

# Johan huzinga's chapter and stuart brown's lecture arguments and supporting evide...

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Johan Huizinga's chapter and Stuart Brown's lecture arguments and supporting evidences In the lecture of Johan Huizinga's chapter and Stuart Brown, both made an interesting analysis of play that transcended beyond our usual concept of playing for the sake of fun or an activity that we usually take as the province of kids. The concept, philosophical underpinnings and activity of play was synthesized from its primal description of Brown's observation of the polar bears without their claws with open mouth but without their fangs (1) at play to Huizinga's elevation of play to cultural and to the sublime consecrating it to the activity of Deity which makes it "the highest goal of man's endeavor" (Huizinga 119). Both authors or professors stressed the importance of play in our lives, society in general and even in nature itself. But their arguments tackled the different aspects and importance of play such that it cannot be judged who made a more valid argument about play. Brown explored more on the necessity of play for our wholesome and holistic development as individuals. Huizinga touched on the same topic but only in passing when he mentioned that "Animals play just like men. We have only to watch young dogs to see that all the essentials of human play are present in their merry gambols" (97) and only used this as a jumping board to his main thesis of play's cultural, aesthetics, religion and philosophical dimension. Brown's finding is quite enlightening about the value of play in our mental health. In his study, he found that individuals who are play deprived are vulnerable to tragic acts such as murder (1). He elaborated that "rough and play is a great learning medium for all of us. Preschool kids, for example, should be allowed to dive, hit, whistle, scream, be chaotic, and develop through that a lot of emotional regulation and a lot

of the other social byproducts -- cognitive, emotional and physical -- that come as a part of rough and tumble play" (2). And according to Brown, play's value is essential to solving problems. For example, in his research, he learned that in order for us to be effective in solving real life problems, we have to learn first how to play and manipulate objects with our hands. In fact " JPL, NASA and Boeing, before they will hire a research and development problem solver -- even if they're summa cum laude from Harvard or Cal Tech -- if they haven't fixed cars, haven't done stuff with their hands early in life, played with their hands, they can't problem-solve as well. So play is practical, and it's very important not only confined in terms of circumscribing ourselves but also in our development as human beings. He found out in his study that play is in fact essential in our cognitive development" (Brown 2). In fact, play is also essential for us to survive as what his experiment with mice revealed that those who are programmed for play had a higher probability of surviving (3). Huizinga did not take Brown's route on delving on the micro importance of play to an individual but rather elaborated more on its grander relevance and significance as a cultural, aesthetic and even religious importance of which play is an important component. Unlike Brown also, Huizinga assumed a lesser grave stance compared to Brown in terms of its antonym as he only categorized play's opposite to seriousness while Brown took it as depression (99). Later in his discussion, Huizinga however argued also that play can also be performed in perfect seriousness that will not deprive of its essence but rather will enhance its aesthetic values such as those in the case of sports and performing arts (111). Another difference between them was that Brown dismissed play as a preparatory activity of

adult life while Huizinga entertained the idea that “ play constitutes a training of the young creature for the serious work that life will demand later on. According to another it serves as an exercise in restraint needful to the individual” (97). As a concept and activity play is also not “ susceptible of exact definition either logically, biologically, or aesthetically” and therefore lies “ outside the anti- thesis of wisdom and folly” (101). In fact, play has a sublime characteristic as it represents a cosmic happening, an event that is happening in a natural process be it in the sports contest or performance (Huizinga 109 - 110). For Huizinga, play is actually a sacred ritual which is indispensable to the well- being of the bigger community in the same manner that Brown argued that play is essential to well-being of an individual. Works Cited Brown, S. “ Serious Play: Why Play is more than just Fun. Huizinga, J. “ Nature and Significance of Play as a Cultural Phenomenon”. *Homo Ludens*, 1955. Reprinted by permission of Beacon Press