

BOOK REVIEW

Diana Mărgărit, Ciprian Jeler (eds.). *Seriozitatea jocului. O abordare multidisciplinară a ludicului*, Editura Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași, 2021, 224 p.

“Seriozitatea jocului. O abordare multidisciplinară a ludicului” (*The seriousness of playing. A multidisciplinary approach to playfulness*), coordinated by Diana Mărgărit and Ciprian Jeler, was published in 2021 at the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University Publishing House, introducing the topic of game, as seen from the perspective of ten original contributions of researchers and authors dedicated to this vast topic. Playing, an activity that does not seem to raise major epistemic issues, comes out unfolding its multiple dimensions such as semantic, aesthetic, historical, social, anthropological or ontological relevance. As a philosopher interested in topics that encompass a wide range of extended applicability disciplines, the subject of play seems to me as much fascinating and spectacular as it is peculiar, mysterious, enticing. I found myself delighted to encounter in contemporary philosophy a paper work that gathers in its content such a vast repertoire of meanings, approaches and tensions related to the proposed topic. Thus, this volume represents a bold proposal to reconsider the playing’s multidisciplinary - this human activity that firmly supports the psychological, emotional and intellectual development. Last but not least, this volume illustrates through its articles an organic development of percep-

tion concerning the play, from its most obvious meanings to overthrowing nuances of meaning and practical intuitions to a pellucid approach regarding the individual - community and otherness relationship, which is closely related to game functionality.

I thus consider this paper work being an act of courage destined to the mind as the act of thinking - arousing the imagination, proposing to broaden the relational and existential horizons regarding the way we actively participate through play in the evolution of the world as a philosophical topic. The work proposes the research of a vast repertoire of playing meanings, reconsidering old definitions, anchoring nuances of meaning into the fertile ground of lucid and penetrating thinking, revealing unusual dimensions of the semantic we use when referring to play. We are now witnessing an openness to unusual, provocative interpretations of different significances of play into the social, cultural, historical, stylistic, philosophical, naturalistic, etymological dimensions. I joyfully discovered complex argumentative structures easily accessible to readers, I permanently had the feeling of an availability reserve from all of authors willing to open themselves to those desiring to dip into their work.



At the same time, the authors emphasize the significance of being open to receive a constantly movement of meanings arising from the interaction of those who are playing, I mean those who make themselves available to others by willing to share a temporary common destiny. The fascination of the play comes illustrated by the manner in which enforces itself into the intimacy of the subject as as default. Appointed right in front of existence, carrying with it all that is and does, the play gently removes the individual from the lucidity callings, allowing him to relax, to suspend in time part of his daily duties, express himself, know oneself, to diminish a little bit the metaphysical weight of gravity. The archaeology of the way playing becomes a serious concern is slowly built with a natural fluidity, easy to follow, with an intense and provocative rhythm; a playfulness matching outfits with the intellectual auspices it is analyzed with. The play rests, imitates, initiates, defines and diverge; its meanings interact and interfere, delivering new, surprising conceptual categories. The play represents a very well defined system of rules - remember, though, not every system of rules is a play. It must be an act standing between seriousness and ambiguity, between clarity and magic, routine and surprise, connecting thus all aspects of psychological life, assuming interpretation, anticipation and revelation of a world of experiences one is capable of. The play also means co-experience, a world of otherness, an encounter on a rule-based field, powered by the very strangeness of the other stranger.

Analyzing the articles that constitute the reference volume it is obvious that playing has its own requirements, proposes its own stake, managing the performance of being simultaneously the activity, the action,

experience and context. Starting from those little games among children for the purpose of amusement and fun to the games of economic markets, power games, dynamics and secret services, language games providing dialogues; this astonishing universe looks to the world with deep soberness, a mesmerizing mixture of fascination, effort and sacrifice. There are no clear borders, they are constantly moving, they adapt to a continuous flow of goals, ideals, expectations and gains. The borders between tradition and novelty are also continuously changing due to the fact that the concepts we use to interpret or question the game content are not always fulfilling our need for ideal consensus or continuity. When not taken seriously, the game becomes inaccurate, illogical, impossible. The expressiveness and clarity of the language in the game reveals its consistency, integrating it in daily life like a valuable activity, socially trustworthy and thus its participants becoming reliable, serious, willing to take risks, to discover themselves, to have hope.

A game promotes a more propitious world for the sake of cooperation; it represents a bold gesture that places the individual as subject of a paradoxical rigourousity where rule-imposed limits do not diminish the metaphysical movements of quest, exaltation or disappointment. Unexpected situations lead to new ways of acting symbolically, to explore unfamiliarity with creativity and curiosity. Taken seriously, the game becomes tender, a tension relief. There is a certain level of engagement that allows the individual to move freely. Bonds of trust and loyalty embody intense emotional gestures, make possible an exchange of postures and points of view, an abundant semiotic field in a well-defined context anchored in space and time. From

an interactive participation arises the rhetoric of a person dealing with the unknown, trying to figure out how to react in order to properly act. The game reveals the beauty of self-questioning and broadens the limits of our boldness and the springs of our fear. We need discernment and courage to join social games, language games, economic, intimate. In fact, the moment we are willing to identify ourselves as vulnerable beings we start to fully appreciate life, to have fun, to explore new possibilities of understanding interaction and engagement as a form of living. Thus, the game achieves authority and a destiny of its own, branched in various experiential contexts, from mutual-aid financial circuits to deception games and espionage field, from the legal form of language-games to game theories and the role of play in the paradigm of visual contemporary arts.

The structure of the paper does not present constraints meant to interrupt the argumentative thread of the exposure, but rather is an invitation to openness, showing well-defined meanings, theoretically sustained and linguistically accessible, maintaining throughout its content the feeling that there is something more to be found, that the meanings of the game have not yet been fully revealed. Analytical consciousness meets the imaginary and the dreaming, and the paper dares to inspire by using an original style, an unique beauty sprung from all the authors who contributed to this work. Cognitive tensions are determined by the vastness of the meanings of the subject of the game, highlighting the multidisciplinary nature of the studies illustrated in the paper. We identify philosophical refinements that reflect the sincere and intense preoccupation on the subject, the volume

representing in this sense an organized ensemble of surprises and surprising findings, caught in their enchanting movement, even graceful here and there. The work therefore has an authentic individuality that manifests itself without restrictions, imposing itself on the territory of reality as an extremely fluid compound of many semantic influences coming from anthropology, phenomenology, politics or art. We are therefore witnessing the emergence of deep ties belonging to distinct concerns, but aiming at a common stake.

By reading this paper, I found myself delighted to discover vast discursive universes, well-founded explanations and the pure honesty of admitting that each and every addressed topic, any contribution to the development of the main subject is encouraged, useful and precious. I found out meaning and consistency, vitality and presence, and I felt a sense of solidarity regarding human experience, which by playing the game, transcends the uniform, rigid-thinking territories, succeeding to expose itself, wanting to want. The tensions between seriousness and amusement, chaos and order, wisdom and childishness, freedom and rules are harmoniously reconciled by elegant reasoning, by expressions of the sublime and exemplarity. Playing as an epistemological constant, having its contemplative and spontaneous expressiveness, manages to be present in this work as a historical, philosophical and cultural heritage. We thus discover the human in its most diverse forms, through *homo ludens* to *homo aestheticus* or *homo significans*, and the game then fertilizing all the aspects of our lives, from the social, verbal, actional or situational, suggesting a complementarity of the contexts where we actually meet.

What is left after reading this volume is the feeling that the most obvious things, the most easy-to-understand facts are revealed to us by hiding; they have their own way of moving into the world, yearning for presence and significance. Our tendency to reject the calling for lucidity most often leaves us scarcely prepared in meeting the deep meanings of our intimate being. Whether or not we hide ourselves by playing the games of our subpersonalities or we play our own life with the questionable naivety of a man who already knows all the answers, it is obvious that we must consciously take part in our own destiny. I am now the astounded witness with new meanings and illustrations of the most obvious games we play and this seems to be the destiny of this work: the emergence of a thought that strives for exemplarity, lucid thinking, inquiry, poetry. As same as in the

games, ingenuity without courage restrains the capability of doing more, of living more. I have felt the audacity of the authors blending into the apparent forms of the game the chance, the unexpected, the entropy. And that so, the game phenomenon becomes a microcosm in an infinite universe of possibilities, a sensual juxtaposition of Eros, the principle of relationship with the Logos – the rational norm that organizes, synthesizes and values. Finally, it might be the game that is the ultimate destiny for those creatures looking at the stars to remember the rules.

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