

Pandemic toy play against social distancing: Teddy bears, window-screens and playing for the common good in times of self-isolation

11.5.2020

[ludounity](#) [pandemic toy play](#) [playful resilience](#) [self-isolation](#) [social distancing](#) [teddy bears](#) [toy activism](#)

Katriina Heljakka

katriina.heljakka[a]utu.fi

Doctor of Arts, Visual culture, MA Art History, M.Sc. Economics

Toy researcher

Pori Laboratory of Play

Digital culture

University of Turku

This article investigates the recent global phenomenon of the teddy challenge (nallejahti) with a focus on Finland. Beginning in March 2020 and as result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, Finnish citizens started to cheer up passersby by displaying teddy bears in their windows. As this activity gained media interest and popularity, it gradually grew into a form of contemporary toy play, inviting both children and adults to participate in the activity as displayers and spectators of toys. Furthermore, a gamified challenge was added on to this originally open-ended and visual-material play pattern made available to a broader audience thanks to sharing on social media. Through an examination of national and international newspaper articles and images posted with the hashtag #nallejahti on social media platforms, the phenomenon is articulated and analyzed through the theoretical lenses of mimetic object play, social screen-based play, and toy play as an act that potentially facilitates mental well-being through imagination, participation, and communal play—here understood as playing for the common good. By theorizing and framing the current phenomenon as pandemic toy play, the article suggests the importance of resourcefulness and playful social resilience as facets of a transgenerational play practice in times of forced self-isolation and physical social distancing.



Figure 1. "It'll be alright, hey!" A toy display presented by MLL (Mannerheim League for Child Welfare) Satakunnan Piiri, photographed by the author.

Introduction: Expressions of ludounity amidst a global crisis

Most often, in the Western context, playing is understood primarily as an activity of children and juvenile animals. However, adult play manifests in several ways, sometimes in association with children (and grandchildren) and even animals but also solitarily and socially within the context of interaction and activities of the matured. That is to say that playing is a universal phenomenon with transgenerational, even inter-species appeal.

Playing as a form of meta-communication (Bateson 1972/1999) is easy to recognize but sometimes challenging to define. For most people, playing means a pleasurable activity motivated by artifacts, environments, experiences, other players, and interactions facilitated by these actors. Key aspects of play are the voluntary participation in play and the intrinsic value of play, which means that playing is valuable due to its processes, not because of its outcomes. According to Bateson, the meta-communicative aspect of playing refers to the message "this is play" (Ibid.). This is to say that gestures of playing are capable of signaling the playful nature of the actions and, in this way, capable of inviting others to join in the playing.

A typology of children's play including fifteen categories has been developed from play workers' experiences and perspectives (Hughes 2002): symbolic play, rough and tumble play, socio-dramatic play, social play, creative play, communication play, dramatic play, deep play, exploratory play, fantasy play, imaginative play, locomotor play, mastery play, object play, and role play (NPFA 2000). This article centers around a hybrid play phenomenon, the teddy challenge, which

encompasses aspects of many categories of object play, such as the social, creative, communicative, fantasy, and imaginative dimensions of playing with things, or toy play. The article suggests that the current phenomenon of pandemic toy play is to be understood conceptually as mimetic object play, social screen-based play, and communal play for the common good.

Accepting that play is a universal right is a culturally specific belief that favors Western ways of viewing children and childhood (Greishaber & McArdle 2010, 11). Nevertheless, the play experiences of children vary in the world due to the different cultural, political, and economic circumstances in which they live. So do the play experiences of adults.

Play may be a strategy for survival or an avenue to deal with difficult things (Heljakka 2015b). By retaining a playful and creative mindset, *homo ludens*—the playing human being—has survived emotionally burdensome crises such as war. Play has been used in diverse ways as a part of therapy and to maintain cognitive, physical, and social well-being. Therefore, it is no surprise that play may be perceived as a resource with a significant role in preserving and enhancing human relations, particularly in challenging times.

Rituals of pandemic play are playful but in many cases with serious intentions. To give examples, the Italians singing from their balconies, the Spaniards giving applause every evening, the Espoo residents in Finland gathering on Friday evenings to listen at a local DJ playing Darude's hit song "Sandstorm"—all of these gestures acknowledge the virus as the invisible enemy feared by many but at the same time express gratitude to those working within health care, not to mention the global efforts to cheer and mobilize people through online means—taking part in video challenges featuring moving and dancing or by enjoying memes related to the challenges of working from home or not being able to drink and dine socially.^[1] These behaviors are all acts of communality, momentary rituals that became viral because of the weight of their gracious or humorous messages and their ability to elevate citizens mentally in times of uncertainty, anxiety, even sorrow.

Due to restrictions on human mobility and everyday life caused by the ongoing worldwide pandemic that started in the spring of 2020, people's social play interactions, in a traditional sense, have been drastically limited. Offline, play-related behaviors have needed to adjust according to governmentally directed rules regarding self-isolation, even quarantine. Consequently, online and screen-based play activities have gained momentum, even from the perspective of how physical toys and games can be played with to maintain a playful spirit despite the lack of physical closeness.

All of these actions produce questions about player motivation to participate in the practices as producers, consumers, facilitators, and other types of active agents engaging with play culture that emerges during a crisis. One of the media-covered motivations of the rituals seems to be to recognize the work of health care personnel, whereas another motivating factor might be to participate because of the individual desire to play for the sake of self-expression.

In a situation in which researchers all over the world are interested in the consequences of the pandemic lockdown with a special focus on its effects on mental health, it is crucial to reflect on this important topic from the perspective of play behavior as well.^[2] The results of the freedom to play are recognized by the author—the self-expression and the liberal approach to play materialize in activities such as the teddy challenge scrutinized in this article. Instances of play that have arisen during the pandemic have been picked up by news media to counterbalance the more serious news articles. However, as this article suggests, the teddy challenge presents a case of transgenerational

and communal toy play, which requires a multitude of considerations, such as analyses of socially emerging and activating toy play.

Playing as a form of human behavior is universal, but it may materialize differently in different areas of the world depending on the tools, systems, or environments used. *Ludodiversity* points to the regional forms of play-related behaviors. What is of interest for this article, however, is not the uniqueness of the forms of ludic culture on the level of individual regions but their relation to a global play pattern that has emerged from the current health crisis. Instead of focusing on the Finnish qualities of the teddy bear challenge, explained later, this article examines the phenomenon from the perspective of *ludounity*—a transcultural and globally connecting pattern of playing that is simultaneously practiced in multiple areas. It is in this regard that this article discusses social hybrid playing, a form of behavior that is communal, co-created, and partaken for the sake of the common good.

Aims of the study

The study presented in the article investigates playing during the current, world-scale COVID-19 pandemic by examining intergenerational toy play through the strategies of toy play in the 21st century, lenses of the positive effects of playing, and the communal and empathic potentialities of toy play identified in current, popular play patterns. By investigating the phenomenon of the teddy challenge with a focus on Finland, it aims to deconstruct this form of toy play by analyzing its motivations, message, and manifestations.

The research material consists of international and national newspaper articles, other media material such as blogs, and photoplay (or toy photography) posted on Twitter and Instagram during March through April 2020. These materials were collected by conducting an Internet search with the terms “nallejahti,” “nallehaaste,” and “teddy challenge” (the most commonly used English term for the play pattern) and scrutinized by conducting a thematic (visual and verbal) content analysis. Altogether, the author included nine national newspaper articles or other online publications, four international newspaper articles, and 100 instances of photoplay on Instagram and Twitter in the study. While analyzing the research material, the author also paid attention to other terms and hashtags (#nallejahti, #nallehaaste, #bongaanalle [teddychase, teddychallenge, spottedteddy]) used in association with the photographs, posts, and articles.[\[3\]](#)

Next, this article moves on to review the theoretical understandings of the universal well-being effects of play, followed by a short summary of contemporary toy play, before moving on to investigate, analyze, and discuss a regional case study conducted in Finland that exemplifies play behavior directed by aims of ludounity in the time of a global pandemic.

Recognizing the positive effects of play

Playing is vital for many reasons. It is a form of engagement with the world and its offerings and a way to increase one’s well-being, be it cognitive, physical, social, or emotional. The cognitive aspect of play, for example, which is skill-building through playing, may influence people’s lives in many ways. Historically, playing with objects has resulted in important achievements. Situations in which humans have been “toying” with materials and discovered ways to manipulate the environment have resulted in findings such as the mastery of fire (Groos & Baldwin 2010, 33).

The physical aspect of well-being enabled through playing comes to existence in the ways playing moves us. In human life, this begins with multisensory play and locomotor play accentuating the movement of the body. Later on, it is through other players or playthings that the physical mobilizing effect comes into the fore. Rough-and-tumble play makes use of the human body with its mobility as children run around and chase or wrestle with each other. Physical exercise can be playful before it turns into a serious, competitive sport. It is no longer, however, the physical toys such as balls, kites, and traditional game elements, such as the elements of throwing games, that make us move but increasingly also mobile devices. With access to commercial systems of play that encourage physical movement, smartphones unlock the mechanics of smart toys that move by remote controllers, location-based games, and player-generated forms of play that involve moving about in different environments, such as geocaching or toy tourism, where players travel with toys, or send the toys out to travel (Heljakka 2013).

James E. Combs, author of *Play World. The Emergence of the New Ludenic Age*, writes about how the status of play has been raised and how it has become a principle of social life (Combs 2000, 21). It is the social and emotional aspects of play that enable social well-being, which are of most importance for the analysis presented in this article. For *homo ludens*, the playing human, play is an important cultural resource (Huizinga 1955). Play is culture-forming and thus an important activity in shaping peoples' behavior: We learn about our culture through play, and, when playing, we participate in creating culture. Essentially, playing enables self-expression, may it manifest as a form of object play, in which the player employs and manipulates various materials (physical or digital) together with one's imagination and creativity, or purely non-object play (through language play, or, for example by relying on the player's own body as a source of movement) and other actions within diverse environments.

This article will now turn to a short introduction of contemporary toy play before moving on to the main focus of articulating and analyzing the phenomenon of the teddy challenge—an instance of a principle of playing during the 2020 pandemic.

Principles of toy play today: A short summary

Hassinger-Das et al. (2017, 2) define toys as follows: “Any item that can be used for play may be considered a toy, including formal toys that are manufactured such as dolls, or blocks, as well as everyday items that children transform into informal toys, such as a cardboard box used as a dollhouse.”

Toys are usually physical, fictive, functional, and affective entities and the toy experience unfolds as a process through the stages of *wow* (firsthand encounter with the toy), *flow* (being immersed while playing with the toy), *double-wow* (becoming surprised when discovering possible hidden affordances or new uses for the toy), and finally *glow* (an ‘afterglow’ cast on the playthings, such as toys or the experience meaning that it gained value during the act of playing) (Heljakka 2013; 2018). In other words, toys are, (also see Figure 2.)

- physical: a toy's tangible materiality is accessed through multisensory engagement with the toy.
- fictional: a toy's narrative element (e.g., backstory) is communicated through its identity and “personality” or its connection to other media products (transmedia storytelling), which enables players to become fans of the toy.
- functional: toys have mechanical and, increasingly, technological functionality, and they can be played with as open-ended playthings (without instructions) or with rules of engagement in a game-like manner. Moreover, they can be used for cultivating creativity and as drivers for learning.

- affective: after the firsthand excitement of discovering a new toy, it invites emotional engagement with it, providing possibilities for attachment, pleasure, joy, and empathy development.

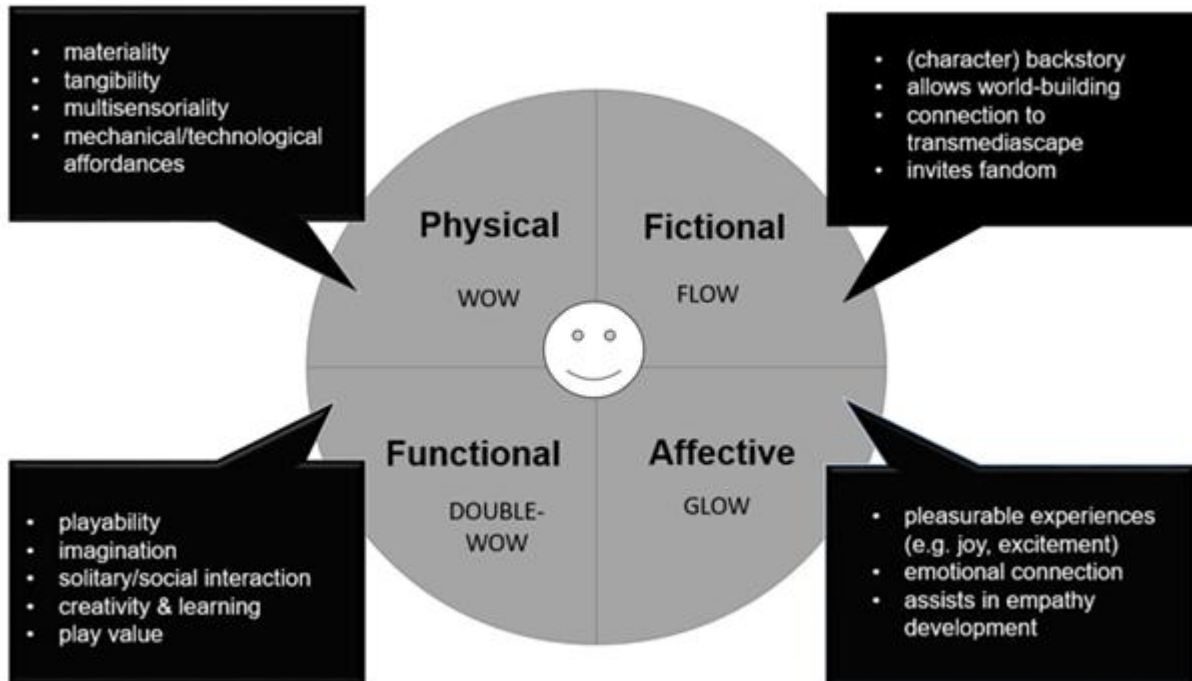


Figure 2. Dimensions of the toy experience refined (based on Heljakka 2018).

Alfano (1996, 23) claims that a good toy is “basically good” around the world because of the universality of basic play patterns (e.g., playing with a hula-hoop or a yo-yo). This article focuses on materially oriented play, and, more specifically, interaction with contemporary playthings such as teddy bears and other character toys, soft toys, and figures (Heljakka 2013). Soft toys (or plush toys) are recognized toys in many parts of the world as they are designed to comfort and to invite imaginative play. Character toys, such as anthropomorphic plush creatures like teddy bears, call out for caring and nurturing. The pandemic toy play analyzed in this article focuses on teddy toys and similar “toyfriends” with the potential to mobilize the masses cognitively, physically, socially, and emotionally in times of self-isolation and social distancing.

In many homes there are traditional teddy bears or other kinds of (sitting or standing) soft toys. The teddy bear is the world’s first mass-marketed toy (Leclerc 2008)^[4] and one of the most recognized and popular character toys universally. In 1998, it was elected to the Strong National Museum of Play’s National Toy Hall of Fame (Teddy bear. Toy National Hall of Fame).

The physical dimension of the toy means that it has tangible materiality, and teddies come in a variety of materials, such as textiles and plastics. The fictional dimension of the toy points to its relationship to a story world—a narrative made popular by other transmedia products, such as literature, comics, television, movies, or play-related content presented on, for example, YouTube. The functional dimension of teddies refers to their mechanics, such as its poseability, or the embedded technological features of the toy, as in the case of smart toys. Finally, the affective dimension of soft toys connects to their ability to evoke pleasurable experiences, to allow emotional connection to the toy, and to facilitate empathy development. These dimensions of the toy experience (see Figure 2.) are a helpful starting point when beginning to consider how teddies invite playing.

Toy play means ludic interaction with and through toys that may happen through solitary toy play (playing with the toy alone) or social toy play (playing with the toy in the company of other players by, for example, sharing the toy). Toy play does not end in engagement with the physical plaything but is extended by the use of mobile devices. In this way, mobile technology fosters the mobilization of both players and playthings. Social media with its various communication platforms has become a significant context for, for example, the toy play of players of many ages. In other words, technology lets players extend the play patterns associated with traditional, three-dimensional, and physical toys to digital and social playscapes. The nature of contemporary, object-based play is thus hybrid play (Heljakka 2016).

There is more and more interest in play between generations creating meaningful transgenerational play experiences that are manifested both online and offline. Consequently, there is a need to develop an understanding of how different age groups can be tempted into social interaction through different playthings in a prominently technologically mediated and digitalizing play culture. One way of investigating this is to explore how social play value is structured, maintained, and further enriched in play experiences related to physical playthings, when they are turned into (or simply enhanced with) digital play experiences while not replacing but adding value to the original concept (Heljakka 2016).

The aforementioned dimensions of the toy experience in addition to the notions of social hybrid play, social play value, and transgenerational play will be considered when analyzing the phenomenon of pandemic toy play in the context of the teddy challenge. First, a brief introduction to the therapeutic values of play will be given.

Powers of play in personal and societal crises

“The urge to play is embedded within all humans,” writes Stuart L. Brown, renowned scholar of play. In fact, play deprivation in humans leads to serious socialization deficits (Brown 2014, n.p.). For a long time, the healing capacity of play has interested therapists. Schaefer and Drewes (2014) identify twenty major therapeutic powers of play located across four areas:

1. Play facilitates communication, including enhancing self-expression.
2. Play fosters emotional well-being and can be cathartic, enabling stress management.
3. Play enhances social relationships, strengthening attachment and promoting empathy.
4. Play increases personal strengths, including the improvement of creative problem-solving and the capacity for resilience.

Additionally, as suggested in this article, character toys like teddy bears can be used as vehicles for mobilizing the imaginations of toy players of many ages and for showing collective affection to channel empathy for the masses—whole nations challenged by the current health crisis. These perspectives of the therapeutic values of play all have a role in the creation of social play value and will be employed further on in analyzing the phenomenon of pandemic playing with toys against social distancing presented in the following sections.



Figure 3. A (supervised) child looking at teddies displayed in a kindergarten window in Finland, photographed by the author.

March-April 2020: Situating the study

According to Woolley (2008), adults are often understood to have control over the experiences of children and young people in the external environment. Many children of today do not have free access to cityscapes but instead are escorted to indoor or outdoor play spaces or playgrounds. What Woolley et al. (2015) consider a “home range,” that is, the distance children go outdoors to play, or children’s independent mobility, has shrunk considerably during recent decades due to changes in the built environment, demography, and technology. There are less green spaces close to neighborhoods, less children being born and more technologies with which to supervise and control the movement of children.

In spring 2020, the home range or independent mobility of players of all ages was challenged by the outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Italy was the first European country to put restrictions on mobility in effect—the country isolated itself on March 10, and Spain followed soon after on March 14. France set its curfew on March 17, Germany on March 20, and, finally, the UK on March 23 (Wallenius 2020). Finland started to head into complete lockdown in Mid-March—to close schools, sport venues, libraries, museums, and art galleries. On March 19, Finland closed its borders. However, the restrictions on Finnish citizens’ mobility in cityscapes has been far less affected by the pandemic than in many other European countries, such as Italy and Spain. With the notion of suggested physical distance during everyday shopping and exercise in public areas, Finns have been able to move about rather freely within urban environments, such as city centers. The

compact nature of many Finnish cities makes them walkable and thus accessible in a way that supports urban flâneurism.[\[5\]](#)

When the pandemic became more widespread, the lockdown of cultural spaces and recreational areas happened fast. This resulted in restrictions regarding spaces for play and emptied cities. Rapidly, however, silent shop windows became filled with artwork, making the city center an outdoor gallery. After this, teddy bears or other soft toys started to appear in the windows, and, quickly thereafter, the phenomenon went viral. Soon after this discovery, the author decided to take action and study the phenomenon.

To date (26 April 2020), there are 6,265 images posted on Instagram accompanied by the hashtag #nallejahti (teddy chase). A search on Facebook of the same search term results in multiple groups formed around the teddy chase with a focus on Finnish cities or municipalities, for example, “Nallejahti Rovaniemi” or the national group “Nallejahti Suomi.”

Furthermore, to compare, a review of international posts featuring soft toys (or plush toys) was conducted among the posts on Instagram after searching this content with the terms in English, #teddychase and #teddychallenge, and Facebook groups, of which, for example, the Teddy Bear Hunt group (created on March 20) has 8.9k followers.

With additional data consisting of nine national and four international newspaper articles distributed online, this study attempts to analyze the main components of the content of these posts and media communication describing the character and spread of the phenomenon at hand in order to arrive at an understanding of the motivations, messages, and manifestations of playing with toys against social distancing.

Recognizing the patterns of pandemic toy play

The notion of social distance means a safe or appropriate distance or amount of space between two people or between people in a group. Nations such as Finland and, for example, Japan are recognized for adhering to this idea—public signs of affection are delivered through a polite distance. The zone of comfort is only challenged by formal handshakes at meetings between strangers. Finns have access to more land per capita than people in most other countries.[\[6\]](#) The idea of social distance is in this way not unfamiliar for those living in the country of the thousand lakes. However, the concepts of social distancing and self-isolation refer more to recent acts of responsibility in times of crisis than to regional preferences in keeping a spatial distance to others. They point to actions that during the pandemic have become obligatory in many countries of the world and strong suggestions in others.

Another possible factor, which explains why the toy play pattern played through the windows (and other screens) analyzed later in this article has resonated so well with Finnish citizens may have to do with the fact that Finland has a history of communicating through artifacts displayed in windows. In Finland during the First World War, two candles were set in windows to send out the message that that place was a safe zone.[\[7\]](#) This historical tradition continues on National Day of Finland, celebrated on 6 December.

According to the news articles published about the teddy challenge, it is defined as “A sweet and silly game to comfort and entertain” (Zeitlin 2020) and a “mass teddy bear hunt” or collective

scavenger hunt (AFP/Agency, 2020). It is “A scavenger hunt suited for social distancing” (Fortin 2020) that occurs in “neighborhoods made empty” (Smith 2020).

As a form of play meme or mimetic play (see, e.g., Heljakka 2015a), this play pattern originated according to newspaper articles in the children’s storybook *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt* (1989)^[8] by British author Michael Rosen, who himself, according to *Inc.*, was in the beginning of April 2020 in the hospital with severe, flu-like symptoms (Zeitlin 2020).

The idea of the teddy challenge is described as an activity in which people “compete with each other to see how many teddy bears or other stuffed animals they can spot, and they keep count of their finds. They take pictures of the most unusual and the ones they like best” (Zeitlin 2020).

Moreover, some further explanations situate the activity as “an outdoor game” (Mutsimedia 2020), “a walk or a drive [for children] with their parents,” which suggests “the children [have] an activity, and the parents [have] an activity” (AFP/Agency 2020). It is “a fun and safe activity” (AFP/Agency 2020) played by both kindergarten personnel (see, e.g., Tynkkynen 2020) and people working in elder care facilities (Esperi hoivakodit 2020), as well as in enterprises (Tynkkynen 2020) and churches (Virtainen 2020).^[9]

Geographically, the play pattern is perceivable in all 50 states of the US “and at least 12 other countries” (Zeitlin 2020), including Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. On social media, several different groups exist that function as virtual gathering places for those taking part in the teddy challenge. For instance, in the US, the Teddy Bear Hunt Facebook group is claimed to have been started by a 12-year-old Iowan named Tammy Buman along with her eight-year-old sister and parents (Zeitlin 2020). The challenge has attracted media personalities, such as leaders of nations, to participate in this mimetic form of play. For example, in New Zealand, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern put a teddy in the window of her family home in Wellington (AFP/Agency 2020). Next, this article moves on to analyze the phenomenon through the perspectives of motivations, messages, and manifestations of playing the teddy chase/challenge.

Motivations

The opposite of play is not work but depression (Sutton-Smith 1997). Therefore, in order to fight depression, we need playing throughout our lives. To encourage playful behavior in others, designers, artists, or everyday people may think of inviting play with the help of a playful intervention—a temporary performance, installation, of interactive event that is a gamified, playified, or toyified manifestation and an invitation to play—something that opens up, for example, an artwork or designed experience for participatory engagement, even co-creation.

It is easy to see the reasons for the popularity of the playful intervention and play pattern under study: the teddy challenge presents ample possibilities for everyday players (Heljakka 2013) to take part in organizing and participating in inviting others to play. A playful intervention may in this challenge mean a displayed intervention with transgenerational appeal—a toy display that motivates its creator. To give an example, Renfrow is a 72-year-old architect for whom participating in the hunt also means experiencing fun in putting the bears on display. The bears displayed by this senior player “are observing social distancing guidelines” (AFP/Agency 2020). Considering this example in light of the dimensions of the toy experience, this demonstrates how the physical, functional, and fictional aspects of toy play come across in the teddy challenge.

As the newspaper articles and photoplay analyzed illustrate, the teddy challenge is not entirely a visually and materially emerging phenomenon but one that is verbalized as well. One interviewee shares the story behind the bears at her house, who “are wearing my mother-in-law’s very favourite hat in the entire world and a scarf from the dog and they are out for a picnic” (AFP/Agency 2020). This example shows how the toy play in the teddy challenge relates to both facts and fiction (the narrative dimension of toy play), which together contribute to the story that the physical toy display conveys.

Messages

Reflecting on the messages the toy displays communicate, it is possible to see how the affective dimension of toy play comes to effect in the following comments: “Spotting teddies gave such a warm and communal feeling [...] It’s a wonderful challenge,” said one interviewee in a newspaper article (Meritähti 2020a). “Everything that is positive creates communality,” says a Lappeenranta-based resident in another newspaper article (Tynkkynen 2020). The teddy challenge is “an easy way to create communality and to produce good spirits with a small effort,” says a Rauma-based resident in a third newspaper article (Meritähti 2020a).

According to an article published by the BBC, the toy displays of a Melbourne resident change every day and feature humorous and educational notes aimed at adults, not just kids (BBC News 2020). Humor is an essential feature of play, but all playing is not humorous.

The messages also articulate the aims of the activity: One “scores” when spotting a toy. Some may have “posted a sign congratulating the young hunters: ‘You’ve found one!’” pointing to the gamified aim of the challenge—to spot as many toys in the windows as possible. Nevertheless, in some instances, the game-like aspect of the challenge is softened by the verbal message as in the case of the window photographed in Figure 1., in which the message reads “post a picture with #mllsatakunta and you may win.” Written with smaller letters, the text in the speech bubble continues: “at least you will feel good [about it]” (see Figure 1.).

There are other examples of communication with a positive tone as well, pointing to overcoming the mentally stressful situation. For example, an 11-year-old boy wrote on his sign for the teddies, “Forget your worries!” (Meritähti 2020a). On a more practical level, the verbalized messages may include important reminders as well. One article features a story with a teddy that, with his sign, targets the message directly to children. In a second-story window, a teddy bear named Russell is positioned under a bright pink sign. “HI KIDS,” the sign says. “Remember to wash your hands” (Fortin 2020).

Manifestations

The form of toy play scrutinized in this article differs from passive admiration and consumption of art and other types of visual culture displayed in the cityscape in one major way: the underlying assumption is that toys displayed on window-screens have an activating role as agents persuading and inviting passersby to social play, first to play for one’s own ludic gratification by spotting and counting the teddy bears and, in this way, challenging oneself to be an active observant of this display-and-see game, and, second, to participate socially by collecting, documenting and sharing one’s finds through a mobile device and photo sharing with commonly known hashtags. Additionally, some displays openly invite participants to take part in competitions with prizes, as suggested in the MLL window display in Figure 1.

Interviews conducted in newspaper articles all over Finland show how the teddy chase has inspired players of all ages to approach the challenge in their own creative ways. Teddies and other toys have been photographed in exteriors through window-screens and in interiors as well. Photoplay of displayed toys has also been posted without window-screens involved. In this case, it is the hashtags that connect the playing to the cause analyzed in this article.

As speculated by Zeitlin (2020) in a recent newspaper article, there is a possibility that the case could be completely virtualized by some participating players: “there are no reports so far of people using Google Street View to look for bears in faraway places.” However, what is of interest here is the hybrid and multidimensional nature of the toy play rather than a simplistic view on play as either a materially oriented or digital activity.

While some players photograph the toys, for others, this play initiative or playful intervention that developed into an established play pattern has meant turning to (physical toy experiences of) handicrafts when a soft toy has not been available at home. Some have interpreted the idea of displaying a teddy in their own way by making displays on balconies or hanging plush toys from trees. Furthermore, a part of the players engaged in the toy play have simply photographed their teddies or similar character toys indoors and posted the results of their photoplay on social media feeds. For example, Jenni Haukio, the first lady of Finland, spouse of the Finnish president Sauli Niinistö, posted an image on Twitter of a teddy bear hugging a smaller teddy on March 21, accompanied by a message: “Let’s take care—wishing a good weekend to all families!” (Riste 2020). Toys in an embracing position send out the timely message of warmth and togetherness to other players without the involvement and potential risks of human touch.

From the rhetorics of play to playful resilience

Brian Sutton-Smith’s recognized categorization of the rhetorics of play (1997) includes the perspectives of progress, fate, power, identity, imaginary, the self, and frivolity. Out of these seven rhetorics, the type of playing happening with teddy bears, through window-screens, and mimetic play in a time of self-isolation seems to serve most fittingly three particular rhetorics, namely play as identity, play as imaginary, and play as the self.

First, the rhetoric of play as identity views play as a means of constructing and confirming social identities through community celebrations and festivals. Times of crisis, such as the pandemic isolating millions of people from their usual social interactions, certainly do not mean occasions for festivals, but resourceful playing, strengthened by the use of technological devices and social media, which may be understood as an expression of communal celebration. It is here that playing develops from solitary, singular, and individual acts into mimetic social behavior, drawing inspiration from other players and (mobile) instances of play both offline and online.

The second rhetoric of play that helps elucidate the form of play described in this article is the rhetoric of imaginary, which relates to the imagination, creativity, and innovation. In the case of the teddy bears displayed on window-screens across Finland, the form of play stems from the imaginative act of employing toys in a public way, and the creative displays speak of the human desire to activate one’s resourcefulness and create something new out of everyday material possessions. The innovative element of the playing sparked from the play pattern is its underlying dynamic predisposition towards human interaction, an almost game-like challenge: how many teddies can you spot in the windows during an urban walk?

The third rhetoric of play acknowledged here as a suitable notion of interpreting the phenomenon under investigation is the rhetoric of self, meaning individual playful pursuits and hobbies for which play is seen as a form of relaxation and escape from everyday life. The concept of individual playful pursuits is useful in the context of analyzing the form of toy play understood here as every instance of a toy display is a creative act that is either solitary or social. However, interpreting the activity single-handedly as either relaxation or escape would be a mistake: on the contrary, the making of the public toy display is, in fact, an activity guided heavily by determinism—to face and engage with the world instead of escaping it.

Leaning on the arguments of the therapeutic powers of play presented by Schaefer and Drewes (2014) presented earlier, it is possible to see similarities in the values of toy play, which in the case of pandemic toy play emerge as social play value. First, playing the teddy challenge first through the window screens and then through the screens of mobile devices to finally arrive in the digital space of social media facilitates communication. This playing is self-expressive due to its visual and verbal nature—players use their creativity in setting the toy displays and in enhancing these with accompanying texts. Second, playing the teddy challenge fosters emotional well-being as it provides the possibility to function proactively in times of social distancing and self-isolation, enabling stress management. Third, playing the teddy challenge enhances social relationships by channeling the important message of togetherness, despite the remote nature of the play. Through the toys, players are able to give physical form to a gesture connecting members of the family and others. Fourth, playing the teddy challenge provides unique opportunities to increase personal strengths, including challenging one’s own resourcefulness during lockdown and consequently improving one’s mental predisposition toward the world in the name of playful resilience.

The term *resilience* in psychological literature refers to the capability to adjust and endure in stressful situations. When defining this term, however, it is important to consider whether resilience is viewed as a trait, a process, or an outcome, as “our response to stress and trauma takes place in the context of interactions with other human beings, available resources, specific cultures and religions, organizations, communities and societies” (c.f. Sherrieb et al. 2010; Rolland & Walsh 2006). Each of these contexts may be more or less resilient in their own rights and therefore more or less capable of supporting the individual. In this way, one of the most important methods to foster resilience is to promote healthy environments within both the family and the community that allow the individual’s natural protective systems to develop and operate effectively. Resilience is “a process to harness resources in order to sustain well-being” and the idea of progress—moving forward—is an important component of resilience (Southwick et al. 2014).

If personal playful resilience is understood as a quality of individuals who deliberately and determinedly employ their playfulness in order to relate, react, and pro-act in overcoming mental stress, then collective playful resilience, which manifests in socially motivating and engaging behavior such as in collective toy activism, helps larger groups to cope with stressful times caused by constraints on entire nations.

The affective component in toy experiences, such as resilience, is of interest to many designers and companies. Toys that channel human emotions by, for example, representing different facial expressions, have existed for a long time (for examples from the 2010s, see Heljakka 2013). Emerging megatrends in toy play after accessibility and inclusivity are already visible in the industries and cultures of play; the prediction is that an interest toward empathy development and emotional intelligence assisted by toys, games, and other playful experiences, both traditional and technologically enhanced, will continue to grow. Current examples of playthings that foster empathy development include The Empathy Toy by Twenty One Toys, a blindfolded puzzle game,

which “can only be solved when the players understand each other” (The Empathy Toy website), and The Failure Toy, which will show children that “[failure as a learning opportunity boosts their resilience](#)” (The Failure Toy website). The connectedness delivered by empathic responses to these novel types of toys is the key outcome of the engagement. This trend is more on note than ever as many countries of the world are wrestling with the ongoing health crisis.

To summarize, and to come back to the play patterns associated with the teddy challenge, it is possible to predict that future (toy) play is set to involve many facets of hybrid social play. Play patterns, such as creative and productive play (handicrafts, tinkering, 3D printing, displaying, and photoplay), mobile play (mobilizing of players, toys, or both), sharing and spectating of play (producing play content for others or consuming other players’ playing), and some more gamifying play (adding on challenges and goals, even competition to motivate participation) will continue to impact the motivations, messages and manifestations of tomorrow’s playing. Furthermore, playing for the sake of empathy development will gain more attention.

In this light, finally, and more philanthropically, the public act of displaying toys in the window-screens is not a cry for help but an invitation to participate in playing for the common good. What pandemic toy play is, from the perspective of the teddy challenge, is slow play, more about goodwill than competition and more about creativity and communication than playing for solitary advancement and ludic gratification. Yet, playing in uncertain times promotes the possibility of self-discovery: in fact, the toys are *us*. From being intimately trusted confidants and guardians, they participate in fighting apathy and passivity by taking the role of our representatives as active agents. They become our avatars and spokespersons, fighting isolation because this is the capacity of character toys—toys with faces that amplified with the power of social media provide a look out from the window toward a world that is a very different playground compared to previous times.



Figure 4. (On the left) “We will survive this together.” Plush character toys comforting each other in a playhouse window. (On the right) A window display with an image of a teddy. Photographs by the author.

Conclusions: Playing for the common good

This article examines the phenomenon of the teddy challenge, analyzing its motivations, messages, and manifestations. As a physically and spatially emerging form of play, it might be perceived as a quiet and solitary product—a gesture of individual play. Nevertheless, there is a strong, almost riot-like social statement lurking behind the window-screens, a form of hybrid toy activism that sends out a strong message about the agility and empowerment of city inhabitants living in voluntary quarantine. The motivation for the teddy challenge, then, is to join forces in the name of communal play. The message of the teddy challenge, thus, is a pledge for togetherness. Finally, the manifestations are as creative as the players in terms of their skills in handicrafts, storytelling, displaying wits, or willingness to give toys a center-stage and purpose to function as stand-ins and spokespersons. The study articulated in this article shows how play provides cultural sustenance (Exploring Play course materials 2020). Playing for the common good is a strategy for surviving a socially challenging moment in time. In fact, it may be understood as a manifestation of playful resilience.

This time of pandemic presents an age of forced self-isolation and physical social distancing and also as a time of forced, rapid digitalization of both work and leisure activities. At the same time, playing to celebrate togetherness is as prevalent as ever, even in the Finnish cityscapes silenced by self-isolation.

Social hybrid play emerges through the physicality of the public toy displays in the windows and the digital nature of capturing, sharing and participating in a self-inducting game. The phenomenon of the teddy challenge as a form of pandemic toy play illustrates the strong bond between the tools of technology and the need for self-expressive play, even during challenging times.

As shown throughout this article, material culture, like that of toys, engages players of many ages. As the form of pandemic toy play illustrated in this article has shown, even the solitary act of displaying toys may become the most socially engaging activity sustaining invisible bonds between both relatives and strangers. As described by Combs (2000), playing has become a social principle. In the times of this global health crisis, creative forms of hybrid playing can be seen to constitute a form of social principle fighting the possible harmful effects of social distancing and self-isolation through communal play for the sake of the common good.

Toy activism, as suggested in this article, functions as a suitable avenue for players to express their participation in fighting the potential negative effects of social distancing produced by voluntary (or forced) self-isolation. It strengthens the nation and its people's ability to cope with challenging times through social behavior. Therefore, the notion of transgenerational or intergenerational play comes in handy when interpreting activities with character toys during the ongoing pandemic. In fact, during spring 2020 and with the quarantines of many seniors, the teddies in the windows may, besides mobile phones, have been one of the most important tools for the grandparents to send out messages to their toy-literate grandchildren, saying, "There will be a time for play together once the situation is resolved; let's wait together for that day."

With play comes risks, and some concerns have already been raised about the "teddy chasers" intruding into people's domestic lives by peeking inside their homes instead of at the teddies. In Finland, people's homes and gardens are protected by laws that safeguard domestic privacy (Meritähti 2020a).[\[10\]](#) Still, as this article suggests, the benefits of toy play amidst a pandemic, illustrated by the activity of the teddy challenge, outweigh the negative potential. With large-scale

participation motivated by the spreading of a message to passersby and thanks to the marriage of play and technology, the audiences of social media applications distribute crucial content in the form of a strong statement: we are here, we are well, and, finally, we are willing to play.

In the context of Finland, the issue of agency needs to be given more thought, however, as opposed to the thin agency suggested by Klocker (2007, 85), meaning less possibilities to act by themselves. In the “world’s happiest country” (World Population Review 2020) located in the Global North, both children and adults have more possibilities to express their playfulness through toy play as compared to many other areas in the world, where the players are far less privileged in terms of resources and acknowledged rights to play alongside the economic and political constraints they face. There is strong belief, however, that other forms of play with similar potentialities related to ludounity take place in other areas of the world. To continue the investigation of pandemic (toy) play, it would then be interesting to conduct studies focusing on other areas in the world to see if the evanescence of toy displays on window-screens and global online platforms happens as quickly as the mimetic toy play pattern and play meme developed.

As this article proposes, by playing for the common good by combining character toys with online sharing as exemplified by the teddy challenge in Finland, the imaginative acts of physical object displaying and socially shared photography (or photoplay) and hybrid play culture thrive and channel a strong, positive message of ludounity: (By playing together) we will survive this together. Ultimately, the appetite for play is a sign of mental strength and playful resilience—willingness to sustain mental well-being—human psychological endurance and survival— not forgetting the hope that playing brings with it. Where there is play, there is a way.

Acknowledgments

While writing this article (the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020), the author participated in the *Exploring Play* online course offered by Sheffield University and Future Learn as a student. Some of the references previously unknown to the author and used in the article originated in the literature for this course. The author would also like to express her gratitude to the organizers of the Playful Creative Summit 2020. The idea of playing for the common good emerged in an interview with the author for this summit conducted by Aleya Sandovar (before the lockdown) in February 2020.

References

All links verified 11.5.2020

Online videos

Stories For Kids. 2019. “‘We’re Going On A Bear Hunt’ Animated Story”, *YouTube* 25.6.2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Waoa3iG3bZ4>.

Websites

Eurostat. 2020.

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&pcode=tps00003&language=en>.

Mattel. 2020. A New kind of hero has arrived. <https://www.mattel.com/en-us/playroom-thankyouheroes>.

Senaatti. 2017. “Two candles in every window”. <https://www.senaatti.fi/en/work-environments/inspiration/article/two-candles-every-window/>.

Teddy bear. Toy National Hall of Fame. <https://www.toyhalloffame.org/toys/teddy-bear>.

The Empathy Toy website. <https://twentyonetoys.com/pages/empathy-toy>.

The Failure Toy website. <https://twentyonetoys.com/pages/failure-toy>.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. <http://ipaworld.org/childs-right-to-play/uncrc-article-31/un-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-1/>.

World Economic Forum (WEF) (2018). [The Global Competitiveness Report 2018: Property Rights](https://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2018/competitiveness-rankings/#series=EOSQ051). reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2018/competitiveness-rankings/#series=EOSQ051.

World Population Report. 2020. “Happiest countries in the world”.

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/happiest-countries-in-the-world/>.

News Articles

AFP/Agency. 8.4.2020. “Let’s go on a bear hunt! Children’s book inspires mass teddy bear hunt”. *The Star*. <https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/culture/2020/04/07/popular-british-children039s-book-sparks-a-spot-of-039bear-hunting039-worldwide>.

BBC. 31.3.2020. “Coronavirus outbreak: Teddy bear hunt helps distract kids under lockdown”. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-52108765>.

Koskinen, Anu Leena. 23.3.2020. “Pitkä lista: Näin eri maissa jo rajoitetaan ihmisten liikkumista – mökkikansa kotiin, 206 euron sakot, lapsella yksi kaveri, lomakkeella kauppaan”. *YLE Uutiset*. <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-11270551>.

Meritähti, Päivi. 4.4.2020a. "Nallehaaste sai suomalaiset liikkeelle – Lukijat lähettivät satoja kuvia ja kommentteja: 'Bongaamisesta tuli niin lämmin ja yhteisöllinen olo'". *YLE Uutiset*. <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-11290988>.

Meritähti, Päivi. 27.3.2020b. "Näitkö jo nallen ikkunassa? Nappaa kuva meillekin – Somehaaste piristää nyt ulkoilijoita". *YLE Uutiset*. <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-11278914>.

Mutsimedia. 2020. "Tuleeko nallejähdistä kevään hittileikki?" <https://www.mutsimedia.fi/lapsenkanssa/tuleeko-nallejähdistä-kevaan-hittileikki-hauskat-leikkivinkit-ulkoiluun/>.

Esperi hoivakodit. 14.4.2020. Nallehaaste <3. 2020. <https://www.esperi.fi/hoivakodit-ikaihmisille/esperi-hoivakoti-untuva-helsinki/kodin-kuulumisia/nallehaaste>.

Tynkkynen, Santeri. 28.3.2020. "Nallehaaste rantautui Lappeenrantaan – Nallet kurkistavat ikkunoista ulos ilahduttaakseen lapsia". *Etelä-Saimaa*. <https://esaimaa.fi/uutiset/lahella/c1b7cccc-9cfe-4cab-b3b3-3825fa519353>.

Riste, Ville. 4.4.2020. "Jenni Haukio osallistui sosiaalisen median nallehaasteeseen". *Iltalehti*. <https://www.iltalehti.fi/viihdeuutiset/a/653b27b2-f9ff-4009-a063-93f97b2e500b>.

Smith, Adam Oliver. 31.3.2020. "Gallery: Global 'Teddy Bear Challenge' arrives in Finland, keeps children active during shutdown". *Helsinki Times*. <https://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/news-in-brief/17495-gallery-global-teddy-bear-challenge-arrives-in-finland-keeps-children-active-during-shutdown.html>.

Virtainen, Anniina. 27.3.2020. "Nallehaaste leviää nyt Helsingissä – kaiva oma nalleesi ikkunan ääreen, niin olet mukana". *Helsingin uutiset*. <https://www.helsinginuutiset.fi/paikalliset/1480283>.

Wallenius, Daniel. 21.4.2020. "Liikkumisen rajoitukset alkavat poistua". *Satakunnan Kansa*, p. 16.

Zeitlin, Minda. 4.4.2020. "Here's why you should put a teddy bear in your window right now". *Inc.* <https://www.inc.com/minda-zetlin/teddy-bear-hunt-tammy-buman-stuffed-animals-in-windows.html>.

Literature

Alfano, Kathleen. 1996. "Making toys for a global market". In *Toys in educational and sociocultural context. Toy research in the late twentieth century*, edited by Lars-Erik Berg, Anders Nelson and Krister Svensson. Part 1. Selection of papers presented at the International Toy Research Conference, 21–3. Halmstad University: Sweden.

Bateson, Gregory. 1972/1999. *Steps to an ecology of mind: Collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution, and epistemology*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Brown, Stuart L. 2014. "Consequences of play deprivation". *Scholarpedia*, 9 no. 5, 30449.

Combs, James E. 2000. *Play world. The emergence of the new ludenic age*. Westport: Praeger Publishers.

- Future Learn. 2020. "The importance of play". *Exploring Play course materials*. Sheffield University.
- Girveau, Bruno and Charles, Dorothée. 2012. *Of toys and men*. [Lelun lumo]. Helsinki Art Museum Tennis Palace 24.2.–20.5.2012, exhibition press materials.
- Greishaber, Susan and Felicity McArdle. 2010. *The trouble with play*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Groos, Karl and Elizabeth Baldwin. 2010/1901. *The play of man*. Memphis, Tennessee: General Books.
- Hassinger-Das, Brenna, Zosh, Jennifer, M, Hirsh-Pasek, Kathy and Michnick Golinkoff, Roberta. 2017. "Toys". In *The SAGE encyclopedia of out-of-school learning*, edited by Kylie Pepper. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Heljakka, Katriina. 2018. "Dimensions of the toy experience" Analysis Workshop II: Hybrid Money Games and Toys. In *Hybrid social play final report*, edited by Janne Paavilainen, Katriina Heljakka, Jonne Arjoranta, Ville Kankainen, Linda Lahdenperä, Elina Koskinen, Jani Kinnunen, Lilli Sihvonen, Timo Nummenmaa, Frans Mäyrä, Raine Koskimaa, and Jaakko Suominen, 16–18. TRIM Research Reports 26. Faculty of Communication Studies, University of Tampere. <http://tampub.uta.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/103277/978-952-03-0751-6.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.
- Heljakka, Katriina. 2015a. "Leikkitieto 2015: Pelillistyyvä nukkeleikki leikillisen käänteän aikakaudella". *Pelitutkimuksen Vuosikirja 2015*, 99–119.
- Heljakka, Katriina. 2016. Strategies of Social Screen Play (ers) across the Ecosystem of Play: Toys, games and hybrid social play in technologically mediated playscapes. *Wider Screen*, 1(2). <http://widerscreen.fi/numerot/2016-1-2/strategies-social-screen-players-across-ecosystem-play-toys-games-hybrid-social-play-technologically-mediated-playscapes/>.
- Heljakka, Katriina. 2015b. Toys and war. *VICCA Journal*. Aalto University.
- Heljakka, Katriina. 2013. *Principles of adult play(fulness) in contemporary toy cultures. From wow to flow to glow*. Doctoral dissertation. Helsinki: Aalto University.
- Huizinga, Johan. 1955. *Homo ludens. A study of the play-element in culture*. Beacon Press.
- Hughes, Bob. 2002. *A playworker's taxonomy of play types*. (2nd edition) Play Education.
- Klocker, Natascha. 2007. "An example of thin agency: Child domestic workers in Tanzania". In Panelli, Ruth, Punch, Samantha, and Robson, Elsbeth eds. *Global perspectives on rural childhood and youth: Young rural lives*. 83-94. London: Routledge.
- Leclerc, Remi. 2008. "Character toys: Toying with identity, playing with emotion". Presentation at the Design and Emotion Conference, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 6-9 October, 2008.
- Marsh, Jackie and Julia C. Bishop. 2014. *Changing play: Play, media and commercial culture from the 1950s to the present day*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

National Playing Fields Association (NPFA). 2000. *Best play: What play provision should do for children*. London: National Playing Fields Association, Children's Play Council and PLAYLINK.

Rolland, John S. and Froma Walsh. 2006. "Facilitating family resilience with childhood illness and disability". *Current Opinion in Pediatrics*, 18 no. 5, 527–538.

Schaefer, Charles E. and Athena A. Drewes (eds.). 2014. *The therapeutic powers of play: Twenty core agents of change*. (2nd edition) Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley.

Sherrieb, Kathleen, Fran H. Norris, and Sandro Galea. 2010. "Measuring capacities for community resilience". *Social Indicators Research*, 99 no. 2, 227–247.

Southwick, Steven M., George A. Bonanno, Ann S. Masten, Catherine Panter-Brick, and Rachel Yehuda. 2014. "Resilience definitions, theory, and challenges: Interdisciplinary perspectives". *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 5 no. 1, DOI: [10.3402/ejpt.v5.25338](https://doi.org/10.3402/ejpt.v5.25338).

Sutton-Smith, Brian. 1997. *The Ambiguity of Play*. Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press.

Woolley, Helen E. and Elizabeth Griffin. 2015. "Decreasing experiences of home range, outdoor spaces, activities and companions: Changes across three generations in Sheffield in north England". *Children's Geographies*, 13 no. 6, 677–691.

Woolley, Helen. E. 2008. "Watch this space! Designing for children's play in public open spaces". *Geography Compass*, 2 no. 2, 495–512.

Notes

[1] In response to the ongoing health crisis, Mattel launched a series called Fisher-Price *Thank You Heroes*, including the collections of plastic play figures consisting of series of Nurses, Doctors, Delivery Drivers, and Emergency Medical Technicians, as well as a series of "Community Champions", 'who work hard every day to help us stay healthy, safe and stocked with everything we need'. Through May 31, the net proceeds from the online sale of each item will, according to the website be donated to #FirstRespondersFirst, a fund dedicated to providing essential supplies, equipment and resources for protecting frontline healthcare workers and their families.

For reference, see Mattel (2020) A New kind of hero has arrived. <https://www.mattel.com/en-us/playroom-thankyouheroes>.

[2] In fact, it is in this sense that the academic response to the crisis demonstrates both resourcefulness and resilience—to see the pandemic as an opportunity to study human coping mechanisms in real-life circumstances.

[3] In order to respect the anonymity and copyrights of the associated images of the teddy challenge, the author only uses her own photography or photoplay to give examples in the article.

[4] In 1902, the German toy designer Richard Steiff (1877-1939) got the idea for a toy bear with movable limbs just like those of a doll. Until then, toy bears had been depicted standing on all fours

(Girveau and Charles 2012, *Of Toys and Men*, exhibition press materials). The teddy bear was named after President Teddy Roosevelt after a famous shooting incident as reported by the US press.

[5] The contemporary flâneur, a casual and cheerful spectator of urban life, must, however, in times of crisis, lay aside carelessness and suit up with (rubber) gloves and the optional facemask.

[6] According to Eurostat ([Population density, persons per km²](#)) Finland has the third most space per person in Europe.

[7] Candles as an Independence Day custom became popular in 1927 when the *Itsenäisyyden liitto* association encouraged people to place candles in their windows on Independence Day from 6 to 9 pm. According to the Senaatti website (see <https://www.senaatti.fi/en/work-environments/inspiration/article/two-candles-every-window/>), the Jaeger Movement also had a custom of lighting two candles in the windows of safe houses where young men travelling to Germany for training as jaegers could safely spend the night. Even earlier, according to tradition, the candles are said to have been symbolic of the silent protest against Russian oppression.

[8] For reference, see (Stories For Kids 2019) "We're Going On A Bear Hunt" Animated Story. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Waoa3iG3bZ4>.

[9] At the time of this writing, the author personally observed how teddies have made their way even to moving vehicles of city officials, such as ambulances.

[10] According to the *World Economic Forum (WEF)*, [The Global Competitiveness Report 2018: Property Rights](#) the protection of property rights in Finland is the best in the world.