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PLAY AS AN EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENON

Abstract

Numerous phenomena of public and hidden play (fighting for something or presenting something) are present in all human ages, from the primordial community to the present day. Play, as dealing with imaginary illusion, is part of man's individual and collective existence. All five existential phenomena: death, love, struggle, work and play, are encompassed by play and expressed through play (E. Fink). Play permeates all significant primordial activities of common human life (speech, myth, cult, etc.). All stimulating forces of social life (from economics to art) have their roots in the act of playing. Play elevates human existence above the purely biological, vegetative one. It decorates and complements life. This points to its importance for the individual (biological function) and society (expressive power, creation of spiritual and social ties, expression of the ideal of living together) (J. Huizinga). Impulses and elements of play, which exist in and out of the world of play, determine the existence of different types of plays: competitions, games of chance, disguising and plays of ecstasy. The dominance of some of these types of play in a society reflects the society - its style and values (R. Kajo). In modern society, elements of play are increasingly disappearing, and play is increasingly manifesting pathological conditions and tendencies of individuals and groups.

Keywords: *play; existence; man; society*

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Introduction

The significance of the play for man, social groups and community has always been present. As Eugen Fink² observes, play is “not a marginal phenomenon in the landscape of human life nor just an advantage of childhood“, it is “a fundamental phenomenon of our existence“. Among all beings, man is the only one playing. From primitive peoples to later peoples of industrial urbanization, there are, in various areas of life, numerous phenomena of public and hidden play. Play involves people of all ages (from a child in a sandbox to an old man playing “solitaire“)³. One can play above the level of childish pleasure and rest below the level of serious life: “it is play of beauty and holiness“⁴. Regardless of the time in which we observe play, its essence is clear: “constant change, change of the established, completed, worn out. It releases from restraint and frustration, encourages, develops imagination, individuality, enthusiasm, uniqueness, self-confidence, and is directed against boredom and laziness. Play is not a substitute for reality nor an escape from it (‘asylum’, temporary refuge, hiding), it is an integral part of reality, its ‘brighter’ side, ‘correction’”⁵. The functions of play are “fighting for something or presenting something“⁶.

Play is a basic existential phenomenon (with death, love, struggle and work). It is by no means foreign to understanding, but this phenomenon is indeed largely a rejection of the notion. “The meaning of play is not something other than play - play is not a means, a tool, it is not an opportunity to express a meaning. Playing is meaningful in itself and through itself. Those who play move in the meaningful atmosphere of their play”⁷. Work and rule testify to the self-care of human existence for the future. Play contradicts them. The magic of play (happiness and seductive charm) consists of its deep carelessness, pointlessness and uselessness, blissful floating and distance from every life trouble⁸. The phenomenon that turns a savage into a man, as Friedrich Schiller⁹ observes, is “the

2 E. Финк, *Основни феномени људској постојања* (Бања Лука: Филозофски факултет и Библиотека „Преводи“, 2004)

3 E. Финк, *op. cit.*, 343

4 J. Huizinga, *Homo ludens: o podrijetlu kulture u igri* (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1992), 24

5 I. Šjaković & D. Vilić, *Sociologija savremenog društva* (Banja Luka: Ekonomski fakultet, 2010), 241

6 Huizinga, *op. cit.*, 18

7 E. Финк, *op. cit.*, 362

8 *Ibidem*, 347

9 F. Šiler, *O lepom* (Beograd: Book & Marso, 2007)

enjoyment of *illusion*, the propensity to *adorn* and *play*¹⁰.

Roger Caillois talks about the cultural effectiveness of play and lists four categories of play that exist depending on what prevails in them: *Agon* (competition), *Alea* (chance), *Mimicry* (simulation) and *Ilinix* (vertigo)¹¹. The essence, character and orientation of the collective spirit and life is evidenced by the dominance of one of the mentioned groups of plays, ie “their choice reveals, in turn, the face, style and value of a particular society¹². In modern society, elements of play in culture and society are increasingly disappearing, and play is increasingly manifesting pathological conditions and tendencies of individuals and groups.

The concept and characteristics of play

Play is a special, meaningful form and quality of action, which has a social function. Play is interwoven with almost all significant primordial activities of common human life - speech (metaphor - play on words), myth (earthly is based on the divine), cult (sacred rites, consecrations, sacrifices and mysteries were performed in pure play) and the like. On the other hand, all significant stimulating forces of cultural life spring from cults and myths: from law and economics to art and science. Their root is in the act of playing¹³. Play manifests the human - play is for man the treatment of imagination with possibilities, the relationship to the imaginary illusion. This is not found in animals¹⁴. As Friedrich Schiller observes, like any bodily tool, “the imagination in man has its free movement and its material play in which it, without any connection with the character, enjoys only its arbitrariness and complete freedom¹⁵. Our existence in play is “to some extent actively reflected in ourselves, we imagine what we are and how we are¹⁶. Play is a mirror of itself and all basic intertwined phenomena of existence (death, love, struggle and work), it encompasses them all, as well as itself¹⁷. According to Johan Huizinga¹⁸, play is defined as “voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed

10 *Ibidem*, 190

11 R. Kajoa, *Igre i ljudi: maska i zanos* (Beograd: Nolit, 1979), 65

12 *Ibidem*, 94

13 Huizinga, *op. cit.*, 12

14 E. Финк, *op. cit.*, 34

15 Šiler, *op. cit.*, 198

16 E. Финк, *op. cit.*, 378

17 *Ibidem*, 380

18 Huizinga, *op. cit.*

limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that it is 'different' from 'ordinary life'. (...) It seems that the category of play can be considered the most basic spiritual element of life"¹⁹. From this definition, some recognizable features of play stand out: freedom, an exit from real, ordinary life "into a temporary sphere of activity with some aim of its own aspiration", completeness and limitation to certain boundaries of time and space, repeatability, special and unconditional order within the playground and tension (uncertainty, chance, but also the desire to relax)²⁰. The space of the world of play cannot be placed and dated in a coordinate value system even though play uses real place and real time. "And this strange world that opens up in play, is not only at a distance from ordinary reality, it has the opportunity to repeat in itself its distance and contrast to reality"²¹.

Roger Caillois²² emphasizes the importance of J. Huizinga's endeavor in re-searching play - in finding it where others before him had failed, by exploring its fertility in the field of culture. But he thinks his (Huizinga's) definition is too broad and concise. Although there is a secret in any activity of play, play takes place at its expense – when a secret has a ritual function it is not play, but an institution. Although they occupy a significant place in the economy and everyday life of various peoples, bets and games of chance exclude J. Huizinga's definition of play as an action free of any material interest. However, play entails a certain economic interest. In some manifestations of games of chance, play brings profit or is extremely destructive, but that does not mean that even then play remains strictly unproductive. Play differs from work or art in that it creates neither wealth nor a work, it is an opportunity for pure spending (time, energy, ingenuity, skills and money to buy props or rent a bar)²³. Thus, play is a free, voluntary and independent activity (we play if and when we want), to which the player surrenders for his own pleasure. A special occupation that takes place within precisely defined temporal and spatial boundaries with precise, imaginary and irrevocable rules (there are plays without rules, in which fiction replaces rule), with an uncertain outcome to the end. Plays are either regulated or fictional, they are not both²⁴. R. Caillois adds two new areas to the world of various plays: the field of games of chance and betting and the field of

19 *Ibidem*, 31

20 *Ibidem*, 15 – 17

21 Е. Финк, *op. cit.*, 357

22 Кајоа, *op. cit.*

23 *Ibidem*, 31 – 33

24 *Ibidem*, 34 – 36

mimicry and interpretation.

Although play itself is not an illusion, as E. Fink observes, “it uses to some extent the illusionistic effects that are otherwise operated by deliberate deception - it accepts the element of deception, but not to betray it as a valid reality, but to have such illusionary as medium of expression. The mask in play should not seduce, it should tame, it is a prop of the practice of magic. Play moves in a guaranteed ‘illusion’, it does not deny it and does not betray it in any way as ordinary-real. Every play works with imagined illusory”²⁵.

Play as an existential phenomenon and the content of existence

Human play is one of the five basic phenomena that encompasses itself and the other four (death, love, struggle, work), “presents them in a strange element of the imaginary and thus achieves for human existence a pure self-presentation and self-perception in a strange play of pure illusion”²⁶. All the great contents of our existence appear in play²⁷.

Play decorates and complements life, which clearly indicates its necessity for both the individual (biological function) and society (expressive power, creates spiritual and social ties, satisfies the ideals of living together)²⁸. As E. Fink observes, play prevents the sinking of human existence into the vegetative. “Many meaningful motives have certainly flowed from the practice of play into the living fields of work and rule - play has become a reality, it is said. The discoveries made in play sometimes take on a real meaning at once. Human society experiments many times in the field of play before the possibilities tested there become firm customs and habits, binding rules and regulations”²⁹. Through play, community life is “adorned with super-biological forms which give it greater value. By playing in this way, the community expresses its understanding of life and the world”³⁰.

Throughout history, there have been two absolute contradictory theses about play. “In the first case, plays are systematically presented only as a degradation of those activities of adults which, having lost their seriousness, fall to the level of harmless entertainment. In the second, the spirit of play is in the origin of fruitful conventions that enable the development of culture. It

25 E. Финк, *op. cit.*, 377

26 *Ibidem*, 373

27 *Ibidem*, 372

28 Huizinga, *op. cit.*, 15 – 16

29 E. Финк, *op. cit.*, 344

30 Huizinga, *op. cit.*, 47

encourages the development of ingenuity, sophistication and an ingenious spirit. At the same time, it learns loyalty to the opponent and gives an example of competition where rivalry does not survive the match. Through play, man creates for himself the possibility of breaking the monotony, overcoming the limitations, blindness and brutality of nature³¹. R. Caillois believes that this contradiction is difficult to resolve - the nature of play has not changed, but its social function has. "The transfer and the degradation they have suffered have taken away their political or religious significance. But that decline only revealed, distinguishing it, what play retained in itself, which is nothing but its structure"³². Authors who saw in play as insignificant and sympathetic degradation of meaningful activities, according to R. Caillois, did not notice that play and everyday life are constantly and everywhere antagonistic and simultaneous domains - which means that play is essential to culture³³.

We can see that from children's play through large cult-related play of primitive peoples to more advanced cultures, the laws and customs of everyday life have no value in the field of play - in play we are "others" and we "do" it "differently"³⁴. Significant formal features of play are its spatial isolation from everyday life within which its rules apply³⁵, and "awareness that something is 'done just like that'"³⁶. The player acts in a way that he produces an "illusion", an unreality, which has a fascinating, taming and enchanting power that is not opposed to the player but actually draws him in. The term 'player' is as ambiguous as the term 'plaything'. Just as it is a real thing in the real world and at the same time a thing in the imaginary world of illusions with valid circumstances only there, so the player is also a man who plays, and at the same time a man of 'role in play'. Those who play fall, so to speak, into their character roles, 'disappear' in them and hide their playing behavior with their playful behavior"³⁷. We produce the world of play in play. "In real actions, which, however, are achieved through magical production and meaningful power of imagination, we build in the community of play with others (or also sometimes in a completely imaginary coexistence with partners we imagined) the world of play limited by the rules of play and sense of representation - we do not remain opposite to it as an observer against the image, but we enter the world of play

31 Кајоа, *op. cit.*, 85

32 *Ibidem*, 86

33 *Ibidem*, 90 – 91

34 Хуизинга, *op. cit.*, 18

35 *Ibidem*, 24

36 *Ibidem*, 26 – 27

37 Е. Финк, *op. cit.*, 352

and have one role in it”³⁸.

Play was essential for the development and transmission of ancient Greek culture. There are two patterns of Greek culture expressed through the understanding of play: the Spartan and the Athenian pattern of play. The first pattern developed endurance, courage, self-confidence, obedience and loyalty through play, already in children from the age of seven, to become great fighters and warriors in later life. The second pattern expresses the effort to develop man in a balance of spiritual and physical abilities. “*The Olympic Games* were organized with the aim of publicly presenting the results achieved in the development of various skills, especially martial arts. Even wars were interrupted to hold the Olympics. True, fighting matches in ancient arenas sometimes ended with the strangulation of one of the participants, which shows that play was already understood as an expression of superiority and the desire for complete victory, and even through the process of eliminating opponents”³⁹. Compared to Hellenic, it seems that the ancient Roman society shows significantly fewer playful features, which have a predominantly sacral character of that society, although this is not expressed in luxury and colors⁴⁰. In the exclamation *bread and circuses!* (*panem et circenses!*), the element of play of the Roman state was clearly manifested. Plays were the foundation of the survival of Roman society, to which the people had a sacred right. Their original function was a solemn celebration for the chosen happiness of the society, but also the strengthening and consolidation of future happiness, through the sacred act⁴¹. In every city, the amphitheater occupied a very important place. In the last phase of the greatness of ancient Rome, the playful factor of Roman culture (inflated panegyric and empty rhetoric, superficial decoration in the fine arts) comes to the fore in literary and artistic works, without giving the impression of great seriousness. Life became a cultural game, in which holiness disappeared from the cult. Roman culture withered when Christianity tore it from its sacred base. The life of the Middle Ages was filled with play, but most of plays do not have a real cultural role (unbridled folk dance, knight tournaments, refined court game, etc.). Playing in medieval culture was associated with beginnings of chivalry and the beginning of feudal forms in general⁴². In the Renaissance, a self-conscious and isolated elite tried to understand life as part of perfect artistic play - a life modeled on antiquity, strong, deep and pure devotion to the ideal of

38 E. Финк, *op. cit.*, 356

39 Šijaković & D. Vilić, *op. cit.*, 240

40 Huizinga, *op. cit.*, 159

41 *Ibidem*, 161

42 *Ibidem*, 162 – 163

plastic creation and intellectual research. Play was a complete spiritual attitude of the Renaissance - the culture in play is a subtle, fresh and strong pursuit of noble and beautiful form. The Renaissance awakens literary and solemn life. All this also applies to humanism, closed within the circle of consecrated and knowledgeable people, nurturing a precisely formulated life and educational ideal⁴³. In the examination of the content of play of the seventeenth century, the general stylistic feature of the baroque is emphasized, which is expressed in construction and sculpture, painting, poetry, and even philosophy, politics and theology. The need for exaggeration is inherent in the Baroque (for example, the fashion of luxurious men's suits, wigs), and we can understand it by considering more complete content of play of the creative impulse, which proves the importance of culture as the factor of play speaking particularly clear language⁴⁴. We also find an element of play in the next period of Rococo, in which style and fashion, play and art came very close to each other. In the play of motifs of elegant tendrils and twigs of a Rococo ornament, which, like musical decoration, obscured a straight line, the spirit of the eighteenth century sought a return to nature in a stylized form⁴⁵. The style and mood of European culture in the second half of the eighteenth century were born in play - neoclassicism (enclosing emotional and aesthetic life in the ideal sphere of the past without sharp outlines of mysterious and frightening characters and inspiration from the spiritual world of romance)⁴⁶. Already in the eighteenth century, the notion of utility and the civic ideal of well-being rose above the spirit of society, which was successfully strengthened by the achievements of the industrial revolution towards the end of the century. The spread of education and scientific reasoning became dominant. The natural fruit of rationalism and utilitarianism was, in a sense, an overestimation of economic factors, which killed the mystery and freed man from guilt and sin. In the nineteenth century, all mental efforts were directed against play in social life (the seriousness of culture). Realism, naturalism, and impressionism seemed to prevail in art and literature⁴⁷. Elements of play in modern society will be discussed in the following chapter. The term play is often expressed as the opposite of the word reality.⁴⁸ Reality

43 *Ibidem*, 164

44 *Ibidem*, 164

45 *Ibidem*, 168 – 169

46 *Ibidem*, 171

47 *Ibidem*, 173 – 174

48 Ancient Greeks used the term "what belongs to a child" for the field of play, but it is not something childish. Also, etymologically close to play are the notions of fighting and competition (agon - shows all formal features of play, and falls mainly within the framework

(we find the term in the area of the terms “zeal“, “effort“, “torment“) as the opposite of play is especially expressed in the Greek language and Germanic languages. In special cases, the notion of work is opposed to play, while reality can be opposed to jokes⁴⁹. “Regardless of the linguistic issues, if we take a closer look at the conceptual play-reality pair, we will find that both of these terms are not equal: play is positive, reality is negative. The content of the notion of reality is determined and exhausted by the negation of play: reality is non-play, and nothing else. On the contrary, the content of the term play is not determined and is not exhausted in any way by non-reality: play is something self-sufficient. The notion of play is of a higher order than the notion of reality. Because reality is trying to exclude play, while play can include the reality quite well“⁵⁰. The elementary realizations of human existence include play, which “distracts us from the ordinary and everyday ‘reality of life’, as it is revealed to us primarily in pregnancy and the hardships of work and struggle for power, we are sometimes taken to a deeper reality, an abysmal-cheerful, tragic-comic reality, where we see existence as in a mirror. Although human play always remains in a double self-understanding, in which “reality“ and “play“ seem opposites, and yet as such are abolished again, the man who plays is interested in mental self-understanding, in conceptual analysis of his winged, joyfully

of the ceremony). Huizinga, *op. cit.* 32 – 33 In Sanskrit, there is not a single word among the words for play that would express competition as such. Also, not even in ancient India. *Ibidem*, 34 In China, the semantic origin of the term play is in “accepting something with the attention of the player“ (engaging in something, finding pleasure in something, going crazy, joking, touching, looking, smelling, enjoying the moonlight, etc.), but it does not mean games of skills, competition, dice or the play. *Ibidem*, 34 – 35 Indians distinguish between children’s games in general (non-serious and organized) from play of semi-adults and adults that have erotic meaning (especially, illicit relationships). In Japan, there is a word for the function of play in general, which means playing in general, relaxation, fun, entertainment, outing, entertainment, debauchery, gambling, leisure, unemployment, playing something, representing something, imitating, and it is joined by its opposite term which means reality. *Ibidem*, 36 In Semitic languages, the word play contains both the meaning of play in the true sense and the meaning of “laugh“, “mock“. In Arabic, the term play means play in general, but it also includes teasing and nagging. In Greek, the function of play is expressed in a diverse and heterogeneous way, in Latin, one word ludus-ludere is a general term for play and playing, and it expresses the whole area of play – “children’s play, entertainment, competition, liturgical and stage performances, and gambling“. *Ibidem*, 37 - 38 The Germanic language group does not have a general word for play and playing, each of its branches uses a different word for play and playing (*Ibidem*, 39), but this term is used for the most serious weapon fighting and erotic play. *Ibidem*, 42 – 44

49 *Ibidem*, 45

50 *Ibidem*, 46

intoned realization.⁵¹

The connection between culture and play should be sought in higher forms of social play (the coordinated action of a group or a society or two opposing groups). Play of the individual, for himself, will be somewhat fruitful for the culture. And in the animal world, there are basic factors of play: playing together, fighting, presenting and showing, challenging, showing off, illusion and rules that limit it (black grouse dancing, decorating the nest, etc.). Cultures are preceded by competition and representation, they do not derive from it⁵². The elevation of play to culture is encouraged by its suitability to increase the intensity of life of an individual or group. The two forms we find everywhere in which culture appears *as* play and *in* play are sacred display and solemn competition⁵³. Closely related to play is the notion of victory (it only appears in play against someone else) - to prove one's superiority by the outcome of play, which can take on the appearance of superiority in general, from winning in play itself the gain becomes greater. Success achieved in play permanently brings reputation, honor, respect - they regularly belong to the whole group (which celebrates by shouting and glorifying). This is one important feature of play. In the importance of gaining victory (agonal instinct) we encounter the tendency to overtake the other, to be the first, and to be appreciated for it. Here we do not meet the thirst for power nor the will to power⁵⁴. Victory is something more than honor - there is a stake in play (a value of a symbolic or material nature or purely ideal)⁵⁵. The element of play has the most decisive place among the functions of culture. A system of completely identical notions and customs of an agonal nature, created independently of religious notions, dominated the life of early communities all over the world. This can be explained by human nature itself, its innate desire for higher (earthly honor and supremacy, victory over earthly) achieved through play⁵⁶, which proves the deep roots of agonal behavior in the very foundations of human mental and social life. As far as society allows, the urge to prove superiority is expressed in so many forms (in courage, endurance, strength, etc.). In any form, competition is essentially play, and its starting point is in that capacity⁵⁷. An active and extremely fruitful factor of play existed in the creation of all great forms of social life. As an

51 Е. Финк, *op. cit.*, 359

52 Huizinga, *op. cit.* 47 – 48

53 *Ibidem*, 48 – 49

54 *Ibidem*, 50 – 51

55 *Ibidem*, 51

56 *Ibidem*, 72

57 *Ibidem*, 98

impuls of society, there has always been play competition which filled life and encouraged the growth of various forms of archaic culture (developing a cult in the sacred play, giving birth to poetry in play, music and dance were play, wisdom and knowledge gained expression in dedicated competitions, the law originated from the customs of the social play, the regulation of conflicts with weapons was built on the forms of play, etc.)⁵⁸.

Roger Caillois presents the division of play according to what prevails in it - competition, chance, pretense or ecstasy: *Agon* (competition), *Alea* (*chance*), *Mimicry* (*simulation*) and *Ilinix* (vertigo, using play to cause confusion and anxiety in one's own body)⁵⁹. The dominance of one of the mentioned groups of play speaks about the essence, character and direction of the collective spirit and life. At the same time, they all can be divided between two sexes: *paidia* (uncontrolled fantasy, the original power of improvisation and merriment) and *ludus* (in which the spontaneous exuberance of *paidia* recedes, combines with the desire for optional difficulty, the desire to discipline archaic and capricious nature, requires more effort, patience, ingenuity and skill)⁶⁰. *Paidia* implies the original freedom, the need to relax, the desire for entertainment and giving free rein to the imagination. In order to come up with various civilizational plays, *paidia* teamed up with *ludus* (desire for optional difficulty). They present the moral and intellectual values of a culture, *paidia* and *ludus* contribute to a more accurate definition and development of culture⁶¹. "Paidia participates in every outburst of joy expressed by direct and unbridled movement, freely improvised entertainment whose unforeseen and free character remains the main, if not the only, cause of existence"⁶². The connection between *paidia* and different plays is obvious except for plays of passive anticipation of the decision of fate, while the possibilities of *ludus* are unlimited in terms of its connection with all plays.⁶³ "In general, *ludus* places arbitrary obstacles that are constantly renewed before the original desire for entertainment and amusement; it invents thousands of opportunities and thousands of schedules where, at the same time, the satisfaction of both desire to relax and the need that seems impossible to get rid of is found, to use unnecessarily their knowledge, value, skill and intelligence, without considering the power of self-control, ability to endure pain, fatigue, panic and fear. In this capacity, what I call *ludus* is the

58 *Ibidem*, 158

59 Kajoa, *op. cit.*, 65

60 *Ibidem*, 40 – 41

61 *Ibidem*, 55 – 56

62 *Ibidem*, 56

63 *Ibidem*, 58 – 59

element in play whose reach and cultural fertility are most noticeable”⁶⁴. In the basic categories of plays (*agon*, *alea*, *mimicry* and *ilinx*), *ludus* imperceptibly brings purity and content by disciplining *paidiae*⁶⁵. All these categories of play do not imply loneliness, but society, they all show socialized aspects, and with their breadth and stability they found their place in the community⁶⁶.

Agon is a group of plays that appears as a competition, as a fight, rivalry, which refers to one trait (speed, endurance, strength, skill, etc.), imposes discipline and perseverance, implies intense attention, constant effort, desire to win and specially adapted training, an effort to equalize the odds of the opponent at the beginning, and the triumph of the winner has a precise and irrevocable value (serves to emphasize the pure form of individual value) from which the motivation to play arises (athletics, boxing, billiards, fencing, football, chess, sports competitions in general)⁶⁷. *Alea* (Latin game with dice) implies all plays in the stark contrast to the *agon*, signifies and reveals the affection of fate, which puts the player in a passive position (has no influence on decisions), who risks his bet, the outcome of which is extremely uncertain (approaching mere chance). It is play with destiny - it is the only factor of victory (children's counting, betting, roulette, lotteries, ordinary, complex or with the transfer of dice, etc.), it denies work, patience, agility, qualification, it is “arrogant and overwhelming mockery of ability”⁶⁸. Both of these types of plays - *agon* and *alea*, are an attempt to replace the usual confusion of everyday life with ideal situations (the role of merit or chance in them seems absolute and indisputable, they impose the need for equal prospects for success or happiness, in which man withdraws from the world by making it different)⁶⁹. By turning oneself into something else one can escape from reality. This is matched by *mimicry* - play in which we “become a fictional person and behave accordingly”, where the subject, in order to believe in himself or for others to believe that it is not him but something else, forgets, disguises himself, temporarily rejects his personality in order to imitate someone else (children's imitations, delusion, puppet, miniature tools and weapons, mask, masquerade, theater, performing arts in general)⁷⁰. Additional areas of this type of play are imitation and disguise. They show all the features of plays - freedom, agreement, exclusion of reality, limited time

64 *Ibidem*, 61 – 62

65 *Ibidem*, 62

66 *Ibidem*, 69 – 70

67 *Ibidem*, 42 – 43

68 *Ibidem*, 45 – 46

69 *Ibidem*, 47

70 *Ibidem*, 47 – 48

and place, except for submission to inviolable and precise rules. It is a constant fabrication, concealment of reality and the illusion of another reality. One rule is that the player enchants the viewer, taking care that he does not reject the illusion due to some mistake⁷¹. *Ilinix* involves plays of ecstasy that are based on causing dizziness (looking for specific confusion, a moment of panic, getting into a kind of spasm, ecstasy, dizziness) and they consist of an attempt to shake the stability of perception for a moment and impose some kind of lustful confusion on clear mind, that erase reality, but with the undoubted features of play involved in it (body movements of dervish-turners and Mexican rulers, children's "dizziness", carousel, swing, waltz, fairground attractions, mountaineering, walking on a rope)⁷². Various activities can create pleasure and intoxication in a person (fast car driving, playing on children's swings, etc.), but the strength and brutality of this feeling were given by strongly constructed machines in the era of industry (devices found in fairgrounds and amusement parks)⁷³.

Elements of play are involved in many forms of non-playing life (for example, war adventures and knightly rules of play, jokes of the powerful on the political stage)⁷⁴. Outside the closed world of play, the principles that govern the various types of games (chance or skill, luck or demonstrated superiority) are manifested. "But it should be well borne in mind that they rule plays sovereignly, without resistance and, so to speak, as a fictional world without aspiration and matter, while in the confusing world of inextricable, real human relations, their actions are never isolated or sovereign, nor limited in advance, it entails inevitable consequences"⁷⁵.

Instead of conclusion - the degradation of play and the loss of features of play in modern society

Any mixing of play with everyday life leads to the dangers of distorting and ruining play. The phenomenon of "infecting" play with reality is a specific perversion of the principle of play. This perversion results from the absence of protection and control (pleasure becomes a fixed idea; escape becomes an obligation; leisure becomes passion, obsession and a source of suffering)⁷⁶. The

71 *Ibidem*, 49 – 51

72 *Ibidem*, 51 – 53

73 *Ibidem*, 54 – 55

74 Е. Финк, *op. cit.*, 375

75 Кајоа, *op. cit.*, 92.

76 *Ibidem*, 72 – 73

perversion of *agon* begins where the recognition of the judge and the judgment ceases - cruelty, desire for power, cunning; the perversion of *alea* is born with superstition, astrology, etc. ; the perversion of *mimicry* occurs at a time when disguise is no longer taken as such - alienation, doubling of personality; and *ilinx* is perverted in alcoholism and drugs⁷⁷. The cause of deviation in *agon*, *alea* or *mimicry* always mixes with ordinary life, when the driving instinct of play extends beyond the strict boundaries of time and place, without pre-established and irrevocable conventions⁷⁸. Plays of instinct (competition, pursuit of happiness, disguise, dizziness) need to be disciplined and institutionalized, otherwise they would have fatal consequences⁷⁹.

In modern society, pathological conditions and tendencies of individuals and groups are increasingly manifested in play. The number and content of games of chance are increasing every day. Media have contributed largely to their popularity and availability. They have turned from activities aimed at fun, pleasant relaxation, into a struggle for money and wealth, accompanied by increased emotional states of their admirers (frustrations, desires and hopes). These games are becoming a kind of "social disease". Sports games also show a high degree of negative social phenomena (their original meaning of developing a free and reliable personality is increasingly turning into a race for reckless success, violence in sports, hooliganism)⁸⁰. The nineteenth century was marked by the renunciation of many features of play of earlier centuries. This loss of forms of play in social life seems to have been offset by sport - a significant compensatory phenomenon, expanding its meaning in social life. However, by systematizing and disciplining play (elaboration of strict rules, searching for greater achievements, division of players into professionals and amateurs), the content of play is gradually lost in sports⁸¹. "In today's social life, sport is outside the real process of culture, and the process of culture is outside sport. In ancient cultures, competitions formed part of dedicated festivals. As sacred and beneficial activities, they were absolutely necessary. This connection with the cult has completely disappeared in modern sports. Sport has lost all sanctity, it no longer has an organic connection with the structure of society, even when it is prescribed by the regime itself. It is far more an independent expression of agonal instincts than a factor of a fruitful social meaning"⁸². Sport remains a barren function in which

77 *Ibidem*, 74, 83

78 *Ibidem*, 77

79 *Ibidem*, 82

80 Šijaković & Vilić, *op. cit.*, 241

81 Huizinga, *op. cit.*, 177

82 *Ibidem*, 178

the old factor of play has died out, it has lost the best of its content, the mood has disappeared from play that has become too serious⁸³ The saying *bread and circuses!*, “has become over time synonymous with tired, worn out and sick societies, or societies overwhelmed by populism, a state of uncreative consciousness and without a clear perspective”⁸⁴.

In the modern sense, the temptation of play can be traced through its *relationship with work* - the opportunity to free work from all routine, stereotypical and tedious elements, to make it free, autonomous, unfettered and humane is provided by modern science, technique and technology, on the other hand, play becomes increasingly work, profession (brings success, earnings, profit)⁸⁵. There are more and more phenomena that oppose play’s tendency to become serious. “Activities whose reason is material gain, necessity or need, ie those that are not initially manifested in forms of play, subsequently develop significance that can be only called playful. The validity of this action is limited to one closed area, and the rules that govern it cease to serve the general purpose. In the first case it is a sport, so play is denied to seriousness but is still considered play; in the second, it is a serious business that turns into play but is still valid as something serious. Both phenomena include a strong sense for agon, which has prevailed over the world, but in forms that are different from the former”⁸⁶. Public competitions are encouraged everywhere by technique, publicity and propaganda - trade competition occurs with the market, the pursuit of records in the economy caused by comparative trade and production statistics, artistic production and performance are familiar with the element of play⁸⁷. In archaic periods, war was understood as a noble game because of respecting the rules of war. The characteristics of play were present in English parliamentary life, in American political customs and in French politics. However, today it is different - if we find traces of plays in the domestic politics of modern states, there is little reason for that in international relations. But there is no reason to exclude the notion of play from international relations, even though they have caused such great and extreme violence and danger⁸⁸.

83 *Ibidem*, 178

84 Šijaković & Vilić, *op. cit.*, 240

85 *Ibidem*, 242

86 Huizinga, *op. cit.*, 179 – 180

87 *Ibidem*, 180 – 181

88 *Ibidem*, 186 – 188

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