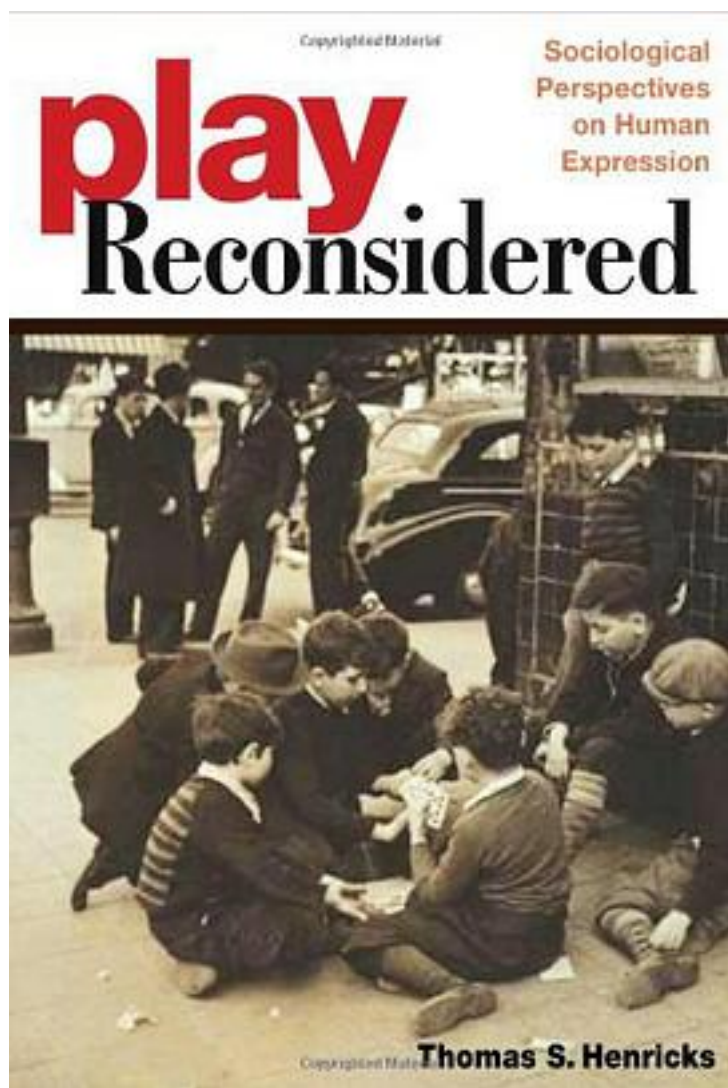


Play Reconsidered



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Within the social sciences, few matters are as significant as the study of human play - or as neglected. In "Play Reconsidered", rather than viewing play simply as a preoccupation of the young and a vehicle for skill development, Thomas S. Henricks argues that it's a social and cultural phenomenon of adult life, enveloped by wider structures and processes of society. In that context, he argues that a truly sociological approach to play should begin with a consideration of the largely overlooked writings on play and play-related topics by some of the classic sociological thinkers of the twentieth century. Henricks explores Karl Marx's analysis of creativity in human labour, examines Emile Durkheim's observations on the role of ritual and the formation of collective consciousness, extends Max Weber's ideas about the process of rationalization to the realm of expressive culture and play, surveys Georg Simmel's distinctive approach to sociology and sociability, and discusses Erving Goffman's focus on human conduct as process and play as "encounter". These and other discussions of the contributions of more recent sociologists are framed by an initial consideration of Johan Huizinga's famous challenge to understand the nature and significance of play. In a closing synthesis, Henricks distinguishes play from other forms of human social expression, particularly ritual, *communitas*, and work.

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