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The topic of the 32nd volume: ***Homo Ludens and Identity Construction***

When Friedrich Schiller linked the full meaning of the concept "human being/nature" to the activity of play, he was referring to the pure, natural expression of the human being in relation to the surrounding environment.¹ Highlighting the connection between play and poetry, Johan Huizinga shows that play is an action that unfolds within certain limits of space, time, and meaning, in a visible order, according to rules accepted willingly and outside of the sphere of material necessity. The emotional state of play is that of distraction and ecstasy, whether sacred or simply festive, regardless of the play being a form of worship or entertainment. The activity is accompanied by tension and elevation, and brings with it joy and relaxation.

All activities of the poetic creation are seen as belonging to this sphere of play: the metric or rhythmic division of spoken or sung words, the finding of fitting rhymes or assonances, the hiding of the meaning, and the artistic construction of the phrase. The correlation between poetry and play does not only refer to the external form of speech. It equally pertains to the forms of imagination, its motifs, and their expression. Whether we are dealing with mythical, epic, dramatic, or lyrical imagination, with legends from prehistory or with contemporary novels, the conscious or unconscious aim is always to produce, through words, a tension that captivates the audience. In countless cases, the central theme of a poetic or literary work, in general, is a task the hero must accomplish, a trial they must undergo, or an obstacle they need to remove.

Practiced in competition, almost always with the purpose of surpassing an opponent, archaic poetry can hardly be distinguished from ancient struggles with mystical or realistic riddles. Just as enigmatological competition produces wisdom, poetic play gives birth to beautiful words. Both are governed by a system of rules of play that determine artistic concepts and symbols, whether sacred or merely poetic, often both at once.²

Alfred Cammann observed that within this world, there are vertical and horizontal structures, as well as the persistence of certain coordinates related to age and the stages of the child's evolution. Similarly, one's inner world interferes with the world of play, as well as

with daily duties and festive entertainment. It is in this "multiple structure" that the "destiny of the human child, according to childhood evolution," is fulfilled.³

In recent years, an increasing number of European and American researchers have focused on the intricate, yet attractive world of play, with objectivity being one of the criteria for evaluation and investigation. Now, as contemporary humans seem to be on the verge of a new becoming – a set of cultural coordinates converging toward "the depollution of their complex structure"⁴ – more than ever, a comprehensive investigation of the culture of play is necessary.

Despite living in an evolving world, with a development rate that keeps accelerating, where school no longer represents the ultimate training and education authority, and where the possibilities of taking part in culture are becoming increasingly complex, the idea of reorienting adults' behaviour toward children regarding their cultural habits is more relevant than ever. In this sense, American researcher Neil Postman notes with concern the disappearance of some traditional games from the repertoire of play and of natural social behaviour according to children's age. His concern is supported by the observation that these games are at best replaced by adult games. After a continuous history of over three thousand years, children's games are threatened with extinction, Postman claims.⁵

The American researcher's statement is not entirely exaggerated; however, it is valid only in relation to certain areas – specifically, highly industrialised and developed countries with a prestigious, purely urban civilisation – where adults, through hyper-technologized educational processes and the toy industry, influence the evolution and natural manifestation of play.

Despite this beginning of the millennium, which brings about widespread technological development – acting as a brake on the natural creativity process of play – research in our country and abroad impresses with the relatively large number of studies concerning its complex universe. All of these arguments underscore the immediate need to connect the concept of culture directly with the term "play."

Possible topics:

Homo ludens - component of human personality

Play - anthropological significance

Play as a cultural phenomenon

Play as a social phenomenon

Play as a form of freedom

Play versus competition

Play versus spectacle

Linguistic play (...)

Literature as play

Play in literature

Play - ethnographic/ethnological approaches

Playful forms of art

Gamification in teaching

Play as a current narrative technique

The imaginary of play

Play as a cognitive route

Play and imitation

Play and hazard

Play as an aspect of identity

Please, find [HERE](#) the submission guidelines for authors.

Selected Further References:

Cammann, Alfred. *Die Welt der niederdeutschen Kinderspiele*, Meissner Verlag, 1970. p. 20—38.

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¹ Schiller, Friedrich. *Ueber die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen, in einer Reihe von Briefen*. Sämtliche Werke, IV. Band. Stuttgart: Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1879, p. 558—634. (<https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/schiller/aesterz/aesterz.html>).

² Johan Huizinga. *Homo ludens*. Traducere din olandeză de H.R. Radian, pref. și notă bibliografică de Gabriel Liiceanu. București: Editura Univers, 1977, p. 33.

³ Cammann, Alfred. *Die Welt der niederdeutschen Kinderspiele*. Meissner Verlag, 1970, p. 24.

⁴ Marghescu, Georgeta. *Introducere în antropologia culturală*. București: Editura Fundației „România de mâine”, 1999, p. 188.

⁵ Postman, Neil. *The Loss of Childhood*. New York, 1983, p. 56.