

THE DIMENSIONS AND THE AFFINITIES OF THE GAME

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ABSTRACT. *The Dimensions and the Affinities of the Game.* Two people cannot be replicated. But they can have common points in life, such as social aspects or others regarding their sentimental life, their artistic one, their spiritual one and from these we can see how everything comes into place and forms their unicity. It evolves on their personal style, on the character, perceptions, visions and also in the person they aim to be. So, the game expresses, no matter what dimension we are considering, that the vision is a concept which indicates both clarity and perspectives between us and our own selves. It can be deformed and transposed into something that actually exists. We are talking about dimension, game, self-being, affinity and the intangible present.

Keywords: *game, dimension, perception, art, philosophy*

The game as a key symbol between the artist's creation and aesthetic

Both in art and philosophy there are invisible or subtle under layers, that we are not always aware of, which can be both tangible or intangible. We cannot say that something is incomprehensible, because of the fact that the nature's game itself, which is a pure fundament of life, defines it as being an action in which the participants know the rules, know the way in which the events are developing and almost all of them have the same objective. "Culture, however, exists as a form of communication, as a game whose participants are not subjects, on the one hand, and objects, on the other."¹ No matter if we are in it as a spectator or as an artist, the scene offered by the game does not make any kind of discriminations, but on the contrary, it supports us on our journey to find who we really are, it supports us when we are trying to find our way towards that common objective but most

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¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Beginning of Philosophy*, Continuum, 2001, p.31.

importantly, it supports us as we try to transpose ourselves in our own skin, our own self-being and also get rid of any masks that might be just an impediment and simply will not let us fully enjoy this amazing experience. The pure connection between pain and pleasure can be even more commune that we could possibly think. We ought to say that we cannot see the world through someone else's perceptions and perspectives. But I still believe that we possess, of course, at some point in our lives, the rough material required to commit at some points, different act, or maybe just don't feel real love anymore? We really just need the right or the wrong combination of events to make this rough material combustible. Regarding our own perspectives and perceptions from which we see things and objects, I believe we can all conclude that everything changes in the end.

It is the tyranny of hidden prejudices that makes us deaf to what speaks to us in tradition. Heidegger's demonstration that the concept of consciousness in Descartes and of spirit in Hegel is still influenced by Greek substance ontology, which sees being in terms of what is present, undoubtedly surpasses the self-understanding of modern metaphysics, yet not in an arbitrary, willful way, but on the basis of a "fore-having" that in fact makes this tradition intelligible by revealing the ontological premises of the concept of subjectivity.²

In our day to day lives the game has a very important role, which can actually be both a constructive and a destructive one - and when I say destructive or make a reference towards this word, we will take into consideration a few key factors which are going to influence, in a subtle way the pure journey of this life, the bonds between us as human beings, as persons, as individuals...but the game's dimension, whether it is a metaphorical or a philosophical one or an artistical one, along with those belonging to the hermeneutics, in some instances at least, starting with the past moving through the present and aiming towards the future, are passing us through those certain images that belong to a life which closes up and dissolves itself just like it would have been in a hallucinogenic or febrile condition or state of mind – which could represent the agreement between agony and ecstasy. Maybe for some of us, the memory of this game is just a huge gap that they feel, without differing it from what is ephemeral or playful, which in one way or another belongs to the soul or to something that is timeless and also contains element that make it a continuous presence.

The task of historical understanding also involves acquiring an appropriate historical horizon, so that what we are trying to understand can be seen in its true dimensions. If we fail to transpose ourselves into the historical horizon

² Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Continuum Publishing Group, 2004, p. 272.

from which the traditional text speaks, we will misunderstand the significance of what it has to say to us. To that extent this seems a legitimate hermeneutical requirement: we must place ourselves in the other situation in order to understand it.³

The dimensions attached to the absolute game have the ability to spread to so many different, complementary or even contradictory fields. But we can also encounter them in our day to day life where the game is a fundament. Also, they can be noticed in our way of communication, between the artist and the spectator, between the spectator and the work of art and even between the artist and his work. We can also notice them in the form of a process that reflects the way in which various actions take place, but sometimes even in the form of limits, showing the inferior or superior margins of our interactions but also our limits as human beings, limits that sometimes have to be overcome in order for us to be able to really find ourselves. "It comes as a surprise when we discover that the most important dimension of human thinking opens itself up in this beginning."⁴

These dimensions also place the game along with us at a specific time and in a concrete space. The game is both a well-structured and a free action at the same time. It offers both an individual reward and a multiple reward (often the personal joy becomes the joy of the group we associate with, or that we have formed and defined through the game). The game is found in areas such as philosophy, art (where it is a defining element as far as the creativity capacity and the freedom of imagination are concerned), but also in other fields such as psychology, pedagogy, economics, politics or even physics, where many times huge discoveries have been the result of a pure game (because we make ourselves self-serving, we want to be better and move from theoretical to practical).

The concept of play, which I wrested decades ago from the subjective sphere of the "play impulse" (Schiller) and which I employed to critique "aesthetic differentiation," involves an ontological problem. For this concept unites event and understanding in their interplay, and also the language games of our world experience in general, as Wittgenstein has thematized them in order to criticize metaphysics. My inquiry can appear as an "ontologization" of language only when the presupposition of the instrumentalization of language is left completely unexamined.⁵

³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 302.

⁴ Gadamer, *The Beginning of Philosophy*, p. 18.

⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 561.

We will try to emphasize not only the possibility of our existence through the game but also of an infinite multitude of universes in which it is reflected. This theme is built not only on the idea of exchanging information between three different directions being perceived as an integrated one. The relationship between dimension, affinity and game is thus not only transferred but also transposed, either by abstraction or by association.

The man of the world, the man who knows all the tricks and dodges and is experienced in everything there is, does not really have sympathetic understanding for the person acting: he has it only if he satisfies one requirement, namely that he too is seeking what is right – i.e., that he is united with the other person in this commonality.⁶

Everything can change according to perceptions, rhythms and directions. The distances and closeness of dimension and affinity in the context of the game can be subjectively appreciated or taken in a different form. But the most important thing is the conceptual link between them. Perhaps it remains only a succession of time and generations, visions and perspectives (for Plato, for example, every individual must enjoy life “playing the most suitable games” for Schiller, a man is a complete man only when he plays what we call life and for Gadamer the game leads to a certain self-knowledge, thought of as “self-representation”, while Huizinga considers the game to be represented by transcendence and alterity, compared to ordinary, common or ordinary life; but there are also negative perspectives on the game, such as Roger Caillois, who does not consider it a problem but actually seeing the game as a degradation of any adult activity).

The game as a subjectivity vs the ontological game

This theme is part of a spectrum not only creative but also considering the fundamental questions and considerations. Since art and philosophy are two wide and prestigious domains, it is likely that for several decades we would have to ask ourselves the question: what is their importance? Perhaps the lack of experience or circumstances goes beyond research and understanding.

Every appropriation of tradition is historically different: which does not mean that each one represents only an imperfect understanding of it. Rather, each is the experience of an “aspect” of the thing itself. The paradox that is true of all traditional material, namely of being one and the same and yet of being

⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 320.

different, proves that all interpretation is, in fact, speculative. Hence hermeneutics has to see through the dogmatism of a “meaning-in-itself” in exactly the same way critical philosophy has seen through the dogmatism of experience.⁷

We all start alive, at an intuitive moment, towards something. Thus, regardless of the dimensions or the affinity, this concept is already so specific, not only in the history of art but also in philosophy. Man is transposed and merged with the effect of the game, competing with what he is, what he thinks will happen, or how his perspective will change. Space and balance point us towards a possible abstract or we should say towards a possible abstraction, but human reason and Kantian perception of the game lead us to other perspectives. It gives us the opportunity to observe, at certain times, the particularities of both the character and the spectator.

According to Plato’s perception, we are really dealing here with consciousness, with the power of identifying. Thinking is always identifying, but it is also a self-movement. Thinking is also always an action, something flowing in time in such a way that temporality is contained within identity throughout.⁸

Even though there are some discrepancies around the game, both affinity and size not only bind, but also collect or break the past or present. There will always be a discrepancy between the artistic and philosophical interpretations, since they each deal directly or indirectly with the situation itself. The perceptions change according to us and we according to them. In this profound journey of transfiguration of both internal and external phenomenas, the leitmotiv will always remain the game and its transposition without abandoning the desiderate of integrated or unintegrated plenitude, holding a compositional framework. Both the subject and the spectator can share the recurrence of the reason.

What we mean by “representation” is, at any rate, a universal ontological structural element of the aesthetic, an event of being—not an experiential event that occurs at the moment of artistic creation and is merely repeated each time in the mind of the viewer. Starting from the universal significance of play, we saw that the ontological significance of representation lies in the fact that “reproduction” is the original mode of being of the original artwork itself. Now we have confirmed that painting and the plastic arts generally have, ontologically speaking, the same mode of being. The specific mode of the work of art’s presence is the coming-to-presentation of being.⁹

⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 468.

⁸ Gadamer, *The Beginning of Philosophy*, p. 67.

⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 152.

The unmistakable difference between the mizanthrop and the common man restrains an almost alert, unmistakable and focused style on the ability to synthesize the form of feelings. When there is a resonance of the context that transforms both size and affinity, the rest of the spectators remain neutral. For some, this resonance is probably a minor reason. However, both the dimensions of the aesthetics and of the game's representative can touch not only technically but also aesthetically the boundaries of a knowledge oriented towards a more diverse amplitude that can define us. Visible or invisible, we are all releasing a certain retreat by interpreting and re-interpreting the game. Some of us have a fluidity of these contours in which the art critic becomes a personalized character, the spectator translates into the artist and the artist into the spectator. The effect is initially filtered but this process continues, and first of all, by an inner, soul-trigger that will transpose itself into other states or feelings, actually derived from a set of personalized principles.

This is the skill, the knowledge of the craftsman who knows how to make some specific thing. The question is whether moral knowledge is knowledge of this kind. This would mean that it was knowledge of how to make oneself. Does man learn to make himself what he ought to be, in the same way that the craftsman learns to make things according to his plan and will? Does man project himself on an *eidos* of himself in the same way that the craftsman carries within himself an *eidos* of what he is trying to make and embody in his material?¹⁰

There will always be sublime controversies or sublime substrates that emphasize, that highlight and extract all of these concepts that we find integrated with authors such as Gadamer, Heidegger, Barthes, Descartes, etc. Perhaps the delight of the past is in the absolute present, full of values whether modified or unattained, by exception or obligation. What today, by a simple definition, is presented to us as a relatively defining instrument for human nature, may not have started from this status. A pure, intimate, sublime idea that develops the imagination and the game, the true essence but also the inner enigma at the same time...we probably find it in philosophy, metamorphosed in one form or another, and in art.

The reason for this is that we are dealing here with the *logos*, with the famous turn to the *logoi*. In Socrates' eyes, the linguistic universe possesses more reality than immediate experience. So, just as the sun – according to the famous metaphor – cannot be observed directly but only on the basis of its reflection in water, whoever who wants to get information about the true nature of things will achieve clarity sooner in the *logoi* than through deceptive sensory experience.¹¹

¹⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 313.

¹¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Beginning of Philosophy*, p. 53.

We are defined by the decisions we make, and the decisions are supposed to shape us in an absolute and irrevocable way. Perhaps no one can provide an exact definition of our states or moments that we experience.

No moment of this work is so perfect or successful that it is immune to either misunderstanding or reasonable criticism. To live with this realization is far from easy. The frustrations provoked by the finitude of all interaction, and of every effort to achieve a stable and fair political society, regularly tempt us to curtail, if not to abandon, the work of seeking mutual understanding and common purposes. Yielding to this sort of temptation would amount, in practice, to giving up on the hospitality needed to make power-in-common prevail, as far as possible, over domination.¹²

But, from the game's point of view, this seems to be a paradox in some form, a kind of vortex either real or imaginary created by sound or by images...a repetitive pattern of vibrations caused by the circuit of perceptions, which implies or defines either an instant lock or chain or on the other hand a complete detachment in the end. Life, as a picture, the process as a destination, implies an underlying or adjacent formalism without a media discourse, whether known or unknown to us, to the participants of the game. Everything we do in a singular form is in our own interest. But many times, even unconsciously, what we seem to do for us, we eventually end up doing others.

Ricoeur considers human beings not only as active, but also as enduring, as suffering from the actions of others. The body in this respect appears not as the capacity for action, but as passivity. For instance, in the case of physical pain, the body forms a passivity. It prevents me from performing the actions I would like to undertake, and can make me experience that my self does not coincide with my body, in the sense that I want something else than my body allows me to do.¹³

And if we look at the theme of this article from this angle, then we can say that we are indeed participants in at least one game, outside the defining one called life. It is as if we are living on a stage where the immediate form takes shape no matter what the imminent end is or might be, no matter what happens in the course of a lifetime, no matter how it changes everything that represents our human inventory and everything embedded in our perceptions and visions.

¹² Gadamer and Ricoeur, *Critical Horizons for Contemporary Hermeneutics*, Continuum, 2011, p. 195.

¹³ Gadamer and Ricoeur, *Critical Horizons for Contemporary Hermeneutics*, p. 213.

In the on going, open-ended process of dialogic play and the unfolding of truth that occurs in it, there are stages of agreement, of reconciliation, and of shared understanding, which ultimately give way to new questions, new confusions, and new disagreements. As Gadamer's rather hopeful and optimistic philosophy of understanding teaches us, these ruptures, which occur in our efforts to grasp some subject matter, are themselves always open again to being bridged, mediated, and reconciled.¹⁴

By eliminating the paradox in which we live, we succeed in removing and dissolving the barriers between real and unreal, between the everyday and a dream world (composed of art, music, literature, philosophy, etc.), we can move into another dimension, being at the same time anchored in reality. We have the opportunity to escape from a deserted world in which the mizantrop lives in a game expressed through art, so affinities become something that goes beyond any immutable truth. There is however, regardless of affinities and dimensions, an inner logic, a consistency of experiences that is reflected through the game, forming an un-uniform and complex spectrum.

This division, spanning such a spectrum of social contexts, is all the more troubling as we recognize the necessity of cultivating more and more fully a global community that can deliberate and act upon shared concerns (concerns such as the health of our environment, human rights, a world economy, depleting natural resources, disease, protecting ourselves from nuclear or biochemical destruction, etc.). In the face of this contemporary demand, we find ourselves confronted with the pressing questions: What causes dialogue to break down? And, what do we do once it has? On the eve of the oft-repeated "time for change," my hope is that we are ready to seek an answer.¹⁵

Conclusion

A first private idea that develops both the imaginary and the game, the essence and the inner enigma could be found in philosophy and art, in images and in texts. Life, as an image, the process visualized as destinations belonging to a specific subjacent formalism without a proper mediator speech, even if it is known or unknown, the immediate receives forms no matter what the ending or the realization of the self-claimed inventory of our own perceptions might be. And this applies to the next moment of our existence, regarding its defining aspects.

¹⁴ Monica Vilhauer, *Gadamer's Ethics of Play*, Hermeneutics and the Other, Lexington Books, 2010, p. 94.

¹⁵ Vilhauer, *Gadamer's Ethics of Play*, Hermeneutics and the Other, p. xi

The connection between pain and pleasure is far more commune than you think. That's why the mind is the most erotic organ of the body. I am wondering... which one worked its way into your mind, which kept you up at night? The triple in us is maybe looking for the cripple into another. To smile when you feel incapable of smiling and if you can empathize with that you know this better than most: everything happens with most of them, rather than how society formed her or him. You might say you cannot see the world from the perspective of somebody else. But I believe that we possess the rough material required to commit, at some point, different acts or just don't feel any kind of emotions, to just retrieve us and keep all there is inside. We just need the right or wrong combination of events to turn this rough material into fuel, to make it combustible.

Gadamer recognizes that, if the "truth" that he claims is "known" in our extra-scientific experiences is going to be philosophically legitimated as real, genuine truth, then what is required of him is a deeper investigation into the phenomenon of understanding itself. Because the narrow, modern scientific conception of "knowledge" does not account for the broader scale of experiences in which we undergo the transformation of coming-to-an-understanding, and so misconceives the true phenomena of understanding itself, Gadamer sees that we are in need of new and more accurate notions of knowledge and truth.¹⁶

Whatever we do, we do it for us or for others. We are defined by the decisions that we are making and vice-versa, it is thought that they define us, in such profound and irreversible way that nothing could counteract this. Still, I do believe that no one can literally define what we experience. Although, in one way or another, some kind of vortex imaginary or real, made up of sounds or images, or just a repeated pattern of vibrations caused by our circuit of perceptions could assume or define an instant blockage or even a complete detachment from whom it was originally created by or from its original form of being (its true self).

In Gadamer's discussion of the way in which understanding always involves both interpretation and application, he has been preparing us to recognize the way in which the knowledge that occurs in the human sciences, and in the totality of our experiences of the world in general, is much closer to what Aristotle calls "practical wisdom" (*phronesis*), than to the methodological knowledge of modern science.¹⁷

I am wondering how it would be if we could realize and comprehend everything, and when I say everything I really mean it, everything that we do or chose to do, everything that happens to us or involves us and might look like a plain

¹⁶ Vilhauer, *Gadamer's Ethics of Play*, Hermeneutics and the Other, p. 5.

¹⁷ Vilhauer, *Gadamer's Ethics of Play*, Hermeneutics and the Other, p. 121.

coincidence? How would we react based on our personal perceptions however exuberant or unmodified they might be? If even the personal exposure, regardless of its shape, modified more or less, due to certain triggering factors that do nothing else but to unleash an invisible plenitude, destroys us or approaches us?

But this is just the starting point. The first step towards comprehension. The moment when the one lost into his own consciousness begins a fight with his own self, trying to absolutize knowledge and that subordination regarding a process of recognition, or should I say self-recognition, sustained by a person dispersed in itself and in his mind. A sudden and adjacent, elemental and profound interpretation is the basis of psychic and physical transcendence. A conscious organization of a phenomenon involving a certain level of knowledge and a philosophy that expose explicitly the orientations that organize a psychic and spiritual structure at the same time.

Here too we are presented with some outline of phenomena, some account of the way things are for us, some philosophy—this time with regard to the way understanding works. Just like Aristotle's sketch of how virtue is cultivated, this philosophy has been drawn from concrete experiences or practices—in this case practices of interpretation and instances in which the phenomenon of understanding has occurred. Here too, we are offered a philosophy regarding our practices, which will find its full meaning and truth in our application of its truth back in our own practices.¹⁸

By manifesting any complex or infantile approach, we see that the organization of the psyche transforms any relationship into something more joyful than it seems to be, and the meaning of refutation or suppression attracts and ensures the validity of the invisible field. At the same time, looking from a distance at a complementary perspective, we can get to overcome our psyche, which is supposed to be unconscious. An unconscious that easily crosses any dimension and through which, at a certain level, we come to our consciousness - the one that produces the images, the experiences, the one that generates the simple touch, the pattern of continuity, but at the same time the one that frees us and makes us realize just who we really are and what is our purpose in this game.

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¹⁸ Vilhauer, *Gadamer's Ethics of Play*, Hermeneutics and the Other, p. 125.