



Romance, Revolution and Reform, Issue 8
Call for Submissions:
Play in the Long Nineteenth Century

RRRR

Romance, Revolution & Reform

While the long nineteenth century is not immediately associated with playfulness, scholars recognise it as a period that revolutionised play. Games were ubiquitous, hundreds of dedicated recreational spaces (museums, playgrounds, parks) were established, and a new cult of leisure took root, reshaping both public and private life. Play was also central to Victorian and Edwardian ideals of childhood, laying the groundwork for modern conceptions of child development. The fluidity of play as a concept reflects its inherent contradictions and multiplicity of meanings.

In the seminal text on play studies, Johan Huizinga characterises the nineteenth century, with its rationalising tendencies, as "the end of play" (*Homo Ludens*, 1944). Others still have identified play as "a totalizing concept" which "pervades nineteenth-century literature and culture and forms the foundations of the modern self" (Matthew Kaiser, *The World in Play*, 2011). Structured or spontaneous, subversive or conformist, innate or transformative, play offers a mode of looking at the broader cultural and societal dynamics of the long nineteenth century as well as our own era.

This issue of *Romance, Revolution and Reform* is looking for papers of 5,000–8,000 words on 'Play in the Long Nineteenth Century' (1789–1914) in all its forms and in a global context. We encourage broad interpretations of play and invite submissions that explore its fluid and multifaceted nature. We welcome playful and creative approaches. The journal encourages multi- and interdisciplinary papers from across the Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities and invites contributions from those at any career stage, including PGRs and ECRs.

Possible topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Leisure and recreation
- The politics of play; access to play
- Theatricality and spectacle
- Comedy
- Music
- Spaces for play: playgrounds, the nursery, parks, the music hall, the seaside, etc.
- Education and play; child development
- Public/private pleasure
- Play and sexuality
- The commodification of play
- Literary playfulness; the aesthetics of play
- Toys and games: board games, gambling, imaginative games, sport, etc.
- Decadence; hedonism

The closing date for submissions is **midnight on Friday 18th April**. Papers should be submitted to **rrr@soton.ac.uk**. Early expressions of interest are welcomed.