devil disappears you know!

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*Brian Sutton-Smith* was born in Wellington, New Zealand. He was the first New Zealand educator (1949) to receive a NZU Ph.D. educational research fellowship. Brian was nominated by Victoria University for a Rhodes Scholarship but proceeded to the USA with a Fulbright Post Graduate Fellowship in 1952. He converted his three children's books, written while a schoolteacher to a life-long search for the multiple meanings of human play. Brian has authored or edited 43 books on play and over 300 scholarly articles, while holding professorships and academic directorships at Bowling Green State University, Teacher's College Columbia University, and the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education where he is currently a professor emeritus.

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