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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
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THE METAPHYSICS OF PLAY,
AND ITS THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

by

Donald McRitchie

Thesis Submitted to the School
of Graduate Studies of the
University of Ottawa
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies



Donald McRitchie, Ottawa, Canada, 1981

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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Donald McRitchie was born June 5, 1935, in Hamilton, Ontario, where he received his elementary and secondary education. He received his B.A. degree from the University of Ottawa in May, 1959, while studying at St. Jerome's College, Kitchener, Ontario. From 1959 to 1963 he studied Theology at St. Augustine's Seminary, Scarborough, Ontario, and in 1962 he received his S.T.B. degree from the University of St. Michael's College, Toronto. In 1964 he earned a Permanent Secondary School Teaching Certificate from the Ontario College of Education in Toronto. After seven years of Secondary School teaching, he began graduate studies at the University of Ottawa, in January, 1970. There he received his M.A. degree in Religious Studies in May, 1971. He was a part-time professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Ottawa from 1971 to 1973. Since 1974 and during the preparation of this doctoral thesis, he has been teaching at a Junior High School in Mississauga, Ontario.

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INTRODUCTION

A. The Overview

1. Object of Inquiry

This essay is a philosophical investigation into the meaning of play and its relationship to reality and to the Christian faith. It formulates a metaphysics with play as its basic notion in Part One and applies this metaphysics to Christian faith, hope and grace in Part Two.

The thesis arises out of the feeling that play has not been satisfactorily treated in theories of the past and that many theories contradict themselves and one another. Spread out, as it is, in numerous disciplines, the literature is a confused and confusing collection. There is a need for some comprehensive treatment of the meaning of play. Furthermore, though there is a useful connection to be made between "play" and "reality" and all the aspects of human experience, such as religious belief, we feel that only some of these aspects have been explored so far.

The present enterprise does not attempt to offer the final word on the subject of play, by any means. It merely examines the numerous notions about the nature of play to arrive at a manageable construct which will harmonize many discordant notes and offer some useful light

as to the proper view of its connection to "reality" and consequently to establish an appreciation of its basic meaning and importance. The metaphysics postulated about "play" and "reality" is then tested in heuristic manner in critical application of it to contemporary play theology.

2. The Notion of Play:

Its Philosophical Meaning and Theological Use

What does "play" mean? What are its phenomenological elements? How can one line up criteria for it and so distinguish it from other kinds of activities?

It is no use using the term if there are many meanings to it - unless there are common essential elements - else we get simply two or more meanings under the ambiguous label of one sound and one spelling. The ambiguity of the term may be of the nature of a homonym, in which case the word "play" may mean many different things, none of them necessarily connected to any of the others. On such a basis a theology of "play" becomes many theologies of many "plays" and would promise very little.

On the other hand, "play" may be ambiguous in a positive sense, that is, in the sense of its being a rich term with many levels of appreciation possible for it and all of them somehow either analogously related or at least suggestive of one another. An overview of such ambiguity

would promise a good basis for a decent theology of play. It is our view that "play" has this positive ambiguity to it, and we hope to see that its ambiguity vis-a-vis the "real" as a powerful beginning for such a theology.

One has to recognize that "play" is most often used as if it were a luxury, separate from the more fundamental reality of the world known through ordinary waking consciousness. Play is most often referred to as a phenomenon which can be judged by the real, even though play is definitely not nothing and so real in its own way. The question of a viable theology of play would seem to rest exactly here, at the point of whether play has to do with the order of the fundamentally real. A theology of play which deals only with the periphery of the fundamentally real, and judged by the fundamentally real, will have little substance. Yet it is our impression that most talk of play in theological circles sees it only in this non-essential, accidental, peripheral way - judgeable from and by the real.

In order to deal with the question of play and reality, we offer a construct of the play-reality connection, involving a metaphysics, in which there are three distinct yet interconnected spheres of reality. Each of these spheres may be understood as existing in a mode of play so that for each (and, indeed, for the integrative theory embracing all spheres) there is a play-reality congruency

or coextensiveness of meaning. Such a view of play and reality is bold and unusual. The whole of Part One of our work is aimed at elaborating the meaning of play and reality in terms of this new metaphysics.

In Part Two, the thesis goes on to elaborate a faithful view of the play-real and to debate among other things the question of a fourth sphere of the play-real, namely, God.

What exactly seems to be the problem about the use of the notion "play" with regard to "reality"? Basically it is that no one knows "play" well enough to define it. This, of course, may be inescapably a "given" with regard to the notion "play", if it is, as we have intuited, a mystery.

Yet the term "play" has been used quite a bit. People seem prepared to talk about it, use it, and in fact give it enormous importance without telling us what it is. What is to be our understanding of the notion "play"? More particularly, what connection can we make between "play" (whatever it can be articulated to mean) and "reality" (whatever that is).

But unless the philosophical questions can be tackled and faced head on, there seems little use to begin a theology of play. The theology of play movement such as it is is weak. Some say it is already dead. It is our intuition that it has hardly begun. The present essay is

an attempt to begin again - at the beginning - with the notion of play itself examined philosophically at the deepest level of its meaning.

B. The Complexity of the Term "Play"

As most authors agree, play is an elusive term, so varied in usage and implication that it is extremely difficult to define in any one, exclusive or all-embracing sense. For we may speak of love-play, or fore-play of lovers, and we may speak of the world's reality as the play-of-the-gods. We speak of animal play and human play. We play games and roles, we play musical instruments, we play both ends against the middle; in various senses, we play out, play into, play off, play back, play down, play up, play about. Theatrical groups play cities, moonlight plays on snow, lovers play the field, gamblers play the horses. Almost any action, person, place, thing or event can play, or be "in play". It can also be playfully played.

There has always been this elasticity to the term "play". The fact is that, with regard to play, there is no consistently uniform usage. Nor is there a unified appreciation of play in modern life. For example, Hannah Arendt informs us that in today's common usage labour is defined as the opposite of play, play being utterly useless activity. "As a result, all serious activities,

irrespective of their fruits, are called labour, and every activity which is not necessary either for the life of the individual or for the life process of society is subsumed under playfulness..."¹

Other scholars see things differently. G.P. Stone, for example, explains that today, "more and more we work at our play and play at our work [...] our play is disguised by work and vice versa. Consequently, we begin to evaluate our leisure time in terms of the potential it has for work - for us to 'do it ourselves', and we evaluate our work in terms of the potential it has for play."²

Since there is so much linguistic fluidity to the term, and so many contradictory understandings of it, it is maddening to try to set limits to play from any single point of view or even a collection of perspectives. For example, there is enormous confusion about what "play" means from the psychological point of view. This is so, even though most of the work done on the meaning of play seems to be in the field of human psychology. But to give us an idea of how confused things can get about the notion of play even in that one discipline it seems ad rem to glance at its evaluation of "play".

¹ Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1958, p. 127.

² G.P. Stone, "American Sports: Play and Dis-play", in E. Larrabee and R. Meyersohn (eds.), Mass Leisure, Glencoe, The Free Press, 1958, p. 285.

There are some elements of play which most psychological authorities agree to recognize. For example, play itself, in animals with noticeable intelligence, is generally seen to be a product of imagination. It is generally agreed, too, that play activities seem to be at least partially internal realities for the player who does them freely and willingly for their own sake. Thus, play, for man at least, is seen to be an internal reality, and to a great extent, internally controlled and internally motivated. Within this internal enclave which they form, play activities are considered to have no significant concern for the ordinary external reality surrounding them. They are "useless" as far as the player himself considers them except within themselves, and within the "separate" world they create. Their whole "reality" is wrapped up in themselves, without regard for "worldly" causes and purposes.³

While these elements are generally agreed upon, it is ironically the case that most psychological theories of play have been based upon a presumption of play's hidden utilitarian nature lying under a cloak of only apparent uselessness.

³ See, for example, Eva Annaliese Neumann, The Elements of Play, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Campaign, 1971.

In the face of the surface impression that play, in itself, is without motivation vis-a-vis the ordinary realm of reality, some authors insist that play is very useful indeed. Most people who study the subject of play see that it is intimately related to other subjects, like leisure, comedy, humour, and wit. Most have rather positive ideas of play's relationship to human growth and development. Quite a few see its most significant impact in human life in the area of education. Still others believe that play permeates all facets of human culture, like art, and that it influences our communication and social life. Psychologists have theories of play's connection with mental and emotional health.

In some way we can agree with such an emphasis upon play's practicality. But, we can do so on the understanding that such a practical purpose of play (for example, in education or psychoanalysis) is not to be so primary, so forced, and so blatant as to be an instance of the "ordinary" world's disruption of the authentic spontaneity of play. All practical purposes of play and causes of play are not play itself, and the player never engages in play because of its causes or on behalf of its purposes as they are generally outlined by educators and psychologists. The player simply plays without regard for practical causes and ends. If these practical aspects of his activities

were uppermost in his mind, it is doubtful that he would continue, indeed be able, to play - for some of the free and spontaneous, auto-telic quality, essential to play, would be lost.

It is difficult to relegate some theories either to one or other group according to causes or purposes - or to categorize or pigeon-hole some theories as being more this than that. Indeed theories may exhibit various emphases which place them in several categories at once. But all in all, in the human sciences, we believe that there have been at least twenty-one various, distinct theories about play's causes and purposes.

For the sake of order, we group these theories concerning the causes of play into eight headings:

1. Fear and the inability to accept reality, boredom, a feeling of helplessness, prompting the creation of an altered or second reality through imagination. (Sigmund Freud, Roderic Gorney);
2. The need to recapitulate imperfect or unresolved past experiences, whether phylogenetically or ontogenetically inherited. (G. Stanley Hall, B.F. Skinner, G.T.W. Patrick, R. Caillois, W. Stern, E. Benveniste);
3. The sheer joy of being a cause, the pleasure of creativity, or of initiating effect upon environment. (Karl Groos, Susanna Millar, Norman O. Brown, S. Freud, J. Piaget);

4. The need to expend surplus energy within the organism, even if in "useless" activity. (Friedrich Schiller, Herbert Spencer, Jean Paul, S. Freud, Wilhelm Preyer, K. Groos, Charles Darwin, Estelle Appleton, Franz Alexander);
5. An innate impulse to act, life's basic instinct. "To be" means "To act", irrespective of a goal. Joy in activity for its own sake. (Plato, L.E. Appleton, Friedrich J.J. Buytendijk, K. Groos, Franz Alexander, K. Buhler, W.A. Sadler Jr., N.O. Brown, R. Gorney);
6. A surrender to the unconscious on the part of the conscious mind; the unconscious then acts out its own meaning and values. (Plato, Carl Jung, Henri Bergson, N.O. Brown, J. Pestalozzi, F. Frobel);
7. Confusion of the subject by simultaneous but conflicting stimuli, resulting in random, irrelevant activity. (Susanna Millar);
8. Awkwardness, exaggeration of movement due to immature adaption to environment. (Susanna Millar).

For the sake of order we group theories regarding the purposes of play into thirteen headings:

1. Rescue. The subject escapes from fear, pain, or boredom in the "ordinary" world. A feeling of triumph over danger. (S. Freud, K. Groos, F.J.J. Buytendijk, R. Gorney);
2. Relaxation-recreation. The subject needs rest or a recharging of energy. (Plato, G.T.W. Patrick, M. Lazarus,

Henri Bergson, E. Erikson, R. Caillois);

3. Practice-rehearsal. The subject must prepare for the practical ends of life in a safe milieu. (K. Groos, Jay Nash, J. Piaget, W. Stern, Erving Goffman, Edouard Claparède);

4. Recapitulation. The subject impulsively repeats primitive habits phylogenetically received or psychologically unresolved. (G.S. Hall, G.T.W. Patrick, R. Caillois, W. Stern, B.F. Skinner, E. Benveniste);

5. Novelty-experimentation. The subject gains new information and new emotional experience by exploring the self's inner life or outer environment. (G.A. Colozza, K. Groos, Quintilian, Plato, Frobel, W.A. Sadler Jr., Brian Sutton-Smith, R. Waelder, E. Erikson, F.J.J. Buytendijk);

6. Exercise. To maintain vigor the faculties of the subject need activity. (F. Alexander, R. Gorney, J.B. Cooper, G.S. Hall, L.E. Appleton, S. Freud, F.J.J. Buytendijk);

7. Catharsis. The subject's emotional life is given safe and free expression in order to purge itself from tension. (Aristotle, Quintilian, S. Freud, G.H. Mead, N.O. Brown, J. Piaget, L. Peller, K. Buhler, H. Spencer, C. Darwin, E. Erikson, K. Menninger, E. Claparède);

8. Mastery-problem solving. The subject repeats actions or relives experiences to gain familiarity, or control,

of them. (Quintilian, Comenius, H. Spencer, Frobel, L.E. Appleton, J. Dewey, F. Alexander, F.J.J. Buytendijk, Karl Menninger, William Stern, G.H. Mead, Marin Grotjohn);

9. Drawing out of inner knowledge. The subject needs to "act out" his intuitive or preconscious awareness or impressions of things before they are recognized or articulated by his conscious mind. (Plato, J. Pestalozzi, F. Frobel, C. Jung, W.O. Brown, H. Bergson);

10. Projection of an idealized self. The subject needs to imagine an ideal toward which or around which he can orient his life. A heightened feeling of self. (F.J.J. Buytendijk, G.H. Mead, R. Gorney, Alfred Adler, E. Goffman);

11. Reestablishment of physical, psychological equilibrium or stasis. (S. Freud, S. Millar);

12. Creative balancing of tension between rigidity and creativity, energy and form, intellect and emotion, self and environment, accommodation and assimilation - and thus to propel a transcendence of past forms. (F. Schiller, J. Piaget, F.J.J. Buytendijk, Robert Neale);

13. Domination of others in safe milieu (socially accepted). (S. Freud, A. Koestler, R. Gorney).

These groupings are artificial. Moreover, they are mutually related, in some cases, and cause-theories come down to being, in some instances, but a slight variation of purpose theories. Some of them having meaning for the

§. human animal only and would seem to be useless for an understanding of animals lower on the evolutionary scale. Only the second-last group mentioned seems to be essentially on to the same general insight which is to be expressed in philosophical terms in our present study.

Suffice it to say, at this point, that many of these psychological theories seem at cross-purposes in some respects, while many others seem to say the same thing but from different angles. Still others seem to talk of play in terms which make the subject so radically different from what others say it is, as to set us wondering if they are talking of the same thing at all. Just as there is confusion as to what play means in psychology, there is confusion about it in all other disciplines too. But generally, most seem to affirm that play must be distinct from the real, the very point we wish to correct.

In an effort to shed some light on this darkness covering the notion of play, we feel that the notion of play must be examined in the realm of philosophy. Only at the level of philosophy will the notion of play be made clear. Thus, we repeat, this essay attempts to begin at the beginnings and ask the question: what is play itself?

C. Mystery or Problem? and the Question of Style

We have to be honest and admit the frightening array of theories about play standing before us. Are we undertaking too much? Is the field too vast, too complex, too compounded for a truly fair perspective, let alone panoramic and unified theory about it?

Because of the challenge of the enterprise, it is wise to provide a contextual base for our reflections on play and on the style which play seems to invoke. As we said, we feel that play is fundamentally a "mystery". As such, it calls for a special style of inquiry.

As we will see, play seems enigmatic, indeterminate, all-encompassing, a problem to the understanding. Play seems so all pervasive in its many levels and counter-levels of interpretability that one is tempted to leave aside the question of definition altogether for fear of setting limits to what seems limitless.

Perhaps it might be more helpful to examine play from many points of view, each overlapping the other, without demanding any final mastery of its meaning. Perhaps, like love, and life itself, the reality of play is to be felt, experienced, and passionately realized in "engagement". Spectre-like, it is to remain beyond

intellectual circumscribing. Such is our intuition about play. We feel that saying this is not a coward's way out of a difficult problem. We feel in fact that it is not really a "problem" at all! We dare to say that play is "mystery", in the sense in which Gabriel Marcel uses the word.

For Marcel, a mystery is to be distinguished from a problem. He says that:

a problem is something which I meet, which I find complete before me, [...] which I can therefore lay siege to and reduce. But a mystery is something in which I am myself involved, and which therefore can only be thought of as a sphere where the distinction between what is in me and what is before me loses its meaning and its initial validity.⁴

Thus, with mystery, the possibility of objective perspective and distance (from that which is mysterious) does not obtain. "Mysteries are not truths that lie beyond us; they are truths that comprehend us."⁵

It should be noted that when we say that the mysterious is equivalent to the all-encompassing and wondrously numinous we are decidedly not saying that the mysterious is equivalent to the unknown - or that, in the

⁴ Gabriel Marcel, Being and Having, trans. Katharine Farrer, Westminster, Dacre Press, 1949, pp. 117, 101.

⁵ Ibid, p. 14.

light of adequate knowledge, mystery will give way to clarity. "Such a view equates mystery with ignorance."⁶ And on the subject of play itself we may say that it indeed appears mysterious. For an increase of knowledge leads not to an eclipse of wonder, but, on the contrary, (and again in Marcel's language) we feel that because it is intimately known and ardently loved, play becomes more mysterious the more we study it. It thus prompts a state of openness of mind, a certain "mindlessness" (as Zen Buddhism has it) so that "the letting be of what is" (Heidegger) can happen.

Play seems to demand a certain epistemological and phenomenological humility and a willingness to trust and appreciate the very mysteriousness of it. A mystery is "a problem which encroaches upon its own data, invading them, as it were, and thereby transcending itself as a simple problem."⁷ So, too, we claim, is "play".

We may say with Marcel that the recognition of play, as with mystery, is "a function of the whole person and is as much a matter of living one's self into the

⁶ Sam Keen, Apology for Wonder, New York, Harper and Row, 1969, p. 25.

⁷ Gabriel Marcel, The Philosophy of Existence, New York, Philosophical Library, 1949, p. 8.

heart of mystery as of thinking."⁸

Writing a dissertation on play necessarily involves "playing" with play itself, in imagination, conjecture, and the juggling of notions. Thus play encroaches upon itself in this present enterprise both as subject and as method, and we find ourselves doubly involved in mystery. Only by a bogus act of abstraction can we pretend to wrest ourselves from the foundations of our own existence and our activity in this work in order to acquire an "objective" view of ourselves, the subject of our inquiry, and the work we are attempting to do. For play is usually considered the opposite of work, and we cannot simply "work" at "play" in the ordinary sense of both terms.

To mention work in regard to play seems to heighten the seeming absurdity of a serious, objective and detached treatment of such total "engagement" as involved in play. Thus this present part of our essay has its own peculiar "problem" of method - and style!

How to treat of play in a manner proper to the irrationality, the "mysteriousness" of it? How to work at play? "If a book purports to witness to life lived sub specie ludi, perhaps then there should not be a serious word in the whole book."⁹

⁸ Sam Keen, Gabriel Marcel, Richmond, Virginia, John Knox Press, 1967, p. 21

⁹ David L. Miller, Gods and Games: Towards a Theology of Play, New York, The World Publ. Co., 1970, p. 170.

The question of style of this present section of our work (and, indeed, the whole work) is important. The question is really that of the birth of a style suitable to play itself and yet acceptable for a "learned" dissertation. It is the question of using art in science.

The question is not simple, for (to accomodate a passage from Huizinga), "[...] in the very idea of 'style' in art, is there not a tacit admission of a certain play-element? Is not the birth of a style itself a playing of the mind in its search for new forms?"¹⁰ In its own way then, even the question of style itself, at this juncture of our own exposition of it, is hermeneutically spiralling in play! The subject of play "plays" itself into a complex of compounded levels of interpretation. There is in this whole enterprise a strong element of irony (itself a form of play) stemming from the experience that play is "mysterious" in Marcel's sense. We are attempting to methodologically and "stylistically" distance ourselves from mystery - a self-contradictory joke.

And immediately there may be offence here - especially at the word "joke". (We hear the question: How can we joke about something serious? But its natural rejoinder is: How to joke of anything else?) Our

¹⁰ Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture, Boston, Beacon Press, 1955, p. 186.

culture, like "any culture oriented toward work will find play to be incomprehensible and dangerous. A few people will respond favourably to the possibility of play, but many more will respond unfavourably; the vast majority will respond ambivalently."¹¹

Marcel again offers us an important reminder about the temptation to reduce mystery to problem - which we can apply to the cultural situation. He says that easy formulas, easy explanations, show a danger of loss of dimensions of meaning which escape the net of our abstractions. "Every depreciatory reduction of this sort has its basis in resentment, that is to say, in a passion, and at bottom it corresponds to a violent attack directed against a sort of integrity of the real, an integrity to which only a resolutely concrete mode of thinking can hope to do justice."¹²

So much for providing a wide contextual base for our reflections on play. Play is a mystery. It is a mystery which seems to call for a special style.

A style to do justice to play: would it not be light, tongue-in-cheek, ironic, even satirical? Would it not inspire smiles, even laughter? Would it not make the

¹¹ Robert Neale, In Praise of Play: Towards a Psychology of Religion, New York, Harper & Row Publishers, 1969, p. 12.

¹² Gabriel Marcel, Men Against Humanity, London, Harvell Press, 1952, p. 116.

whole enterprise a comedy? And would not all of this make a serious academic treatise less respectable - that is, as an academic work? What is worse, would it not make the whole enterprise mere empty froth without substance at all? Without question, all of this is a decided danger. Indeed, it is a contradiction in the mind of many to do anything of value if one is light-hearted, smiling, carefree!

Yet, just how to produce a concrete style to "do justice" to play? It is a humbling thing to say that with regard to play (as with all mysteries) the problem of creating a mode of expression which will carry something of the emotive, all-embracing concreteness of the experience (a Dionysian mode of expression?) has eluded us. We wonder too, as was just hinted, whether the academic world is ready to accept such a style in an academic dissertation - even if a style suitably "play-ful" (eg. poetry) could be evolved.¹³ It seems we must remain Apollonian in our approach, and that we must see Dionysus' world "from a distance". We simply lack the creative genius of a play-ful style for our present enterprise.

¹³ We are aware of another context - (Shall we call it a post-doctoral sort of philosophizing in general?) - where, different from the abstract, third-person sort of approach, men like Heraclitus, Montaigne, Nietzsche, Lichtenberg, and Wittgenstein have used a dynamic, non-objectifying and aphoristic immediacy in grappling with "reality".

To have recognized some of these built-in difficulties of our present work in this regard is helpful, we believe. A playful hermeneutic is at least imagined and a playful style longed for!

Perhaps, indeed, play is, after all, a mystery in the sense we have been describing. What we have to say about play will proceed upon such an assumption (and intuition).

But no mystery is totally beyond some recognition - for, in the first place, it would not be recognized as anything at all unless some aspects of its reality were already knowable and known. Otherwise, we would have a case of total ignorance about the very existence of the thing. To put the matter another way, we can say that even if play is a mystery (beyond total comprehension) it still remains possible to say something valid (and true) about it.

D. The Type of Inquiry: The Question of Method

The problem with regard to play is the confusion in the literature on the question of how "play" relates to "reality". On the one hand, for example, some authorities on play do not hesitate to call "play" a separate realm over and against ordinary "reality" (Johan Huizinga, Roger Caillois,

Robert Neale, for example). Yet, these same authors on the other hand, make their own distinct cases for the essential importance of play with regard to ordinary reality. Play seems at once superfluous and outside of reality but also essentially and integrally part of reality.

The status quaestionis for this present work is this confusion and apparent contradiction of these positions. We hope to offer a contribution to learning by way of a construct of a metaphysics which will do justice to the literature and which will help lead a way out of the confusion.

This metaphysics operates as an idea only. It sees itself as ordering the literature and the experience of play by the authorities, resolving this basic contradiction, and some lesser problems here and there, in their work and presenting a holistic appreciation of the play-reality question in such a way as to be a powerful challenge to the adequacy of theories of play in the past - both in regard to philosophy, psychology, sociology on the one hand, and Christian theology on the other.

Essential to our vision of reality, that is, our idea of reality is that reality is "playful" in its very core. Yet reality as play exists, we feel, is three distinct yet interconnected spheres of meaning.

Thus, the purpose of the thesis is to explore the idea of the reality-play equation in all seriousness, namely, in three distinct spheres of meaning and to construct a scheme for a core meaning of play, uniting the three spheres. We hope to offer a metaphysics which would embrace all of reality - with play as its fundamental and explanatory notion.

Moreover, the purpose of the theory is to offer a unified appreciation of the three distinct yet interconnected spheres based upon a metaphysics which would identify the meaning of play as "the wondrous adventure of the possible", and a distinction of playfulness (paidia) from game (ludus), with special attention to the character of man.

Having pushed the idea as far as we can, our purpose is further to test the idea by application of its implications in an imagined dialogue with the contemporary theologians of play - and thus to offer a challenge to them, and through them, to the whole of the contemporary theology of play movement.

The value of the thesis is as an idea thesis, therefore, not as an historically critical one. It does not examine sources of past ideas on play in order to cull new information from them; rather it explores new meanings built upon the commonly accepted data from these sources.

This purpose requires a method which is appropriate to an idea thesis, as distinct from an historical thesis (or "critical" one). The interest is in the idea of play and the play-reality equation, as it is presently contained in the work of psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, and theologians.

The idea of play-reality equation is not new in each distinct sphere. Thus, we make use of the generally acknowledged sources for the equation as a stepping stone with a view to the overall construct we wish to make of the various meanings of the equation. As it were, we "run with" the idea of play as it is presently used - and we make use of sources quite freely as they are currently understood. We relate our work to the relevant literature on the subject of play of necessity since it is there that the problem (the apparent contradictory views of "play"'s connection with "reality") originated.

It should be obvious that the very large number of authorities quoted is our first evidence that our interest is not in doing a critical disquisition of anterior views about play. The focus of interest remains on the general "idea" of play. The authors are mentioned, for the most part, as examples of those whose work helps clarify our own metaphysical view. However, we are confident that we have been faithful to the general

understandings of the sources who form the background to the present work. It is important to note that the use of these authors is only to aid us to understand what might be called the common denominator of their various approaches to play - that is the most general and wide understanding of the meaning of the play-reality equation itself in each sphere. Thus it is that the focus of attention is the common general acceptance of the play-reality equation, and, consequently, the use of authors is only illustrative of the general respectability of the equation. The authors' works are presented only insofar as is helpful to come to appreciate this common denominator for each sphere of meaning.

Some thinkers' ideas are treated at some length, others rather sketchily, almost in passing. The reason for this is simple. Some thinkers seem to lend more weight to our own intuition and insight - others seem to offer only interesting corollaries or less substantial support. For that reason more attention is paid to Heraclitus, Plotinus, Nietzsche than to Schiller in Chapter One. References are made to Fink and Axelos only insofar as we can gather support from their thought for the articulation of our own synthesis.

In Chapter Two, more weight is given to Heidegger and Ehrmann's ideas than to La Rochefoucauld's for the same reason.

In Chapter Three Huizinga and Caillois seem more important for our purposes than Ortega y Gasset or Roheim.

We spend enough description of their thought as is necessary to give a fair picture of the significance of play which they have insofar as it might directly bear upon what we ourselves want to say. No attempt has been made to treat any author exhaustively - even on the subject of play itself in their thought.

In trying to set the parameters of the meaning of play's connection to reality in different spheres of meaning, we will be lining up certain authors as being in one sphere or another in their ideas. We will also be responding to these authors in the light of our hypothesis so that we may see in what way they seem to be articulating their ideas in a compatible way with the hypothetical construct we have in mind. This exercise of lining up authors for this purpose is based upon the conviction that those who have made the play-reality equation in one sphere or another have implicitly embraced it in all spheres. Yet, as we will see, many

authors seem to want to acknowledge the equation only in a limited sense, without understanding this wider implication of universal applicability of the equation. In some cases the authors embrace a contradiction because of this fact. Our response in terms of our holistic view of all spheres of the equation is made to point out this problem in the literature.

The defence of the implication in all spheres of meaning derived from the acceptance of the equation in one sphere is left to Chapter Four and the Conclusion to Part One.

In regard to sources specifically for items not on "play" itself, - no attempt has been made to be critical and comprehensive. We are fully aware that a critical work on the problem of God, for example, (which is touched upon but tangentially in this work) would require a vastly different scope and method than is used here.

Thus, for a systematic theologian, there may be some uneasiness in regard to the casual and sparse documentation for matters not formally on "play" itself. The uses of Denzinger-Schönmetzer's "Enchiridion" and Rahner and Vorgrimler's "Dictionary" are not intended any more than as examples of commonly accepted general

understandings of notions touched upon in this present work. No intention is made with regard to the critical value of such sources of information.

The stance we take is as theorist with an idea to set in dialogue with the literature. Because of this stance, especially in the treatment of theological data, no attempt has been made to speak for the believer - since it is felt that the hypothesis acts as a first principle of the real and cannot be claimed to be true - either in philosophy or theology - in the sense of providing itself with certitude (for example, as "of Christian faith").

The hypothesis operates as a challenge and shows itself only as compatible with what has been said in the literature while suggesting that much more has yet to be explored by theologians in the light of the idea, which, because it seems to "hold water", cannot be too easily dismissed. It does not do violence to faith experience. In fact, the idea may be a stimulus to greater theological work - and faith too. Still, just because it may do so, it does not automatically make itself a datum of Christian faith. It is for this latter reason that the basic stance taken up is a step removed from theology proper.

This is basically a philosophical essay leading up to a theological review of the philosophical findings.

INTRODUCTION

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It is because the basic type of inquiry here encountered and the type of speculation so produced are strongly philosophical and anthropological (concerned with reality

and the nature of man in general) that we prefer not to begin with an elaborate (and particular) appreciation of the "real" and of man from the special viewpoint of Christian faith, i.e., a Christian "theological" status quaestionis. To be more specific: we think that, in the first place, the choice to begin with philosophy and anthropology and a phenomenology of human behaviour and to adumbrate our findings toward the fundamental appreciations, before proceeding on to a theological consideration of the same question, is simply that, - a "choice", regarding the kind of study we want to do. This is not to denigrate theology, but to understand its "world" in a particular way - i.e. from a distance. Such a "distancing" makes us feel justified in regarding our study as speculation arising out of Religionswissenschaft or Religiology - or a form of religious anthropology, in the last analysis, - not entirely theology proper.¹⁴ Our findings are speculative - based upon a philosophical and scientific appreciation of "play" related to "reality" and further speculation as to the compatibility of such appreciations with Christian faith-understanding. Thus, the study is really a speculative essay on the relatedness of these appreciations

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For a distinction between Religionswissenschaft and Religiology, see Reinhold Pummer "Religionswissenschaft or Religiology?", Numen, Vol. XIX, 1972, pp. 91 - 127.

to one faith-view, the Christian. Theoretically, the theory might be applied to other faith views (or religious philosophies), e.g., Hinduism or Taoism, in the same general methodology.

The application to Christian faith-life of the hypothesis will be vindicated or not by the response of the Christian community of faith to its basic premise that reality and faith are indeed play-full for the Christian. Of course it is hoped that the findings will be so compatible with that faith as to make for positive response; but the study does not proceed solely ex fide. Its basic stance and perspective - and its validation - (as a study "from a distance") - will be according to criteria outside of the Christian faith. Speculation about a faith-system is not the same as a particular faith examining itself. This study tends to look at Christian theology, not so much as theo-logy but as a particular kind of anthropo-logy; the theology, here entertained, surfaces, as it were, legitimately, but secondarily, as regards method.

In the second place, even if this study were ab initio usque ad finem a theological enterprise, arising, and sustained, out of faith-experience, even then, there might be strong grounds for beginning rather coldly, with as much objectivity as possible about the subject to be studied - before the immediate connection be made.

to faith (by its nature a "hot" subject, entailing certain passionate commitments to "givens"!)). Before the application of anthropology to faith (and faith to anthropology) there should be a firm anthropology delineated. To say this is itself to exhibit a certain theological prejudice. In other words, it is to say that theology's task today is to be, in part, a special type of anthropological study. "Dogmatic theology today has to be theological anthropology."¹⁵

Thirdly, it should be noted that in the present theological world, though much has been explored, there is no coherent "theology of play", as such; there is such confusion as to the meaning of the notion of play that consequently, the "proper" questions have hardly been asked, till now, about the relationship of play to faith for such a theory as our own to become a theological realm of its own, with problems of its own, for its own proper status quaestionis. Such a realm, in part, is (obliquely) the making of the present work - though not exactly in the traditional "theological" formulation of such realms - as has just been indicated.

¹⁵ Karl Rahner, "Theology and Anthropology", in T. Patrick Burke (ed.), The Word of History, New York, 1966, p. 1.

However much the reader may agree or not about this matter of method, he must patiently wait till Part Two for the theological speculations (proper) to enter his view and a "theological" status quaestionis to take up stage, front and centre.

Of course, this is not to say that Part Two will be merely an "application" of the theory; but, rather, that it will operate, in its own way, in the intent of validating the theory, reflexively, by theological anthropology. In this way the total hermeneutic here employed is not to lead to a vicious circle but to a spiral - a "return" which is to the previous beginning point at another level, but in a more refined, detached, and self-conscious perspective. By this it is meant that the Christian faith-interpretation of the basic hypothesis will deal with fundamentally the same data but with its own proper method and commitment. But the full hermeneutic is laid out in a third loop in the spiral of interpretation in a "return" to philosophical anthropology - after the theological appreciation. The latter loop is the substance of our final "Conclusions".

This study is not laid out in a critical fashion. That is, it does not establish how the idea of three spheres of play-reality come to the author's consciousness, nor does it explain how, by critical method, anyone may

move from an awareness of one sphere to another. The study is simply based upon an hypothesis that there are three spheres which serve to structure the whole play-reality question. The critical value of the hypothesis is contained in the fact that it "works", that is, that it does order and shape the literature and experience to a self-consistent and comprehensive whole. In addition, the whole of Part Two exists to demonstrate the heuristic value of the hypothesis where in theology it is shown that it also "works".

E. Falsification of the Hypothesis

The question of falsification must naturally arise. Briefly stated, the question of falsification is the claim that if an hypothesis cannot be put to the test, it is virtually meaningless. Is our hypothesis falsifiable? If not, is it meaningless?

As to the equation (play = real) in the tertiary sphere of meaning, as we will explain it in Chapter Three, it seems the next thing to self-evident observation that what is distinctly real in this tertiary sphere is a playful reality through and through. Play in this realm is obviously something, not nothing; hence, we are dealing with a reality. But the nature of the real in this sphere is as play. In fact, it is the very reality of play in

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this sphere which makes "play" and "reality" one and the same question, as in a game of soccer, for example.

To doubt that the equation (play = real) is valid in this tertiary sphere is virtually to deny that there is any play anywhere at all. For, surely, all uses of the term "play" derive from this common experience that within our everyday stream of consciousness there are separate enclaves - separate, that is, from the mainstream, with their own apparently autonomous rules of reality - called "play". Every other use of the term "play" - in any of the other spheres of meaning - owes itself to this common experience of play in the third sphere.

In regard to the secondary sphere of the equation where play, reality, and culture are one, there, too, it is felt that Ehrmann's arguments alone are sufficient evidence of the impossibility of falsification - for if the three-fold equation operates as a first principle of "what is" (as it does) in the realm of man's cultural world, it becomes impossible to attain a distance from it in order to proceed to the matter of falsification as a logical and verifying process. As an "idea" the three-fold equation obviates its falsification.

In regard to the primary cosmo-ontological sphere of meaning, the play-reality equation is a question of a vision of the real at the most basic level of all - and consequently at a level which would have to be the

foundation of any task of falsification (or verification) itself. Here there can be no proof, no falsification, no verification - only a question of self-consistency of vision which is truly comprehensive (Does it embrace all that is real?). It is felt that this metaphysical vision is a self-consistent, logical, and comprehensive vision over and against any other - but (as an idea) of equal value and non-falsifiable.

Insofar as the integration of the various spheres of the equation and the core meaning of play are explained in Chapter Four, the idea of the thesis seems to have self-consistency, inner logic, comprehensiveness. What is more, it offers some heuristic value in ordering the literature, resolving the major contradictions in the literature.

But, not to eschew the test of verification - falsification altogether, we apply it as it can be utilized in the present instance where we treat a general theory. In this respect, the whole of Part Two of our work operates as a testing of the idea by applying it to a particular domain of research and reality (theology). The very challenge of the idea to this body of work is itself evidence for the respectability of the idea of the thesis and its truth claim.

No more is being asserted, certainly not that the theoretical construct is a complete world-view. For that reason, all the evil in the world is no disproof.

Even if this test would be applied anyway, it would appear that the theory makes room for evil, negativity and contradictions. The reason for this is, that, as it appears in the test, the term paidia has to do with "possibles", and out of these real "possibles" there may arise contradictions, and hence negativity.

As an example of the heuristic value and the place for falsification in the thesis, we may note the theological sources are largely negative towards the secondary sphere of play. This fact does not imply that these authors deliberately reject the equation - for they surely would have acknowledged it before rejecting it! The fact is, that they seem not to have been conscious of, nor confronted by, the rationale and implications of the tri-fold equation, play = real = culture. This seems a valid observation and critique of their work, accounting for much of the confusion of the play-reality problem in theology. Consequently it demonstrates the heuristic value of our thesis, and its truth-claim.

F. Limitations of the Hypothesis

Since the present enterprise is so panoramic in viewpoint and because the general philosophical and psychological methods utilized are so sweeping, several real dangers arise. There is, for example, a real danger of oversimplifications and irresponsible generalizations. Indeed we have to guard against being so general in our remarks as to convey little useful information, that is, to say something which would be as much true as false and as much false as true.

It will also be a problem, because of the wealth of particular phenomena and characteristics of each in many different disciplines, to limit the inclusion here of a large number of concrete instances of play such as chess, or dance, or infant games in support of some observations. Illustrations, examples and detailed particulars will be sacrificed, perforce, at times, because of space limitations.

It may be helpful here to hint at some general, all-pervasive problems or colouring-tones throughout, which should be taken for granted.

The first of these "colouring tones" with regard to the dissertation is that the theory is largely built upon the theories of others - or the observations of

others. But rather than being a mere accumulation of observations and theories - (a limited value since there is little point in looking at things unless it is known in advance what to look for¹⁶) - the theory is made on the basis of a selection of these sources and by means of what, for lack of better terms, are called "intuition" and "imagination"¹⁷.

The second point to be taken for granted with regard to the theory is that it is incomplete, (not a rare event in the history of science) and tentative (not a rare event in the history of speculation). On the question of its validity, then, two common criteria for theory-validation might be kept in mind: viz. probability and simplicity.¹⁸ Indeed, "the acceptance of a theory is always the result of a compromise between the requirements of 'agreement of facts' and of 'simplicity'".¹⁹ It is the conviction of the author that his theory is probable, given

¹⁶ Stephen Toulmin, The Philosophy of Science: An Introduction, New York, Harper Torchbooks, Harper & Brothers, 1960, p. 54.

¹⁷ Philipp Frank, Philosophy of Science: The Link Between Science and Philosophy, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962, pp. 316-317.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 350-354.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 353.

the experience of play as described by the literature. As to the note of "simplicity"? Well, we hardly need to point out that the fundamental theory (reality is play, full and consequently homo Christianus is homo ludens) is simple to the point of elegance.

Because it would be awkward to state these cautionary observations in every paragraph, let it be noted that the "colouring tones" of intuition (and its companion, imagination), along with incompleteness and tentativeness are operative throughout. They make for what we called "simplicity" and are aimed in the direction of "probability".

There is a special problem of any scientific theory being simply a map, projection, or model which may or may not be taken with common sense literalism or metaphysical certainty ("to think A is B is one thing, is to think A as B is another").²⁰ In this regard it is hoped that the content and tone throughout should become clear, particularly on how one should think of the connection between "play" and "reality" and "play" and "faith". Let it be clear that we mean the connection quite literally.

It should be noted, as well, that there is a third criterion for the validity of a theory, which is termed

²⁰ Toulmin, op. cit., p. 165.

the "dynamic", and it refers to the potentiality of a theory to foster new excursions into new realms.²¹ It is believed that the theory of this dissertation is of "heuristic" value and that the discussion of Christian theology in Part Two and our General Conclusions is a preliminary examination of this dynamic value.²²

Indirectly, the dissertation offers a critical evaluation of the contemporary "theology of play" in the light of its findings. In substance, it criticizes the theology of play movement for not having examined deeply enough the basic play-reality connection.

²¹ Philipp Frank, op. cit., pp. 352-353.

²² In pointing out observations about theory in general, the author is deeply indebted to Robert Neale, Play and the Sacred: Towards a Theory of Religion and Play, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York, Union Theological Seminary, 1964, pp. III-IX.

PART ONE: THE METAPHYSICS OF PLAY

PRELUDE TO PART ONE

Status Quaestionis

What is the connection of "play" to "reality"? How can these notions be seen relative to each other in a philosophical sense? Are not these notions distinct? Does not one negate the other? Is play a luxury, separate, unproductive vis-a-vis the real? Is, therefore, "the real" logically prior to "play" and more important than "play"?

Of the many ways to examine the play-reality problem, the following seem obvious: Play may be examined as object, as episode, as phenomenon, separate from so-called ordinary "reality", judged from the vantage point of this more basic "reality". Such a view of play is common and perhaps Roger Caillois²³ is its most illustrious articulator.

Caillois offers us this description of an essential characteristic of play: Play is "make-believe: Accompanied by a special awareness of a second reality or of a free unreality, as against real life".²⁴

²³ Roger Caillois, Man, Play and Games, trans. Meyer Barash, New York, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

Play may also be studied as "mystery" (Marcel), as a given aspect of man's being in the world, as a dynamic which operates, as it were, automatically, in man's appreciation of the world around and within himself. As such, play operates even in the act of examining itself. Thus, in this view, reality for man and his culture as well are inextricably interwoven with the coextensive dynamic of play. Such a view is typified in the work of Jacques Ehrmann.²⁵ Ehrmann holds that to say that play constitutes a separated realm from "reality" is an a prioristic assumption in which "play" is already pre-judged to be different from what is uncritically accepted as the more basically "real". He says that Caillois and others who judge play from the vantage point of "the real" have already prejudiced a fair evaluation of play. They have already placed it in a realm which is separate and distinct. According to Ehrmann, play along with culture and reality are three co-extensive terms, and that in practice, one cannot be "separate" from the others.

At the most basic level of all, play may be scrutinized as the basic manner in which all things are.

²⁵ Jacques Ehrmann, "Homo Ludens revisited", in Jacques Ehrmann, ed., Game, Play, Literature, Boston, Beacon Press, 1968, pp. 31-57.

According to this view, the fundamental reality of things in themselves and in their interrelationships and activities in the whole cosmos involves a way of existing which is best called play. Such a view may be found in the Eastern philosophy of the universal Tao, the principle of unity and activity of all things. It is also found in a stream of Western thought from Heraclitus to Kostas Axelos.²⁶

Which ontology seems best? Are they not mutually exclusive? How do reality and play interrelate? Can one support "separateness" and "coextensiveness" too? The present enterprise addresses itself precisely to these questions.

Play as Playfulness (Paidia) and as Game (Ludus)

This is perhaps an appropriate point to refer to the meaning of "game" which will operate throughout this essay. For our purposes a "game" is play according to rules, i.e. play according to recognized patterns. Any event can be described as a game if the limits and parameters, the patterns and dynamics of it seem to be more or less fixed. Thus the whole of a given culture may be described as a game if the freely accepted conventions of the

²⁶ Confer, for example, Kostas Axelos, "Planetary Interlude", in Jacques Ehrmann, ed., Game, Play, Literature, op. cit., pp. 6-18.

society are recognized by its inhabitants. A dramatic presentation on stage is likewise a game. Even within a given subject who is day-dreaming and making rules within the realm of his fancicizing there is a game going on. As we will see there is room to consider the whole universe too as operating as a game since there seem to be rules or patterns discernible in it.

For the whole of the essay, structured play, or game, will be called ludus, whereas pure unstructured energy of play, or "playfulness", will be called paidia.²⁷

The Hypothesis

1. The Three Spheres of Play-Reality

Let us state the hypothesis. It is this: Philosophers ought to distinguish three distinct yet complementary spheres of the play-reality question. A cosmologico-ontological sphere of play embraces all reality so that "play" and "reality" are coextensive in meaning. Such play-reality identity is disclosed and discerned in concrete episodes called games (ludi). The whole cosmic reality may be thus viewed as the Game of Games. Such a view may not be evaluated since it is

²⁷ The choice of the terminology derives from Roger Caillois in part and from Johan Huizinga and others as we will see.

really a vision of a first principle - an intuitive appreciation of what is - at its most basic level and in its most intrinsic mode of being-becoming. Paidia (unstructured energy of play or playfulness) has structured itself into a grand ludus, which is our whole world, one among many possibles.

This sphere of play we will call the primary (cosmo-ontological) "appreciation" of play. One of its manifestations is in the human-dimension, the world of human culture. At this secondary level, another sphere of play, as identified with reality, appears so that play-reality-culture are coextensive in meaning. We will call this secondary realm of the play-real the regional²⁸ or cultural "appreciation" of play.

Within this secondary sphere of play certain activities may be separate from the game (ruled and accepted patterns of play-culture-reality) and seen as "play" (new or different forms vis-a-vis the play-reality-culture coextensiveness). These separated activities in themselves (called play in a tertiary sense) are also to be regarded as identifying the real and the playful and often found their own structural patterns (ludi)

²⁸ After the vocabulary of Nicolai Hartmann; confer, for example, Stanislas Breton, L'Etre Spirituel, Recherches sur la Philosophie de Nicolai Hartmann, Paris, Emmanuel Vitte, 1962.

(e.g. a hockey game; a dramatic performance). We will call this tertiary sphere of the play-real the sub-regional or conscious "appreciation" of play.

Thus, there are three levels or three realms of the play-reality coextensive.

The primary cosmo-ontological sphere embraces the secondary regional-cultural sphere which in turn includes the tertiary sub-regional-conscious sphere. Yet, conversely, the tertiary sphere, as a ludus of the primary sphere, at the same time extends the horizon of the primary sphere's paidia. Thus, the tertiary sphere both exemplifies the paidian element of the primary sphere while transcending all previous ludi of that primary sphere.

The secondary-regional-culture sphere is a ludus of the tertiary sphere as well as a ludus of the primary sphere and thus is to be understood as an "expression" of both. It is an "expression" (ludus) of the tertiary sphere because the ludi of the tertiary sphere tend to become socially recognized and shared and eventually subsumed into the ludus of culture itself (and so identified with "ordinariness" rather than what is popularly called "play").

Thus, the ludi of the tertiary sphere tend to become the ludi of the secondary sphere and (at least "humanly considered") part of the ludi of the primary sphere.

But, it is important to note that according to our theory, the ludi of the tertiary and secondary spheres are really (sic!) ludi, ipso facto, of the primary sphere. The play-reality equation for human "realities", therefore, whether in the tertiary or secondary spheres, transcends the limits of the phrase "humanly considered" as ludi of the primary sphere. They are ludi in themselves of the primary sphere! This is another way of saying that the distinctly human dimension of reality bespeaks the intrinsic nature of the cosmo-ontologically real and man's "character" is an image (ludus) of Reality Itself. Both are playful!

The spheres relate to each other as various ludi of Paidia. The tertiary sphere is a paidia-ludus of the paidia-ludus of the world in the primary sphere. The world itself is a paidia-ludus of Pure Paidia Itself in the same primary sphere. The secondary sphere is a paidia-ludus of both of the other paidia-ludi (the world and man).

The thesis makes a case for a paradox: that because reality is play-full, any assertion of "non-reality" or "play (estimated as unreal activity)" is valid only relatively, that is, when one considers the statement about "play" and the "un-real" as arising in a sphere of meaning which would validate the statement for its own parameters but which already presupposes the identification of "play" and "reality" in some other sphere.

Because reality is fundamentally playful, the thesis goes on to say, all aspects of Christian-faith are likewise playful.

Thus, while all three spheres are separate, all are interconnected and complementary. Only the "un-real" playfulness (Paidia) undergirding the world, and which is the cause of the Game of Games, really escapes patterns (ludi).

2. Man: Wonder and Adventure

Within the tertiary sphere man's play is of three kinds: 1. His simple wonderous exploration of the other spheres but with no utilitarian end; 2. His adventurous search for the not-yet, the possibilities of the "un-real"; and 3. His creative forms or games (ludi) which have their own meaning apart from the other spheres (e.g., sports, stories, plays, etc).

Man's own nature, when he is actively and consciously playing, thus exhibits something analogous to the three spheres of play-reality. His wonder at the way things are is correspondent to the cosmic way of play (our primary ontological meaning of play). His tendency to pattern his play into games (i.e. socially acceptable forms) corresponds to the cultural way of things (our secondary regional or cultural meaning of play). His

adventurous explorations of the not-yet corresponds to his own creative imaginings (our tertiary sub-regional or conscious realm of play). It is at this last point that man's playfulness (paidia) becomes involuted with the primary (ontological) sphere of playfulness (paidia) to begin the cycle again.

In a spiralling fashion man elevates the cycle to new heights of possibilities and thus enables it to transcend all past forms (ludi). In our appreciation, man's proper paidia may be called his soul. It is his own: He has his own proper identity over and against cosmo-ontological Paidia.

It is important to note that what is peculiar about the mode of paidia is that it is the mode of the possible as against the actual. It is not nothing, however. It is a power or energy moving in the realm of the possible-but-not-realized in actuality, i.e. not reduced to ludus. Thus, it is a reality whose mode appears distinctly as un-real vis-a-vis a given patterned set of energies which we have called ludus.

In the same way that scientists may speak of energy and matter being distinct, so too we may speak of paidia and ludus being distinct. The conversion of energy into matter and vice-versa is a conversion of paidia into ludus and vice-versa. As we have said, it is only in the absolute, of the cosmo-ontological sphere, where Paidia can never be exhausted by ludi.

3. A New Metaphysics

What is crucial for an understanding of our present enterprise is the fact that we are taking up a stand which is revolutionary of the usual ways of dealing with "play" and "reality".

We do not just classify opinions with the help of a three-fold hypothesis. We are not even only offering a deeper definition (or, better, a description) of play. We are actually proposing a new metaphysics based on play as the fundamental and explanatory notion. We claim that play is a powerful mode of energy operating in a realm of possibilities in the direction of self-actualization and that looked at from that vantage point, culture is play and, even more sweepingly, that the whole of reality, or better, the whole of the universe, is play.

Our world, our culture and our so-called "play" episodes are in fact differing but complementary spheres of ludi connected by the common element of being structures of Paidia, the energy of possibilities. Our world is one of many such actualizations (ludi) of Paidia, our culture also is one of many possibles, and our "play"-forms (phenomena of play) are likewise only some of possible play-forms.

It is not just that things - in whichever sphere of play-reality - are playful in their mode of being, - but also that the interrelations between spheres - as well as between things in the same sphere - may be rightfully called inter-play. If all things are in process, the process is play, the relationship between processes is play, and there is one universal all enveloping play-process going on.

The transcendentals of being: unity, goodness, truth, and beauty may be joined by another: play. In fact, play along with unity give the basic understanding of reality - but goodness, truth and beauty are consequent upon play and unity.

4. Avoiding Ambiguity

The point of making these distinctions clear is the avoidance of unnecessary ambiguity in understanding the question: "What is the play element of the real?" or "How are play and reality related?"

As we will see the problem, there are three different levels of the question. Some authors (for example, Huizinga) have had an intuition about the answer to the question in one sphere of its meaning but have responded to it in language more appropriate to another and so ended up contradicting themselves. By making the three levels of the question clear and providing separate

appreciations of an answer for each we hope to give some help in this difficult area of how play and reality relate to each other. The distinctions help us to resolve the contradictions but permit us to say that, for instance, play is separate from reality but coextensive and identical to it too.

We feel that each of the three spheres of appreciation of play is a respectable view of reality.

Our task now is to make each of these spheres more comprehensible and respectable so that the insights of our intuition may be seen to be making some contribution to this whole area of speculation.

As we stated in our Introduction, play seems to be a mystery in the Marcelian sense. We will see that each sphere of play is mysterious and that all of the three realms of play are mysteriously interrelated.

To help us understand what we call the primary (cosmo-ontological) meaning of play (Chapter I) we will enlist the help of Heraclitus, Plotinus, Friedrich von Schiller, Friedrich Nietzsche, Eugen Fink and Kostas Axelos.

For the secondary (cultural or regional) meaning of play (Chapter II) we will seek the support of Martin Heidegger, Francois de La Rochefoucauld, and Jacques Ehrmann.

For the tertiary (sub-regional or conscious) meaning of play (Chapter III) we will hear from José Ortega y Gasset, Géza Roheim, Johan Huizinga and Roger Caillois.

Our conclusions to Part One will be in the form of our presentation of an integration of these three appreciations of play, called "The Essence of Play" (Chapter IV), the heart of a new metaphysics of the play-real.

Chapter IV will show that playfulness (paidia) is the dynamic mystery undergrinding the world's reality in three spheres of game (ludi). Relative to these spheres, playfulness (paidia) must appear as "un-real", as non-being, and as beyond actualities (i.e. ordered to possibilities). Thus, playfulness (paidia) is the active ingredient which permits change and possibility beyond present actualities, as well as the cohesive connection between all actual realities. It is what accounts for finite actualities and the phenomenon of change to new actualities. It is in this sense that play must appear at once mysterious, "useless" and yet essential to the actual.

CHAPTER I

THE PRIMARY (COSMO-ONTOLOGICAL) SPHERE OF PLAY

The purpose of this Chapter is to articulate the most fundamental and all-embracing meaning of the notion "play", its cosmological-ontological meaning. This Chapter, then, is one answer to the question: "How does play relate to the real?" The various explanations of this primary appreciation of play are offered as cumulative estimations of it, each analysis adding on to the others. These explanations follow a chronological order according to the lives of their authors so that we can see a gradual sophistication growing as this appreciation of the play-reality equation developed.

In this presentation, Heraclitus, Plotinus, Schiller and Nietzsche serve merely to set the stage for the more notable modern play-ontologies of Eugen Fink and Kostas Axelos. We offer all these appreciations of play in the cosmo-ontological sense, however, in order to give a context of meaning for our own hypothesis. We reserve the exposition of our own ideas to Chapter IV, contenting ourselves (in this Chapter) with brief responses to the philosophers found here.

Let us briefly review the highlights of the play-reality equation in the fore-runners of the moderns.

A. Heraclitus

In the West, the first cosmo-ontological thrust toward considering "play" as the way of the real seems to come from the work of the Ephesian philosopher Heraclitus whose works also embody a playful mode of expression, aphorisms - often enigmatic, provocative, and maintaining an air of mystery in themselves. "Time", he said, "is a child playing, moving counters on a game-board; the Kingdom belongs to a child."²⁹ Time in this aphorism denotes eternity or ultimate temporality, the whole of human existence. According to David Miller, "the Kingdom referred to must be some sort of ultimate kingdom (Kingdom-Basileie, paralleling the ultimacy of time, aion), not unlike Jesus' Kingdom of God, the goal of mankind."³⁰ However one accepts Miller's linkage of Jesus' "Kingdom" to Heraclitus', it seems likely that the latter meant "play" to be the category for understanding - and expressing - the nature of the world and the road to authenticity in

²⁹ Heraclitus, Diels, "Fragment 52".

³⁰ David L. Miller, Gods and Games, Towards a Theology of Play, op. cit., pp. 102-103. Cf. his "The Kingdom of Play", Union Seminary Quarterly Review, XXV, 3, (Spring, 1970), pp. 343-360.

human development. Nietzsche was later to say that this aphorism of Heraclitus' was a metaphor for morality in that it had its spirit from pre-Homeric Orphic religion (Man must imitate the high God, Dionysos, traditionally pictured as a child playing with toys).³¹ In imitating Dionysos, the god of human creativity, man transforms his nature and behaviour. He does this by mastery over strife within himself. This amounts to "letting be" the spirit of play which is the spirit of truth and wholeness. In this sense play and the serious are one, and we are dealing with the Greek ideal of the "grave-merry" (spoudogeloios) man.

Thus, in the beginning of Occidental philosophy - even before Heraclitus - the polarization of "grave" and "merry", "serious" and "play" did not amount to a dichotomy.

In the words of Norman O. Brown,

Wisdom is in wit, in fooling, most excellent fooling; in play, and not in heavy puritanical seriousness. In levity, not gravity. My yoke is easy, my burden is light.

The God of Delphi, who always spoke the truth never gave a straight answer, in the upright Protestant way; he always spoke in riddles, in parables; ambiguities, temptations; that hearing they might hear and not understand. To teach is not to tell, like Heraclitus, the Obscure. The god knew how to lie; and so did not deceive his

³¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks, trans. Marianne Cowan, Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1962.

countrymen. The real deceivers are the literalists, who say I cannot tell a lie, or hypotheses non fingo.³²

For Heraclitus only a playful attitude and style could get at the playfulness of things themselves.

For Heraclitus "everything changes" (panta rhei) and is "in play" in the game of life. In so saying he puts himself at one with the Eastern philosophers of China and India, holding to a notion of a rhythmic and "lilt"-ing (Sanskrit: lilayati) swinging of an ontological and cosmological yang and yin (the ultimate Tao). At the core of reality is change, process, play. Especially is this true of man's own spirit. "You could not discover the limits of soul, even if you travelled every road to do so; such is the depth of its meaning", wrote Heraclitus. On both the cosmic and personal scales, "The hidden harmony is better [closer to the truth] than the obvious."³³ In this appreciation Heraclitus gives expression to his intuition that man is a microcosm of the larger macrocosm, nature itself. Nature actualizes itself in constant process, a Weltspiel. ("You cannot step twice into the same river, for other waters go ever flowing on.")³⁴

³² Norman O. Brown, Love's Body, New York, Random House, 1966, p. 245.

³³ Philip Wheelwright, Heraclitus, New York, Atheneum, 1964, pp. 58, 102. Fragments 45, 54.

³⁴ Heraclitus, "Fragments", in Philip Wheelwright, ed., The Presocratics, New York, The Odyssey Press, Inc., 1966, p. 71.

Looking at the whole and attempting to penetrate to some fundamental meaning, Heraclitus saw "the Logos that is everlasting". He saw how it behaved. "All things come to pass in accordance with this Logos". Karl Jaspers says that the Logos which Heraclitus perceived as pervading and encompassing the whole

can neither be translated into any other term nor defined as a concept. Logos can signify: word, discourse, content of discourse, meaning; reason, truth, law; even Being. In Heraclitus it is not defined; it carries all these meanings at once and is never limited to any one of them.^{34a}

Within this Logos is the eternal struggle of opposites. This insight is repeated in many different ways.^{34b} Heraclitus' intuition is that ultimate reality (the Logos) is a unity of opposites. Everywhere there is identical unity within the tide of change. Heraclitus does not explain just how the opposites within the Logos unite to form an identity. But the essence of wisdom seems to be to breathe in this Logos by the logos of the soul and so become rational.

In order to grasp the whole one must see the inner connectedness of all things which are themselves constantly changing even as the soul itself is constantly changing. One of these connections, Heraclitus believed, was the

^{34a} Karl Jaspers, The Great Philosophers, Volume II, New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966, p. 17.

^{34b} Fragments 8, 10, 36, 49, 49a, 51, 60, 62, 67, 88, 111, 126.

harmony of the soul's way of being and the way of being of the cosmos. To find wisdom, therefore, Heraclitus said, "I searched into myself" (Frag. 101).

True knowledge or wisdom for Heraclitus was a life process, an ongoing activity, in touch with the ongoingness of the fundamental way of the cosmos (not mere epistemic or theoretical information, but an engagement with the world). One had "To speak and act the truth, paying heed to the nature of things" (Frag. 112).

The soul is thus a peculiar entity, if it be an entity at all, for apparently it is of a nature as to be constantly changing, and changing in such a way as to increase itself^{34c}

("The soul has a logos, which increases itself" - Frag. 115)

The logos of the soul must be unending because it points to a logos of the daimonic, or that which is in between the mortal and the divine. But an adequate logos of that which is in between the mortal and the divine must include as well the logos of the divine. To give a complete logos of the soul is to give a complete logos of the structure of the whole, and for reasons which Heraclitus presently makes clear, such a speech must be unending.^{34d}

Thus, in a sense, "the soul is more than what it is"; it points to or is oriented to what is not itself but beyond self. One cannot understand the soul without relating it

^{34c} Drew Hyland, The Origins of Philosophy, Its Rise in Myth and the Pre-Socratics, New York, Capricorn Books, G.P. Putman's Sons, 1973, p. 149.

^{34d} Ibid., p. 150.

to the cosmos, and the clue to understanding the cosmos is the art of knowing the self.

According to Sextus Empiricus, Heraclitus held that man become intelligent not be himself alone, but by virtue of his participation in the rhythmic movement of "that which encompasses us".^{34e}

Heraclitus calls this encompassing reality Logos. Yet the origin (archè) of this ever moving Logos is one. "The Logos, in fact, is the unification in intelligibility of the principle of flux itself. Everything indeed is in flux, including the Logos itself."^{34f}

As Hyland interprets Heraclitus

the Logos itself is not a static principle of the flow of becoming. That view remains for Plato to articulate. Heraclitus' Logos is itself flowing according to its own order.^{34g}

The way of true wisdom must be one which recognizes the rhythmic flux of things and a certain living into the harmony of the flux at the same time. Heraclitus called this method "attunement".

Participating in this rhythmic harmony of the Logos is to dance along in time with it, becoming consciously

^{34e} Sextus Empiricus, Against the Logicians, I, 126-34, quoted by Drew Hyland, op. cit., p. 154.

^{34f} Drew Hyland, op. cit., p. 156, (Cf. Fragments 32, 41, 50).

^{34g} Ibid., p. 157.

part of it, as permeated by it as the dancer is touched by music, translating its movement into his own and so becoming one with it.

Heraclitus knew that this method of attunement was not apt to be widely accepted. But the truly wise man could see that apparent chaos or fortuitous events were not meaningless but rather a certain kind of hidden order.

"Nature loves to hide" (Frag. 123) "A hidden harmony is better than an apparent one" (Frag. 54) "Unless you expect the unexpected, you will never find it. For it is hard to discover and difficult" (Frag. 18)

The favourite model for this difficult Logos was fire (pyr); fire was more than a symbol, more than a physical cause. Wheelwright thinks that all the meanings of the term which pyr can have are meant to be taken together at once and fused together.^{34h}

Robert Brumbaugh thinks that for Heraclitus matter was a kind of energy of this pyr.³⁴ⁱ In this sense, it was energy, not matter, which was important to him.^{34j} In this sense we might suggest that perhaps matter was the temporary "giving out" of the fire of the cosmic flux, "an ever-living fire, kindling itself by regular measures and going out by regular measures" (Frag. 30).

^{34h} P. Wheelwright, Heraclitus, Princeton, 1959, noted by Robert S. Brumbaugh, The Philosophers of Greece, New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1964, pp. 48-49.

³⁴ⁱ Robert Brumbaugh, op. cit., p. 221, n. 26.

^{34j}

This deliberate attempt on the part of Heraclitus to break through the abstractions about matter to the felt experience of the flow of life's energies made mock of conventional rational analysis of reality. His intuition was that reality was constituted in a non-constitutive way.

The playful epigram was therefore suitable for articulating the intuition and transcending discursive reasoning. The epigram suited the playfulness of reality itself. Reality was playfully what it was - for play was to be thought of as an inner-directed, self-sufficient mode of energy apart from its being abstracted in some logic or idea by rational philosophy as "being".^{34k}

^{34k}Confer Baumbaugh, op. cit., p. 49.

Heraclitus used "fire" and "flame" as one of his fundamental symbols of the play of life because play itself seemed to him to bespeak "flaming up" of reality. We know that his second symbol for the process of nature was strife, "the father of all things", the dynamic flowing back and forth of balanced and agonistic poles of reality. We know that for him, as for Hesiod, there was a good Eris - beneficial strife - as well as a destructive Eris. For Heraclitus reality itself is this process - agon (contest), this ebbing and tide-flood of balanced poles "flaming up" in play. Play is the proper way to speak of the dynamic process of the world. The life process was mystery-in-play and the best way to appreciate it was not in trying to intellectually see and capture it, but in pure, receptive contemplation, the "letting be" of what is, by "listening to the essence of things",³⁵ allowing it to "play" into our consciousness.

We can see that what Heraclitus did for us was to open our eyes to an ontological-cosmological view of ultimacy in constant activity but as best understood as play. In fact, reality was playful by definition. Reality and ontologico-cosmological play were one and the same.

³⁵ Heraclitus, "Fragment", 112.

B. Plotinus

Plotinus never wrote a "system of philosophy" as such, but in nearly all the writings of The Enneads there is the schema of his over-all vision which can be discerned.^{35a}

For Plotinus, ordinary reality was comprised of being and non-being, but above both was "the One", the unthinkable, utterly transcendent, ineffable Reality. In his "schema", non-being was matter, which was also unthinkable, the formless, passive, unstable stuff of the universe, without quality or quantity as such. In contrast to this reality of being and non-being, "the One" was not to be considered as the number one, nor contrasted with "the other" properly, nor a unity of a multiplicity. The One could not be thought since it was so radically "other", "of itself", and "Above Being".

The full schema is laid out in five descending principles: the One, the spirit (nous), the soul, nature, and matter. The middle three of these comprise the sphere of "being".

Rational insight of the soul looks upward to the Ideas, a self-sufficient world of forms (a closed totality,

^{35a} We will follow the outline of this schema as presented by Karl Jaspers, The Great Philosophers, Vol. II, op. cit., pp. 38-92.

the cosmos of the spirit), the archetypes of all existing things. As such these Ideas are true Being, while everything which comes after them is a mere copy, having only apparent Being.

The soul looks upward toward the "Above Being of the One" through the intermediary of the nous (the spirit, the intelligible world of pure forms) and downwards toward "matter" through the intermediary of nature (the corporeal world).

In its looking downward, the soul becomes the world-soul which gives life to nature as a whole, while individual souls give living unity to all the many beings. Entering into nature, which is spatial and temporal, the soul becomes in part spatial and temporal.^{35b}

The soul knows the realm of spirit only by way of the intelligible categories (Being, identity, difference, motion and rest - taken from Plato). It knows the realm of nature only through the sensory categories (space, time, quality, quantity, etc. - taken from Aristotle). Since "matter" and "the One" are not encompassed by categories, they are beyond thought.

Plotinus' prejudice was on the side of "the One". He had no great interest in natural phenomena since they

^{35b} Ibid., p. 41.

were merely matter, the ultimate limit of the "copies" ("images") emanating from the One.

The value of the intermediate realms of spirit, soul, nature was precisely in relation to their various stages of union or connection to what was above them, that is, the One.

The Spirit's ideas and its thinking of them are really one: it is self-consciousness. The soul is a copy (image) of the Spirit. In looking up to the Spirit, the soul engenders nature, the cosmos. Substances and bodies are matter that had been already formed and so drawn into being out of incorporeal, imperceptible, unthinkable matter.^{35c}

Plotinus saw the One as a radiance bursting forth in countless spheres of images of itself. He never explained why "the system" is this way; nor did he explain how he had come to know it. Each sphere within "the system" creates an image of itself, as Father generates Son and Son grandson. Each sphere is connected intimately with the others but is, nonetheless, distinct.

The One, of its very nature, exercises the power to be freely diffusive of itself. It generates freely what it wills. The One thus has the power of "imagination" as part of its essence.

^{35c} Ibid., p. 42.

The method of refining one's awareness of the One consists in a series of transcending steps, speculative operations, all fundamentally the same. For example, from the accessible immediate experience of life, forms, motions and beautiful objects, one moves to the inaccessible beyond but mediated realities, true life, eternal forms, first motion, beauty itself.

This kind of philosophizing is not based upon rational evidence for truth. It is a vision and a yearning for absolute consciousness of the Ultimate. We can "agree or disagree in so far as we perceive our own existential potentialities in it." The truth content is "in our own Existenz."^{35d}

This process of attaining to the transcendent reality of the One involves two steps: first, there is the necessity of transcending sense perception to what cannot be sensed but only thought. For example, a visible triangle is never exactly identical with the triangle of thought. Mathematical truth applies to objects of an ideal world. But this ideal world encompasses more than mathematical forms. It involves everything thinkable, everything which exists in thought (the infinite world of archetypes, of which the sensuous world discloses copies).

^{35d} Ibid., p. 47.

Second, there is the necessity to transcend this ideal world of pure forms, the realm of the thinkable, to reach the domain of the One. Thinking goes to its limits and spurs us to pass beyond it. Thus, all statements about the One are only analogously true since they are thinking statements and the One is unthinkable. The mere statement "that it is One," is inaccurate. The One is rightfully appreciated as beyond being, beyond non-being [in this sense]. It is beyond categories, beyond the grasp of language.^{35e}

For Plotinus, what finally accomplishes awareness of the One is an awakening beyond reasoned, scientific knowledge, beyond even pure thought, a kind of mystical surrender. Here the reader will recognize a theme reminiscent of Heraclitus' "attunement" to the Ultimate Reality.

Such an ~~intuitive~~ "attunement" is a state of simpleness, a growing simple (haplōsis), a standing-out of oneself (ekstasis) - at perfect rest.

As Jaspers says:

transcending reason, it becomes drunk in a way that is better than sober earnestness. The soul beholds the One by muddling and dispelling, as it were, its intellectual faculty (reason, nous). Thus it attains to the One.^{35f}

^{35e} Ibid., p. 49.

^{35f} Ibid., p. 53.

This state of haplōsis and ekstasis, in intuitive union with the One, is a playful mode of being, appropriate (because attuned in style) to the nature of the One itself as beyond sober earnestness. To approach the One, it is necessary to become playful to be in the presence of (that is, not purposefully to strive for contact by human effort) the One. This state of playfulness "is experienced rather as a waking from the customary mists of existence into another existence, in which I rise above my usual thinking, spatiotemporal experience".^{35g}

When Plotinus spoke of the One he entered into an attempt to conceptualize and capture into language the source of all reality and so found himself saying the truth in terms which appear logically impossible (the contradictory). This is evidenced in his statements that the One is a conjunction of potentiality and actuality in pure unity where the most real is the most potentially other.

In our interpretation, this means that he felt that the basic reality is a realm of pure possibilities. Its reality is its possibility or tendency to actualization of possibilities, its disposition to be imaged forth freely and playfully into spheres of actuality.

^{35g} Ibid., p. 55. This kind of language about the One and the experience of the One is at least analogously close to the "separate enclave" and "non-earnestness" the literature about play describes play to be.

As Plotinus says:

Of course Potentiality may be a power, as, for instance, when we are referring not merely to a thing which may be brought into actualization but to Actuality itself [the Principle or Abstract in which potentiality and the power of realizing potentiality may be thought of as identical].^{35h}

Plotinus felt that Ultimate Reality was to be considered as beyond being, in a distinctly self-sufficient, perfect, undivided itselfness beyond comprehension in terms of potency and act.

As Jaspers explains:

In other words: at their source, beyond all existence, potentiality and actuality are one. A logical relation (potentiality and actuality) serves as a metaphor for something unfathomable. In seeking to express an intuition of the unfathomable in terms of a thought content, we must avoid the distinction between potentiality and actuality that is indispensable in our thinking of existence. Thus we arrive at the logically absurd proposition (for which Cusanus coined the word "possest") that potentiality and actuality are identical.³⁵ⁱ

Because of the One's being its own identification of potency and act, the One is utterly free (and not free in virtue of some other thing). Moreover the One is self-actualizing, self-validating, non-contingent, simply self-sufficient.

^{35h} Plotinus, Second Ennead V, in Great Books of the Western World, Volume 17, 1952, (Encyclopedia Britannica), p. 58.

³⁵ⁱ Karl Jaspers. op. cit. p. 62.

The approach to the awareness of the One is a negation of all serious investment of confidence in rational thought - for the One is beyond thought. It is to be "seen" in a vision and spoken of appropriately only in myth and poetry, distinctly playful avenues to truth.

The levels of being are disclosed not through the process of search, but through vision. At this point there is no cleavage between mythical vision and logical clarity. Just as the image becomes a metaphor for what cannot be stated in terms of rational thought, so thought itself becomes a logical myth.^{35j}

From this profound appraisal of the radical distinctiveness of the One and the immeasurable gulf between the One and man's understanding, Plotinus could seriously speak of man's life as play - and man's noblest destiny as play. The truly wise man, the man of insight, sees himself as playing out a fated role in a cosmic drama before the One. "The Creator of the piece" is a great dramatist allotting roles to various actors; some "he promotes to more serious roles or to any more important play he may have, while (another) is cast for whatever minor work there may be".^{35k}

Plotinus felt that the wise man found no fault in the drama and no better task than to play his role well.

^{35j} Ibid.

^{35k} Plotinus, Third Ennead, II, op. cit., p. 92.

Jaspers explains:

Authentic vision is more powerful than action; but on the basis of his vision, a man should play his role in the world drama to the best of his ability; [...] Playing his role, he will do battle, and not allow himself to be dominated by the wicked. But only those 'who do not understand serious things, who are themselves playthings', play the role in earnest.³⁵¹

Thus there is a seriousness beyond the ordinary seriousness which requires work and battles, namely a super-seriousness which is play.

The earnestness of the play attitude derives from Plotinus' vision of the One which is beyond all being, an infinite realm of "itself" as he calls it. With this vision, the proper attitude to the world is a seriousness of play rather than the seriousness of doing battle. Play is the proper attitude and mode of ascending to the One and transcending the limitations of the world. But within this play of authentic ascendancy to the One, there is room to play out the assigned role in life in a quasi-serious, quasi-work attitude.

Thus the ontological base for man's authentic becoming is the free and self-contained playful One, the vision of whom inspires a resonance in the playful attitude of man vis-a-vis the world. But while in the world a

³⁵¹ Karl Jaspers, op. cit., p. 77.

lesser form of serious role-playing (ordinarily called "work" and "battle") is permitted.

It is the continuing play of the One which inspires the insight into the authentic way of being for man, namely playfulness in resonance with the playfulness of the One.

Each of the emanations stemming from the One plays out its role and plays out also its loving connection to its Source, the One. Plotinus held that all things in the universe exult in their own particular connection with the One.^{35m}

What we have learned from Plotinus in terms of play is that the nature of ultimate reality may be rightfully appreciated as play; or perhaps playfulness would be better as at least suggestive of a freer and unlimited autonomy and, further, that the nature of this basic playfulness manifests itself in various realms of emanations from itself - each an image of the other, and all reflecting, therefore, the centrality of playfulness in various forms (or, as we use the term, ludi). This profound playful cosmo-ontology of Plotinus sheds useful light upon any thoroughly playful philosophy of a playful Absolute. Similarities of his appreciation of playful reality will appear in the elaboration of our own theory.

^{35m} Plotinus, Second Ennead, II ("The Heavenly Circuit"), op. cit., p. 41.

Plotinus' philosophy provides a powerful base for what will be our later contentions that ultimate reality is intrinsically playful, that it is a realm of playful possibilities, that, as part of its intrinsic playfulness as a realm of possibilities, it produces "images" of itself in various spheres, that it has within itself the unification of potency and act, and that it is properly appreciable as non-being, that ultimate reality is beyond-being - or even beyond "Being".

Plotinus' philosophico-religious view had a definite playful base. "All things are created by (the life of the All in its fulness", he said, "and by living It creates gay multiplicity. It never ceases, but continues without pause to call into being lovely, well-formed, living playthings."³⁶ Along with Plato, Plotinus held that the best of man is his being a play-thing of the gods (prefigured in the Logos, for Plotinus). Man is serious and playful at once, "secure in the knowledge (...) that his life has meaning (as a play thing of God) and that his existence in creation is not the product of necessity."³⁷

³⁶Plotinus, Enneads, III, 15 (ed. von Harder, V. p. 43), as cited in Hugo Rahner, Man at Play, New York, Herder and Herder, 1972, p. 26.

³⁷Hugo Rahner, op. cit., p. 26.

Thus, for Plotinus there is an ontological rootedness in the play-life of man. Indeed all of man's noble life rests in this play-base and is meant to be a serious and joyful participation in the superior play of the Divinity. For Plotinus all things strive toward God, and exist in a play mode since they have been created by a playful God who has ordained all things to play their way back to him.

Making play to begin with before taking up the subject seriously, we affirm: All things strive toward Theoria, the vision of God. Does this mean that this treatise of mine is itself nothing but a kind of game? For, after all, things that play, play only because of their urge to attain to the vision of God, whether they are the seriousness of the grown man, or the play of the child. ³⁸

In the peculiar mind-set that was Plotinus', all of life's experiences when seen ~~correctly~~ are to be appreciated as but shadows of the really Real. Life is a drama, a play, before the eyes of God. "All this is no more than so many changes of scene and shiftings of properties, so many simulated tears and rehearsed lamentations." ³⁹

It is in this vision of things, knowing what is behind the scenes, that the true gnostic, according to Plotinus, can be both earnest and playful at once - a version of spoudogeloios. "The more the human mind penetrates into the secrets of the universe, either by intuitive feeling or by clear understanding, the better fitted a man becomes for moving in time [dancing] with the divine, for the true activity of life is that of the artist, such as the dancer in motion who is indeed the image and symbol thereof." ⁴⁰ Thus life, for Plotinus,

³⁸ Plotinus, Enneads, III, 8, 1 (cited by H. Rahner, op. cit., p. 29).

³⁹ Cited by Hugo Rahner, op. cit., p. 38.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 62, quoting from Plotinus, Enneads, III, 2, 16.

has a play-ontology; it is the "divinely-inspired dance that moves around the primal One".⁴¹ For him it was the imagination as much as the intellect in man which was "privity to changes of meaning which memory contents bear"⁴² and which enable the human dance of life to play with its own Ground of Being. Thus, for Plotinus, Ultimate Reality and Play are One. Man's playing nature is as an image of the really Real.

C. J.C. Friedrich von Schiller

J.C. Friedrich von Schiller took the split powers of Kant's human being (sensuousness and reason) and expressed them as the twin forces of the impulse-to-form (Formtrieb) and the impulse-to-sensuousness (Strofftrieb).⁴³ Play, for Schiller, was the clue to "the difficult art of living" where man is faced with his innate need to discharge energy and his need to restrict that energy in orderly ways. In his development of a holistic view of man and in his attempt to give expression to the creative element in art, Schiller found that play was the answer.

⁴¹ Plotinus, Enneads, VI, 9, 9 (cited by H. Rahner, op. cit., p. 87).

⁴² Ray Hart, Unfinished Man and the Imagination, New York, Herder and Herder, 1968, p. 194.

⁴³ J.C. Friedrich von Schiller, "Letters Upon the Aesthetic Education of Man", Literary and Philosophical Essays, Vol. 32 of the Harvard Classics, Charles W. Eliot, ed., New York, P.F. Collier & Son, Co., 1910.

To be truly free, Schiller argued, a "medium situation" balancing the two impulses to sensuousness and form in mutual stimulation was needed. Yet, at the same time the "medium situation" must tone down the tendencies in each to go to extremes. Such a "medium situation" was the "play impulse" which liberates man from enslavement to either tendency alone.^{43a} The truly free and playful man was liberated by his very playfulness to be master of the sensuous and the formal and so was ready for knowledge and morality.^{43b}

The beginning of culture lies in this freedom of the play instinct which balances sensuousness and form allowing man to "create appearances" or aesthetic beauty. It is this creation of appearances, the making of playful realities, beauty, which inaugurates the truly social inheritance of man.^{43c}

Something of Schiller's philosophy is shown in his essay "On Simple and Sentimental Poetry" in which he shows a marked preference for comedy over tragedy. The reason for this preference, he says, is that "comedy aims at a more important end; and if this end could be actually

^{43a} Ibid., XX, p. 281.

^{43b} Ibid., XXII, p. 283.

^{43c} Ibid., XXVII, p. 311.

attained it would make all tragedy not only unnecessary, but impossible".^{43d} Comedy's end is

the same as that of the highest destiny of man, and this consists in liberating himself from the influence of violent passions, and taking a calm and lucid survey of all that surrounds him; and also of his own being, [...] and ultimately rather smiling at the absurdities than shedding tears and feeling anger at the sight of the wickedness of man.^{43e}

The exalted perspective of comedy transforms the valuation of tragedy. The superiority of comedy is that it makes play out of tragedy and smiles out of tears and anger. The comedic spirit is but another aspect of the "joyous realm" which "emancipates man from fetters, in all his relations, and from all that is named constraint, whether physical or moral."^{43f}

To live totally according to the play impulse, Schiller said, is to exist in a "completed infiniteness" without any special determination - that is, to be truly free, without needs, and enjoying the self for its own sake.^{43g}

^{43d} Friedrich Schiller, "On Simple and Sentimental Poetry", in Essays Aesthetical and Philosophical, London, George Bell and Sons, 1884, p. 294.

^{43e} Ibid.

^{43f} Schiller, "Letters Upon the Aesthetic Education of Man", op. cit., XXVII, p. 310.

^{43g} Ibid., XXI, pp. 282-283.

Thus, the play impulse in man not only gives man true freedom and permits the rise of aesthetics and culture, it echoes, in its "completed infiniteness", the basic way of the universe (that is, it demonstrates the harmony of the self with nature). Hence, the play impulse in man has cosmo-ontological implications. By permitting man to participate in the play of the universe it allows man to grow authentically.

"For to speak out once for all, man only plays when in the full meaning of the word he is a man, and he is only completely a man when he plays", Schiller declared.^{43h}

^{43h} Ibid., p. 266.

Play reconciled two aspects of man's composition - the physical and the moral, the feelings and the principles, the sensuous instinct and the formal instinct. The play force in man balanced man's twin energies and permitted further energies to expand his aesthetic being-in-the-world.

In his study of man, Schiller discovered some intimations of a cosmological-ontological base for play. "He noticed that the dichotomous thinking that is based on these two impulses [impulse-to-form and impulse-to-sensuousness] leads to a copy theory of reality (in Plato, mimesis of the Idea; in Aristotle, mimesis of the essential act). [...] A copy is never as good as the Reality. [...] And if we are serious about the activity of imitation, the result is bound to be frustration. But, if we are playful, the story is different."⁴⁴ David Miller explains:

Children - we all once knew - experience life as characterized by freedom and coherence; they experience no substantial dichotomy between the life of play and the life of seriousness [...]. It is because the metaphor "play" carries these connotations that placing it in a position of primacy works the magic of mediation and reconciliation between schizoid categories of meaning and being.⁴⁵

⁴⁴David L. Miller, Gods and Games, Toward a Theology of Play, op. cit., p. 114.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 115.

The implication from this is that man imitates the dynamic of nature which ebbs back and forth from fixed forms to chaos. The ebbing back and forth produces a balance in nature and is essential for the on-going process of nature. So too, in man. This ebbing back and forth in man Schiller called play. If there is such balancing play in man, and man is an aspect of nature, then it followed that the rest of Nature too might also be in play. Play in this sense is the ontológico-cosmological balancing force between being and becoming. Play, Schiller said, aimed "at the extinction of time in time and the reconciliation of becoming with absolute being, of variation with identity."⁴⁶

Using Schiller's understanding of play in man and his intimations that there is an essential playfulness of nature itself, we can go on to elaborate an interpretation of the consequences of his thought. This new element in understanding nature-at-play would be the function of play as the force of balance between being and becoming, between stasis and ekstasis, between order and chaos, between structure and energy. Nature in this view is

⁴⁶ J.C. Friedrich von Schiller, op. cit., Vol. XIV, p. 74.

never quite in either "being" or "becoming" totally because a third life-giving element of play is the mode of their ebb and flow and is operating in both.

It is this latter insight which makes our use of Schiller's thought important regarding an appreciation of play in depth - or the cosmo-ontological base of play.

D. Friedrich Nietzsche

Friedrich Nietzsche presents us with a cosmic-ontological thrust in philosophy - a kind of return to the stance of Heraclitus - as distinct from the aesthetic-ontological emphasis of Schiller. What is more, both Heraclitus and Nietzsche philosophized, not only about play, but also playfully, i.e., in the way of playful aphorisms. Yet Nietzsche could be very explicit:

I know of no other manner of dealing with great tasks than as play; this, as a sign of greatness, is an essential pre-requisite. The slightest constraint, a somber mein, any hard accent in the voice - all these things are objections to a man, but how much more to his work. In this world only the play of artists and children comes and goes, builds and destroys, with an eternally even innocence and without being moralistic.⁴⁷

⁴⁷Friedrich Nietzsche, Ecce Homo, No. 10, in G. Clive, The Philosophy of Nietzsche, New York, New American Library, Mentor Books, 1965, p. 65.

For Schiller's dichterish human being, caught between the extremes of sense and form, Nietzsche painted the picture of modern consciousness torn between warring inner forces typified in the symbols of Dionysos and Apollo.⁴⁸ The proper, balanced person was one who blended seriousness and playfulness. To become mature, Nietzsche said, "is to recover that sense of seriousness which one has as a child at play."⁴⁹ Play then, for Nietzsche, had a transcendent seriousness which could act in judgement of ordinary everyday seriousness.

For him, "play" was a category of life transcending the practical, ethical categories of "good and "evil". As a transcending "third force" play then, for Nietzsche, compared favourably with Schiller's estimate of play's significance for human life.

The contrast between Apollo and Dionysos, according to Nietzsche is that between "dreams and drunkenness".⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music", trans. Clifton P. Fadiman, The Philosophy of Nietzsche, New York, The Modern Library, 1927, pp. 949-1088.

⁴⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, Ecce Homo, No. 10, cited by David Miller, op. cit., p. 118.

⁵⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music", op. cit., p. 952.

The way of Apollo is that of form, of appearance.⁵¹ The power of form, of Apollo, makes the individual come to be.⁵²

Dionysos, on the other hand, stands in opposition to Apollo; his way of drunkenness confronts the way of dream. Culture is not a calm sea, reason often fails, and the barque of individuality may sink into ecstasy.⁵³ Dionysos leads us back to chaotic nature where all individuation is dissolved in a sea of oneness - man with man, man with nature's elemental forces.

The union of the two gods in tragic nobility is summed up in the saying:

Midnight too is noon; pain too is a joy;
curses too are a blessing; night too is a sun -
go away or you will learn: a sage too is a
fool... Have you ever said Yes to a single joy?
O my friends, then you said Yes too to all woe.⁵⁴

Finding a reason for joining in the feast of life - even for a moment - is an affirmation for the whole of life. "If it be granted that we say Yea to a single moment, then in so doing we have said Yea not only to ourselves, but to all existence".⁵⁵ This affirmation of life is basically

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., p. 954.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 954-55.

⁵⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra, cited by Harvey Cox, The Feast of Fools, Cambridge Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1969, p. 21.

⁵⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, trans., New York, Random House, 1967, cited by Harvey Cox, op. cit., p. 21.

an affirmation of our own humanness. But it is also an affirmation that the game of life itself, of Reality itself, needs a 'Yes'. In this sense, Nietzsche said, a man must come to love his wounds - of the human condition itself, and these things which have fashioned him into what he is.

Saying yes to a single moment is also to say yes "to all existence" - to Reality. To play is to respond to - the play of Reality.

As to any ontological basis for his views, here is a significant remark from Kostas Axelos:

[...] it was Nietzsche who perceptively echoed Heraclitus' thinking words (parole pensante) by going beyond the anthropological and humanist level of the position and the interpretation of the game. It was Nietzsche who proclaimed the innocence of becoming, who understood the non-total totality of Being-Nothingness, in a word the world, as a game, this same game linking man in truth-wandering (errance) to what imposes itself upon him.⁵⁶

Mirroring the thought of Heraclitus who had said "the course of the world is a playing child moving figures on a board - the child as absolute ruler of the Universe", Nietzsche wrote: "Becoming and dissolution, building and destruction without moral implication, in eternal innocence, are to be found in the world only in the play of the artist and of the child" "the world is the play of Zeus".⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Kostas Axelos, op. cit., p. 8.

⁵⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, in Philosophy in the Tragic Era of the Greeks, cited by Eugen Fink, "The Oasis of Happiness", in Game, Play, Literature, op. cit., p. 29.

Nietzsche was, of course, an atheist in protest against a particularly unfestive, un-playful Christian God. Nietzsche could not believe in such a solemn God as popularly proclaimed by the doctrine and life of Christians. "I would believe only in a god who could dance", he said. "And when I saw my devil I found him serious, thorough, profound, and solemn: it was the spirit of gravity - through him all things fall." He immediately goes on to say, "Not by wrath does one kill but by laughter. Come, let us kill the spirit of gravity!"⁵⁸

Nietzsche depicts the evolution of man in a fable of transformation, of becoming in three stages. According to his fable, a camel (a beast of burden, without the will to freedom) becomes a lion (the spirit struggling for freedom in an act of will) and then the lion becomes a child once it has eaten (destroyed) the camel. Why does it become a child? "The child", he says, "is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game [...] a sacred 'Yes'. For the game of Creation [...] a sacred 'Yes' is needed."⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra, in Walter Kaufmann, ed., The Portable Nietzsche, New York, Viking Portable Library, 1968, p. 153.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 137-139.

In expounding his philosophy, Nietzsche thought he could detect a fundamental error in Western philosophy. This error was what he considered the enshrinement of "being". Nietzsche's own philosophy sought to transcend this error by going beyond being, beyond rationality to the non-beingness of reality itself.

All of philosophy since Heraclitus, Nietzsche felt, had been afraid of Heraclitus' "becoming", and had produced a lie "of unity, the life of thinghood, of substance, of permanence. 'Reason' is the cause of our falsification of the testimony of the senses."^{59a}

According to Nietzsche, there arose a second error out of this conceptualization of substance, unity, etc. For, pushed to the limit, a highest substance, a highest unity, and so forth, was posited. It followed from the positing of such an exalted degree of these conceptualizations that the beginning of all else was attributed to it.^{59b}

As Nietzsche warned, the highest may not have grown out of the lower and may not have grown at all if an honest appraisal of reality had been undertaken. In any case, the "highest concepts" mean "the most general, the emptiest concepts, the last smoke of evaporating reality", and these

^{59a} F. Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols in Walter Kaufmann's The Portable Nietzsche, op. cit., p. 480.

^{59b} Walter Kaufmann, The Portable Nietzsche, op. cit., p. 481.

are posited as "in the beginning; as the beginning."^{59c}

The conclusion of philosophy was that the common denominator of all highest concepts was the causa sui, the ens realissimum, "God". But the process of arriving at "God" is an error--for "God" is the thinnest and emptiest of concepts--an abstraction of abstractions. This error is caused by the "brain afflictions of sick web-spinners" who should not have been taken seriously

precisely insofar as the prejudice of reason forces us to posit unity, identity, permanence, substance, cause, thinghood, being, we see ourselves, somehow caught in error, compelled into error.^{59d}

Part of the blame for the error of "being", Nietzsche said, lies with grammar or language forms as well as a projection of the "ego" into language.^{59e}

"The error of the spirit a cause mistaken for reality! And made the very measure of reality! And called God!"^{59f}

Everywhere "being is projected by thought, pushed underneath, as the cause; the concept of being follows, and is a derivative of the concept of ego."^{59g}

^{59c} Ibid.

^{59d} Ibid., p. 482.

^{59e} Ibid., p. 483.

^{59f} Ibid., p. 495.

^{59g} The Twilight of the Gods, The Portable Nietzsche, op. cit., p. 483.

Now this so-called "true world" of ideas, abstractions and forms is in marked contrast to what can be verified by empiricism. It is "constructed out of contradiction to the actual world." It is a "moral-optical illusion".^{59h}

This error about the so-called "true world" of being eventually becomes unattainable--even unknown--because not attained.⁵⁹ⁱ

Nietzsche went through the whole agonizing process of tracing the origin of being to the point where his thinking led him to "nothingness" and despair of meaning until he hit upon his own vision of ultimacy, his own myth of the eternal recurrence of an endless series of finite possibilities of nature. In his Thus Spoke Zarathustra, the reality beyond "being" is posited and joyously proclaimed. It is a reality decidedly not to be approached as was the serious "grave" reality of "being"--but it was a reality completely and wonderfully new. That is, playful non-being and authentic life then became a joyous proclamation of finitude and eternal return of the possibilities of finitude. In Twilight of the Idols he could say, "Reality shows us an enchanting wealth of types, the abundance of a lavish play

^{59h} Ibid., p. 484.

⁵⁹ⁱ Ibid., p. 485.

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and change of forms. ^{59j}

The existence of man and of the world is without purpose. It is its own purpose. It is for its own sake, an end in itself, and therefore no "end" at all. It is! That is enough. The work explanation, the teleological, rational explanation will not do. The world is at play for play's sake. As Nietzsche puts it

No one is responsible for man's being there at all, for his being such-and-such, or for his being in these circumstances in this environment. The fatality of his essence is not to be disentangled from the fatality of all that has been and will be. Man is not the effect of some special purpose, of a will, and end; nor is he the object of an attempt to attain an "ideal of humanity" or an "ideal of happiness" or an "ideal of morality." It is absurd to wish to devolve one's essence in some end or other. We have invented the concept of "end": in reality there is no end. ^{59k}

Nietzsche was aware that man could not completely escape the net of rational thought even if it is recognized as inadequate to the task of dealing with reality. He knew that language was arbitrary and merely conventional.

Language did not permit us to know facts, "only interpretations", he said. In this sense language lies and "being" is an empty fiction. ^{59l}

^{59j} F. Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, in W. Kaufmann, The Portable Nietzsche, op. cit., p. 491.

^{59k} F. Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, op. cit., p. 500.

^{59l} F. Nietzsche, On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense in W. Kaufmann, The Portable Nietzsche, op. cit., p. 42-47. (See also Twilight of the Idols, op. cit., p. 481; also Notes 1887 in W. Kaufmann, The Portable Nietzsche, op. cit., p. 455.)

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The proper attitude and method in philosophy, therefore, must be freer, more lighthearted, more playful than cold reason has traditionally allowed. It must even become, as it does in Zarathustra, a boundless surrender to the play of the cosmos.

The concept of play fitted what he intuited was the way of reality. The Overman he celebrated was a future player in a playful cosmos rejoicing in the eternal recurrence of nature's games.

"I am a prelude to better players, O my brother! A precedent! Follow my precedent."^{59m}

Walter Kaufmann tells us that the original German is more "playful". "Ein Vorspiel bin ich besserer. Spieler, oh meine Brüder! Ein Beispiel!"⁵⁹ⁿ

Nietzsche becomes ecstatic in what saved him from the despair of nothingness, the eternal recurrence:

If ever one breath came to me of the creative breath and of that heavenly need that constrains even accidents to dance star-dances; if I ever laughed the laughter of creative lightning which is followed obediently but grumblingly by the long thunder of the deed; if I ever played dice with Gods at the Gods' table, the earth, till the earth quaked and burst and snorted up floods of fire--for the earth is a table for Gods and trembles with creative new words and Gods' throws. Oh, how should

^{59m} F. Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Part 3, Section 20, in W. Kaufmann, The Portable Nietzsche, op. cit., p. 321.

⁵⁹ⁿ Ibid., p. 263.

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I not lust after eternity and after the nuptial ring of rings, the ring of recurrence?^{59o}

The highest degree of seriousness for Nietzsche was playfulness and a certain light playfulness befitted the way of basic reality.

Who among you can laugh and be elevated at the same moment? Whoever climbs the highest mountains laughs at all tragic plays and tragic seriousness.^{59p}

The insight into the purposeless eternal recurrence dispels gravity and produces lightness and laughter, a sacred thing. The heaven which guided Nietzsche was "a dance floor for divine accidents" and "a divine table for divine dice" and dice players."^{59q} "Do we not always sit at a big jesting-and-gaming table?"^{59r}

All of this means that the cosmo-ontological base for Nietzsche's appreciation of the world is the playful round of endless manifestations of power playing out various possibilities of the eternal return. As part of the cosmic playfulness, man should affirm and enjoy his own game (his own configuration within the whole complex of cosmic possibilities).

^{59o} F. Nietzsche, The Seven Seals in Part 3, Number 3 of Thus Spoke Zarathustra, op. cit., p. 341.

^{59p} F. Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, op. cit., p. 152-153.

^{59q} Ibid., p. 278, p. 234.

^{59r} Ibid., p. 404.

In anticipation of the third stage of the evolution of human freedom and authenticity, man is permitted now to play, and so catalytically to hasten his wholeness, for "whoever discovered the land called 'mankind' also discovered the land called 'human future'".⁶⁰

Thus it is that Nietzsche held a view of play as basic to Reality. The twin forces of Schiller's Formtrieb and Stofftrieb had become the Apollonian and Dionysian elements in man's striving nature. Man was a play-microcosm in the larger play-macrocosm. Man was simply part of the play of the universe. Man enjoyed the special privilege of bringing the play of the cosmos to consciousness and thus raising the game of the universe to newer heights.

The Modern Appreciation

Our very brief glimpse at Heraclitus, Plotinus, Schiller and Nietzsche has given us a foretaste of the play-reality equation and has set the stage for a more critical review of two modern philosophers who we feel articulate an appreciation of the primary cosmo-ontological sphere of the play-real, namely Eugen Fink and Kostas Axelos.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 253.

E. Eugen Fink

A notable contemporary philosopher of this school of a cosmo-ontological appreciation of play is Eugen Fink. In 1960 he published an analysis of the symbolic significance of play, entitled Das Spiel als Weltsymbol.⁶¹ It succeeds an earlier work, Oase des Glücks.⁶²

According to Fink, the mainstream of Western philosophy has been astray is not giving sufficient attention to cosmology, the inquiry into the nature of the world. The reason why Fink places such emphasis upon the nature of the world is his eagerness to understand man. For Fink holds that it is only when man is viewed in relation to the world that he can be understood. The fault of much of Western philosophy has been its insistence that man and the world be studied separately, a point of view in which the distinction between "essences" or "substances" can only add up to a loss of the dynamic quality of meaning.

⁶¹ Eugen Fink, Das Spiel als Weltsymbol, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1960, also found under the title, Le Jeu comme symbole du monde, Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1966.

⁶² Eugen Fink, Oase des Glücks: Gedanken zu einer Ontologie des Spiels, Freiburg, Karl Alber, Verlag, 1957.

The basis of this separation of man from his world, according to Fink, is a further relationship which occupied and eclipsed the holistic concepts of meaning in philosophy. This obscuring emphasis on distinction, this further separateness of relationship, is the "theological character of metaphysics", the relationship of man, not to the world, but to God. He uses play as a term for being in an ontology that includes cosmological factors (i.e. in-the-world-relatedness). Fink holds that "play" transcends the errors both of the subjective and mythological ontologies as well as of the substantialistic and objectivist theological metaphysics. According to him, the transcendental divine referent is "out there" and has no formal base for world-relatedness.

To counter this obscuring God-metaphysic, Fink tries to open up a new appreciation of human personhood, of philosophical meaning, including man and God, under the heading of world. The world plays itself out in structures of human meaning. Fink believes that philosophical understandings may themselves be instances of the cosmo-ontological play of the world. For Fink, the "play" of Being is "play without the player".⁶³

⁶³ E. Fink, Le Jeu comme symbole du monde, op. cit., p. 227.

He wants to demand a reexamination of the nature/history and myth/gospel dichotomies as they have been treated recently in Protestant theology. He does not set "work" and "play" in opposition to each other; rather they interpenetrate each other, based upon a fundamental "ludic receptivity to being". The cosmic-and-human game in Fink's work follows upon the tradition of Nietzsche, Husserl and Heidegger.⁶⁴

For Fink play has objectivity; it is a structure of Being in which particular participants of being exist. As he puts it, "The play of the world is the play of no one because it is only in itself that there are persons, man and gods."⁶⁵

Fink feels that a certain "letting be" and intuitional approach to the subject of play-in-the-world is the only ultimately satisfactory method for his cosmologico-metaphysic. For Fink, "the man who plays does not think, and the man who thinks does not play". What is more, "to meditate on play is ostensibly not play".⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Confer Kostas Axelos, "Planetary Interlude", op. cit., p. 8, n. 7, - also where reference is given to Fink's La Philosophie de Nietzsche, Editions de Minuit, coll. "Arguments", 1964.

⁶⁵ E. Fink, Le Jeu comme symbole du monde, op. cit., p. 238. (David Miller's translation in his Gods and Games, op. cit., p. 76.)

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 64, 63.

He writes:

We are persuaded that a comprehensive interpretation of human play already presupposes an ecstatic overture to the world [...]. Is it not possible that [...] there may well be an authentic meditation, truly on play, which remains in the realm of play, which is held in the openness to the world that is informed by play? This question is not idly posed. [...] 67

Eugen Fink's philosophy of man is nowhere better summed up than in the statement: "Man - as player - exists most openly to the world when he rejects all norms and when he is bound by boundlessness". 68

Fink warns that, "As long as we continue naively using popular antitheses of 'work-play', 'frivolity-seriousness' and the like, we will never grasp the ontological meaning of play". 69

Man is whole not only when he plays, says Fink, (Schiller had said that man is whole only when he plays), but also "when he works, when he struggles, when he confronts death, when he loves". 70 All of these essential

67 Ibid., p. 63.

68 Ibid., p. 239.

69 E. Fink, "The Oasis of Happiness: Toward an Ontology of Play", in Jacques Ehrmann, ed., Game, Play, Literature, op. cit., p. 19.

70 Ibid., p. 20.

phenomena of human existence

appear to us as ambiguous and enigmatic. The fundamental reason for this is that man is exposed and yet sheltered at the same time. Man is no longer like the animal held captive in the bosom of Nature and not yet free like the incorporeal angel - he is a free being, yet bound to Nature.⁷¹

When then is play in man? What are its motives? For Fink, the answers to these questions reside in the modality of "spontaneous act, of vital impulse".

Play is, as it were, existence centered in itself. The motivation of play does not coincide with that of other human activity. All other activity, whether it has its purpose in itself (praxis, "doing"); or whether its goal is the creation of an artifact (poiesis, "making"), is a means to the final end (telos) of man, namely his ultimate happiness (eudaimonia).⁷² [...]

Unlike other activities, play does not fit into this style of life. It contrasts conspicuously with the futuristic mode of being, and it cannot easily be fitted into the complex structure of goals. Play is not for the sake of a "final good" and cannot be marred by profound uncertainty as to the correctness of our conception of happiness. In contrast with the restless dynamism, the obscure ambiguity and relentless futurism of our life, play is characterized by calm, timeless "presence" and autonomous, self-sufficient meaning - play resembles an oasis of happiness that we happen upon in the desert of our Tantalus-like seeking and pursuit of happiness.⁷³

Play, then, is a respite from this teleological quest for meaning in human existence. It is a temporary

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., p. 20.

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

"meaning-in-itself" enclave within the mainstream of our futuristic consciousness. We create, as it were, an island of happiness as some kind of immediate "final goal" of existence.

The immanent purpose of play is not subordinate to the ultimate purpose served by all other human activity. Play has only internal purpose, unrelated to anything external to itself, [...] In the autonomy of play action there appears a possibility of human timelessness in time. Time is then experienced, not as a precipitate rush to successive moments, but rather as the one full moment that is, so to speak, a glimpse of eternity.⁷⁴

Play is "a strange oasis, an enchanted rest-spot", "a type of temporal present" of activity and creativity close to "the eternal pulse of the world" permitting us to "perceive the pure eternal ideas in the midst of their ever-changing incarnations".⁷⁵

For Fink, the relationship of play to other modes of existence is essentially representational. Play, confronts all the forms of existence and "absorbs them by representing them".⁷⁶ Thus, while seeming to be unrelated to our normal life, it nevertheless relates to it in a very meaningful way. Fink tells us that we are mistaken in simply contrasting play with work, reality, seriousness or authenticity. "We falsely juxtapose it with other existential phenomena. Play is a basic existential phenomenon,

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 22.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

just as primordial and autonomous as death, love, work and struggle for power, but it is not bound to these phenomena in a common ultimate purpose."⁷⁷

Fundamental to human play, Fink believes, is a kind of "'schizophrenia', a kind of split-personality that is not to be mistaken for a manifestation of mental illness",⁷⁸ Unlike the true schizophrenic who is unable to distinguish "reality" and "illusion"

The player can recall himself from his role; while playing, man retains a knowledge of his double existence, however greatly reduced this knowledge may be. Man exists in two spheres simultaneously, not for lack of concentration or out of forgetfulness, but because this double personality is essential to play.⁷⁹

This "double personality" structure of play is the product of imagination and so presents an obscure and difficult problem in ontological examination. The "play world" is "an enigmatic realm that is not nothing, and yet is nothing real".⁸⁰ The play world is a world which juxtaposes and keeps itself aware of two realms, the ordinary and the imaginary. The two realms interpenetrate and delineate each other.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 22.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 23.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid.

The curious interplay of the dimensions of reality and the play world cannot be demonstrated in any other known model of spatial and temporal relations. The play world is not suspended in a purely ideal world. It always has a real setting, and yet it is never a real thing among other real things, although it has an absolute need of real things as a point of departure. That is to say, the imaginary character of the play world cannot be elucidated as a phenomenon of more subjective illusion, it cannot be defined as a chimera, which were to exist only in the innermost soul without any relationship to reality.⁸¹

What is more, for Fink, play cannot be limited to man. It has cosmologico-ontological implications. Even in man there is room to ask "whether in playing man remains in the human sphere or whether he does not also thereby of necessity assume a relationship to something beyond himself".⁸²

Basic to any philosophical appreciation of play is its connection with imagination. As Fink reminds us, / with the question of imagination arises the difficulty of interpreting just how play is to be considered "illusion". In exploring the various meanings of illusion (Schein) Fink distinguishes three kinds: 1. Illusion as the surface, the external appearances, the mere facade of

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 24.

⁸² Ibid., p. 25.

things; 2. Illusion as erroneous, subjective deception, or unclear idea of a thing; 3. Illusion as a positive creation of the imagination, a phantasm of the soul. Fink concludes that the play-world does not take place in pure subjectivity but "contains both subjective imaginary elements and objective ontic elements" since it "always has to do with play objects".⁸³

We are acquainted with the imagination as a faculty of the soul, we are familiar with the dream, with visions and phantasies. But what is an objective, ontic illusion supposed to be?⁸⁴

Fink tries to answer his own question by offering an example of images in everyday experience. As an example he gives the case of the reflected image of a tree in a lake.

As an image it is real - it is a real reflection of the original tree existing in reality. But a tree is also represented in the image; this tree appears on the surface of the water, yet in such a way that it exists only through the medium of the reflection and not in reality. An illusion of this kind is an autonomous category of Being and embraces something specifically "unreal" as a constitutive element of its reality. Moreover it is superimposed on yet another form of Being, one of a quite straitforward order of reality. The image of the tree does not hide the surface of the water on which it appears as a reflection. The reflection of the tree is qua reflection; i.e. as a certain light-phenomenon, a real thing, and embraces the "unreal" tree of the mirror world.⁸⁵

⁸³ Ibid., p. 27.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

(Fink then refers to "the entire Platonic ontology" which, he reminds us, "operates continually with the concept of the copy as a shadow and a reflection to interpret the structure of the world".⁸⁶

It is because of man's imaginative faculty that he is able to play, and "man's capacity for creating a play-illusion depends to a great extent on the fact that there exists already a real illusion in nature". Thus, "play is finite creativity in the major dimension of illusion".⁸⁷ As such it is a free creative act of the imagination with some real reference to "real" images in Nature.

It is at this juncture of his exposition of the meaning of play that Fink relates it to symbol - to our mind an extremely important observation:

In the magical mirror image produced by the play world, a single object chosen at random (e.g. the play thing) becomes a symbol. It has representative character. Even if it has long since been forgotten, human play is the symbolic act of representing the meaning of the world and of life.⁸⁸

Throughout the history of philosophy, Fink relates, many speculative attempts at comprehending Being have employed

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 27-28.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 28.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

a single model which, acting itself as a sort of encapsulated summary of Being itself, could be used as a paradigmatic tool for the understanding of existence. Thales used water, Plato light, Hegel spirit, and so forth. Each tried to explain the whole by using the model of one of the whole's parts. "Whenever the laws, structure and plan of the universe repeat themselves symbolically within the world, this marks a philosophical key-phenomenon that can serve as the foundation of a speculative formula for the universe."⁸⁹

Because play is endowed with the character of symbolic representation by its very nature, it is perhaps the superb instance of such philosophical key-phenomenon. Play can become the symbolic theatrical enactment of the universe, the speculative metaphor of the world - or so Heraclitus and Nietzsche, for example, had proposed.⁹⁰

Once the essence of the world is conceived as play, the logical consequence for man is that he is the only creature in the entire universe who can relate to and reproduce the workings of the whole of Being. If this be the case, then man can find his true essence only in relating to that which transcends him.⁹¹

Fink has closed his lyrical earlier book, Oase des Glücks, which is a defence of play based upon Nietzsche

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 29.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 29-30.

and Rilke, with the words:

Since this philosopher and this poet point towards the worth of the concept of play in such a profound and humane manner, we should also recall the words of another: we cannot enter the Kingdom of heaven unless we become like little children.⁹²

Summary of Fink's Position

Eugen Fink's philosophy of play has disclosed the following characteristics of play: separateness (the "oasis" of happiness), split-awareness (a healthful "schizophrenia"), calm and timeless presence (of an autonomous set of values), meaningfulness in itself ("self-sufficient meaning"), non-utilitarian or auto-telic centering of self ("autonomous", "calm", "free"), centered in the "now" ("timeless presence"), and fulfilling ("one full moment...a glimpse of eternity"). Play is an imaginative creation based upon the experience of real illusions in life (example, the illusion of the tree reflected in the lake). What is more, the play-process of illusion-making is "the symbolic act of representing the meaning of the world and of life". Man's play has implications of cosmological-ontological significance. The world-reality may be best understood under the symbolic representational character of play which is a key phenomenon disclosing the basic play-quality of the world.

⁹²E. Fink, Oase des Glücks, op. cit., p. 51 (cited by David Miller, Gods and Games, op. cit., pp. 77-78).

Evaluation of Fink's Characteristics of Play

Fink's basic intuition seems to be that man's play is linked to the cosmo-ontologically real as co-extensive attribute so that what is itself real in the world is itself also playful in its mode of being real.

In such an estimation, the ordinary quality of "separateness" which is usually attributed to play, i.e. separateness from the real, does not really obtain. Why then does he use the term "separateness" ("oasis" of happiness) and why does he talk of split-awareness? It seems to us that he is saying that there are moments when the essential congruity of reality and play can be felt and enjoyed and that these moments are play moments. He is really saying that there are at least two aspects of play: (1) as ontologically united with the real, and (2) as given insightful experience of such ontological unity of the real and play - where one can enjoy the essential "is-ness" or "playfulness" of things amidst the otherwise tension-filled and vacant estimations of the real.

In our terminology Fink seems to be speaking of the primary and tertiary appreciations of play, the tertiary being a glimpse into the reality of the primary. His language is ambiguous because he labels the elements

of play indiscriminately. But they are not applicable to play itself on the primary sphere. They have meaning only on the tertiary sphere.

In the consideration of the real, Fink seems to take for granted that what is ordinarily called the real is non-play ("the futuristic mode of being"), i.e. the ordinary cultural enterprises undertaken by man. Thus, he fails to see that culture-reality-play are in their own way coextensive terms and that play has meaning on what we have called the secondary sphere of appreciation.⁹³ The ordinary real world of man, for Fink, is touched by play because play "has to do with play objects" and is that out of which an "oasis" can be found - but it is itself not play. Man's playful oasis tends to be only an imaginative free imitation of the non-playful aspects of ordinary human existence.

The way through these difficulties in Fink's thought can be found in our hypothetical construct of a three-sphered appreciation of the play-reality problem.

Human play is, as Fink notes, close to "the eternal pulse of the world" permitting us to have intimations of the eternal reality in the midst of its "ever-changing incarnations". This appreciation of play ties in nicely

⁹³ The secondary (regional or cultural) level of appreciation of play appears in our next chapter.

with what we will later say of play, namely that the eternal reality is pure Paidia which is "incarnated" in "ever-changing" ways of finite (delimited and "representational") ludi.

But, we quarrel with Fink's explanation of play. In an upheaval of Fink's ideas, our hypothesis has it that play does not have an essentially "representational" relationship to other modes of existence as if these modes of existence were themselves non-playful, for the notion of "representational" itself connotes a form of playful existence itself, in which case all that Fink is saying is that play exists "playfully" (representationally) of other modes of existence (which are apparently non-playful).

It is here where we see a contradiction in Fink's position which is resolved by our own hypothesis. On the one hand, Fink boldly states that the "oasis of happiness" which is captured in human play has "worldly" meaning, that is, ontological-cosmological weight. It says something powerful about how the world's reality is: that is, such as to justify human playfulness. The world itself exists playfully.

On the other hand, Fink affirms just as stolidly that human play is but "representational", "symbolic" or "reflective" of "other modes of existence", that is,

what we might call "ordinariness" which apparently is non-playful.

Fink feels that the kind of reality which is play is simply imitative or symbolically representational, that is, play is a "reflection" of ordinariness. But we may ask: If it is merely representational of ordinariness, why does it provide an "oasis of happiness" when ordinariness itself apparently does not? Play thus seems not to really "represent" the "playful" world!

Our position, as we will explain in detail later, is the reverse of Fink's and resolves the contradiction. For "other modes of existence" (ordinariness) are essentially representational ludi (hence playful) of play itself (more exactly of Playfulness, Paidia Itself). Thus, our understanding is that the relationship of play to ordinary life is not just to imitate it, but rather to see through it to its Ground of Playfulness (Paidia) and thus to participate in Paidia and to enjoy the present futurity of the End here and now by its own activity (ludi). In this way human play is a response to the play in the other spheres. Human playfulness indeed captures an "oasis of happiness" and in so doing, speaks prophetically that ordinariness or "other modes of existence" themselves are ludi and that, as such, they are merely secondary

("representational") to playfulness (Paidia). Thus, "other modes of existence" themselves are playful in their own way as finite "incarnations" (as Fink would say) - but "representative" (finite ludi) of Infinite Paidia (as we would say). For human ordinariness is important regarding that which is not the end, that is, ludi, but human playfulness (paidia) rests in the end (Paidia) already. Thus, both what is called "play" by Fink and what is called "other modes of existence" must be essentially playfully real, each in its own distinct sphere of the play-real identity.

F. Kostas Axelos

The philosopher, Kostas Axelos, has some interesting reflections on the cosmological and ontological weight of play.⁹⁴ While man plays his game of life over and against the world he finds that the world is also playing with him. Man and world are in an exchange-transactional game:

This game with its thousands and thousands of facets is neither sad nor joyous; if man is one of its "poles", the other is Being as time, the game of the world, one plays with the other in the same game.⁹⁵

⁹⁴Kostas Axelos, "Planetary Interlude", op. cit., pp. 6-18.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 7.

Man's nature as homo viator is indicated here in the special aspect of his hunger for truth which leads him to a quest involving dynamic transaction with his world. Axelos maintains that this transaction between man and his environment is best categorized by play - or, more specifically, by "Game". The reason for this is that while man begins to manipulate the world the world manipulates him equally as much. The encounter is a kind of contest, not just logical or rational - but more total than these.

Axelos calls to his side the philosophy of Heidegger where Being, Time, and Game are involuted one upon the other:

Heidegger, scrutinizing Being and Time, Being which "is" Time, sometimes admits a little timidly that "the essence of Being is the game itself." He asks the question: "Does the essence of the game allow itself to be determined, as it should, starting from being foundation (Grund); or must we think being and foundation, being as abyss (Ab-Grund), starting from the essence of the game?" The question of why and the answers in because are outdistanced in and by the game, founded and swallowed up in it. "The 'because' is drowned in the game. The game is without 'why'. It plays while it plays. Only the game remains; it is what is highest and deepest. But this 'only' is All, the One, the Unique."⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 8. Axelos gives as footnotes to this section: "Identitat und Differenz, Neske, Pfullingen, 1957, p. 64; Der Satz vom Grund, Neske, Pfullingen, 1957. French trans. Le Principe de raison (Gallimard, 1962, p. 241; modified trans.); Ibid, p. 243."

Here Heidegger and Axelos are pitched on a key which seems remarkably Eastern. It seems to be Taoistic. At any rate, we feel that if we keep Taoism in mind, Axelos can be interpreted. In his thought, "game" or "play with rules" becomes the unifying all in all, the eternal Tao in which the divisions, variations, points and counter-points of the ordinary principles of reality are transcended so that Yang and Yin are permeated, saturated, unified and elevated by a single principle, all embracing, universal, unique, and eternal, the Tao itself. This impression or insight into Axelos' thought seems substantiated by the next passage in his essay:

Thus the game might well be, and/or be seen as being that in which are founded and swallowed up the great thoughts and the great thinkers, the great powers, such as myth and religion, poetry and art, politics, thought, science and technology and the fundamental forces which open us to the world and it to us, like language and work, love and struggle. What is more, it might "be" - in its still too summarily elucidated play - not only the characteristic of man and the future dimension of all his manifestations and changing fortunes, but the "master-word" saying, calling and naming the being in becoming of the fragmentary and fragmented totality of the multi-dimensional and open world.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

If this does not convince us of his Taoistic appreciation of play, Axelos goes on to more precise language:

In it [the "Game"] everything is constructed and destroyed. Being and non-being, nature, God and man would be its masks, the game itself neither idea nor idealized, nor thing nor thingified, playing all games as wandering (errant) time. When speaking of the game of the world we should not forget that all the games we play and which involve us completely are always intra-world in the world and in time. Never do we find ourselves in the presence of the World and of Time, of the Game itself; our dependence is always situated inside their fragments.⁹⁸

Putting Axelos' words into a Taoistic mind-set we can say that everything of the intra-world is "played" out as Yang and Yin but never touches the fullness of the Tao itself - which is the "Game" itself of Reality; thus man can never master the "Game" (the Tao) of life for he is simply an aspect of it. The rules and regulations of the "Game" transcend and encompass him, making any attempt at control of the game simply part of the greater play of "the Game":

The question of the rules of the game can only remain open. All the individual games, and even those considered global, are and remain individual, have rules made to be respected and/or transgressed. But the very game of the world, the world as a game, develops without having rules exterior to itself. It is not Play; it "is" the Game.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 9.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

In contrast to a Christian interpretation of the Game which would have it that the Game itself and each of its parts is meaningful, especially as they touch upon the destiny of man himself, this Taoistic Game propounded by Axelos is indifferent. The Game has no meaningful promise of a happy ending, a fullness of time; rather, the Game has no ending at all; the hunger for such a Christian ending is but part of the inexorable, unsympathetic rhythmic flux of time:

This game is not on the order of tragedy, nor of comedy, although the historical, social and human world and the world which embraces it - but not "the" World - may equally well be envisaged as an enormous and minute farce.¹⁰⁰

Our Taoistic interpretation of Axelos' cosmic Game seems further corroborated by reference to his notion of the evanescent, evolving, incompleting unfolding of time where:

Nothing is ever elucidated. Prelude, development and - especially - finale remain problematical. We are always embarked and under way. We are - and what we are not is too - in the interlude. What we are and what we are not is the interlude, not only inter-but intra-ludos (entre deux ludes), in the game.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 11.

A remarkable congruency here between the notions "entre deux ludes" and "between Yang and Yin"! Man and the things of his environment are Yang and Yin. Echoing Heraclitus, Axelos says,

We mould them and they mould us. If man is a toy destined to break and to be broken, a grown-up child who breaks his toys, Time is the child who plays sovereignly, without there being a director of the Game. [...] Galactic irony is watching us.¹⁰²

For Axelos, man being aware of the cosmic Game of which he is a part, there remains the big question: Once you know that the Game is, how then, do you play it? He notes that:

It is not a matter of living or of thinking by oppositions and reversals, even though the contrasts which evoke each other reciprocally do not allow themselves to be overcome. Will we be fit, while taking and giving, pushing and being pushed, between tension and relaxation and without fixing the first, the second and the last hours [...], will we be fit to play vitally and morally at everything and at nothing: to speak and to think, to work and to love, to build and to demolish, to organize and to poematize? Will we be capable of playing at playing?¹⁰³

Is everything necessary - or is it merely chance? Is anything certain (even about this present question) in the Game?

We evade the question: What is the necessity which activates chance and, at the same time,

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 12. (Emphasis his.)

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 13.

we restrict the role of chance and radical contingency. Everything is at least double, split in two, plays a double and a triple game, is double-edged. In every unity and totality, there are inter-changeable, movable places and points which overlap and interlock.¹⁰⁴

We hear Taoism here again! In this "appreciation" of play Axelos warns us that though "We still live and think in metaphysical terms: yet we are already somewhat beyond them. In the discordant harmony between life 'and' thought;" yet again, "Every is and every and (tout est et tout et) constitutes a problem. Everything constitutes a problem and nothing does."¹⁰⁵ The reason for this conundrum in man's awareness of the Game in his hunger for power, the hunger to liberate himself from the Game, to control it. But "all the games which aspire to domination shatter themselves against the Game of the World. It alone supports global structures and historical events, though structures and events, totalities and developments do not oppose each other rigidly."¹⁰⁶

The Game "asks" to be played by men, always defeated, even when they assail the planet earth and the planet of the sky. [...] Language speaks and falls silent, since everything can be said thus and otherwise and through all dissimulations, speech, thought and writing are fulfilled in betraying themselves and struggle among themselves, at grips with "That", in the circles which spin in a number of manners around the visible power and the invisible power.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 15 and p. 14.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 17, 18.

Here, Axelos seems to be struggling for a proper language for the Ultimate Mystery, the language of neti neti ("not this, not that") and tat tvam asi ("That is It!"). The Eastern philosophers and religious mystics have for endless ages been using such language in reference to the Game of Games, the Play of the Cosmos Itself.

And here we see the appreciation of the "Planetary Interlude" as the Mystery-Game before which and in which we are inextricably enveloped. The language of mysticism replaces the language of science and philosophy.

Axelos surrenders himself to the Game (the Play of the Tao) in the final paragraph of the essay:

The Game is not definitive, it is not the last word. It might even be that the game is only one of the games of Time or that time itself is only one of the rounds that "the" Game plays. The Game is not the last masterword, that is, it should not be understood as a new and convenient masterword, password and watchword for action. It remains the unthought - if not the unthinkable -, the undivulged, the impracticable. It plays with us, impels us toward action and upsets all the games, all the actualizations. As if it were unplayable. The wandering (errantes) truths of the world and the true wanderings (errances) of man confront each other and compose this game. The Game of the World is the question. It is for men to play the game of questions and answers.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 18.

With this passage, we are on the threshold of Zen, the smiling, wise, game of "engagement" with the Game Itself!

Evaluation of Axelos

If we take Axelos' view of the Great Game (as typical of this primary cosmo-ontological appreciation of play) there is an immediate impossibility of evaluation of it - almost by definition. For the Game would include the process of evaluation itself and there is no possibility of distance from the Game to get an outside view of it. There is nothing outside the embrace of the Game! Thus, Axelos' view is an attempt to articulate what to him is "the" mystery, and he knows that his enterprise, too, is part of the same mystery he is trying to examine. His view and those of the others who share his appreciation of play is an intuition into the depths of mystery - indeed the Greatest Mystery of all.

We may note, however, that Axelos' view supports our own, namely, that in the absolute cosmo-ontological sphere of reality "play" and "reality" are one. What is more the "Game" of the world is but one of perhaps many possible Games (ludi) originating in an utterly mysterious playfulness, which our terminology calls Paidia.

G. Conclusion

In the foregoing review of the thought of some philosophers we have seen a rather wide-spread and powerful articulation of a school of thought about the ontological weight of play. The writers we have mentioned would seem to hold one general view in common: that Reality-Itself is Play - or that Play is the only word appropriate to the dynamics of Reality-Itself - even in the ultimate consideration of what "reality" means. Only "play" is adequate to describe what and how things are. It is the way things are and act.

The answer to the question: "How does play relate to the real?" is, in this view, this: Play is the mode of activity of the real, and since all things are active per se, "play" is synonymous with the "real". Another way of saying this is to say "play" is an essential aspect of the real making the real to come to be. Play is the way of things themselves and of all things connected with one another and interacting with one another within the great Game of the cosmos.

This line of thought seems difficult but not beyond our understanding. We have called it the primary "sphere" of the ontological significance of play and it

identifies play and reality in the cosmo-ontological sense. It is but the first of three general ways to speak of "play" related to "reality". As such, it is the fundamental mystery of reality and of all particulars - including the cultural creations of man and the "separated" imaginings of his mind. It is these latter two particulars of this cosmic-ontological play-reality which we must now go on to explain in Chapters II and III, respectively.

We have seen that philosophers have made the play-reality equation in many different ways. Still, they all agree that fundamentally - in the cosmo-ontological sense - the equation is simple and unequivocal. We might argue, therefore, to a certain common denominator of these philosophies - namely that they assert, each in its own way, a conviction that play and reality are one in this fundamental sense. This common denominator amounts to a tradition in philosophy.

No theory of play or reality can be complete without explicit reference to this tradition. No theory can ignore this tradition without providing reasons to reject such a powerful body of thinkers. It is our conviction that it is this equation in this cosmo-ontological sphere of meaning which accounts for the validity or meaningfulness of the equation in the other sphere of meaning.

CHAPTER II

THE SECONDARY (REGIONAL OR CULTURAL) SPHERE OF PLAY

If the view we have just investigated in Chapter I is a valid one, then it follows that it embraces all particular forms of reality, whatever, within the cosmic-ontological whole. Thus it is that it must embrace the totality of man's cultural life.

By "culture" we mean what man does with his intelligence, his imagination, his unconscious and conscious energies to give then concrete forms or institutionalizations in the world. Wherever man touches naked, unadorned reality (which we have just seen may be considered the Game of Games) he adds to it (or, better, exemplifies within it) his own peculiar play of meanings, and significances. He does so by selecting and arranging "facts" to give order to what otherwise would be utter chaos of the bombardment of stimuli upon him. He "creates" a world, a reality, according to his knowledge of facts and his desire for meaningful existence. In this way the play of the whole universe becomes involuted upon itself in man.

Man's language and its form would be an example of such activity.

There is a sizeable body of thought on this peculiar human type of reality we have mentioned. For example, Hans Vaihinger's The Philosophy of "As-If" argues that meaningful fictions must be projected in the external world so that order may exist in our lives - in politics, science, art, religion, and so forth. These fictions, he says, function as truth.¹⁰⁹

We have in mind to examine the question of play as the adequate notion for a human-sized ontology. The question is: How do human beings relate to their notions of the real, the meaningful, the significant? Is play the best way to describe this human-sized concept of the real? How profound is this connection of cultural play forms and play dynamics to human reality? To answer these questions we will look to three approaches to the question, those of Francois de La Rochefoucauld, Martin Heidegger, and Jacques Ehrmann.

¹⁰⁹ Hans Vaihinger, The Philosophy as "As-If", trans. C.K. Ogden, New York, Barnes and Noble, 1924. Confer also, for example, Peter Berger, The Precarious Vision: A Sociologist Looks at Social Fictions and Christian Faith, Garden City, Doubleday and Company, 1961; Erving Goffman, Encounters, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1961; Erving Goffman, Interaction Ritual, Garden City, Doubleday and Company, 1967; Erving Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Garden City, Doubleday and Company, 1959; George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self, and Society, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1934.

A. La Rochefoucauld

La Rochefoucauld's Maximes provides us with a scintillating critique of society's use of language, its notions of truth and reality.¹¹⁰ La Rochefoucauld has taught us that the social world which survives on language of one sort or another cannot exist solely in a world of naked existence - nor in a world of total fantasy. It is the inter-play of this naked existence and play which make communication - and society - authentically human. "Barren 'essential' truth, were it accessible, would be unbearable, would undermine all human contacts," Lewis tells us.¹¹¹ As La Rochefoucauld expresses it, "Les hommes ne vivraient pas longtemps en société s'ils n'étaient les dupes les uns des autres" (Max. 87).

Society itself is held together by a webbing of agreed-upon games of half truth, half-deception. The truly "wise man" elects to play the game and so participate in society.

¹¹⁰ Philip E. Lewis, "La Rochefoucauld: The Rationality of Play", in, Jacques Ehrmann, ed., Game, Play, Literature, op. cit., pp. 133-147.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 139.

Pursuing his interest through co-operation, each player enters into the jurisdiction of the game, commits himself to continue playing, accords his undivided attention to the action, resists at all costs the illusion and isolation of either victory or defeat. Caught up in their roles, the players incorporate - and simultaneously incorporate themselves into - the dominion of the game. Their renunciation of victory connotes a subtle triumph that ultimately belongs to the game itself, whose control over all the forces in play sustains the enactment of a successful social strategy.¹¹²

La Rochefoucauld's pessimistic world allows little freedom - even amidst play. The kind of freedom it is "is freedom to mediate deterministic force through the structures of deliberate contestation, freedom to balance or absorb the capricious play of chance through the rational play of strategy."¹¹³

For La Rochefoucauld, society or culture cannot exist without these subtle play forms. Reality, in practice, is playful indeed. A wise man recognizes the game of "society" nonetheless and sees "play" as something human beings superimpose upon naked and meaningless "facts" (the "real" in the primary cosmo-ontological sense) but in such a way that it is virtually impossible to isolate the game of culture from these "facts". (The primary sphere cannot, in practice, be isolated from the secondary

¹¹²Ibid., p. 140.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 146.

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sphere). It is in this latter sense that reality and play are coextensive in meaning.

La Rochefoucauld is aware that mystery entirely engulfs us. He knows that in our effort to be objective and detached from our world, reality as it really is escapes our efforts to be masters. The game of culture dwarfs our efforts and makes mock of our so-called knowledge. For La Rochefoucauld we are controlled by many unconscious facets of the game which set up gaps between our thinking and our being.

He is a realist who recognizes the subtle power of self-deception as part of culture's apparatus. Man's ego was a reflection of a universal egoism, a kind of natural law, which man participates in but by so doing also confabulates a society of competing egos and a structure of games of indirect and artful deceptions which are inescapably part of the "as-if" mental attitude of man.^{113a}

^{113a} Encyclopedia Britannica, 1961, Vol. 13.

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B. Martin Heidegger

The philosophy of Martin Heidegger embraces integrally the whole context of being(s) "with" culture (the field of Being environing and permeating beings) and a unique mutual inherence of beings with environment (time and space) in "Being"; it is clear that "being", for him, is not seen as object but only in a field of meaning "in the world" embracing the self; hence Heidegger bridges the two spheres of cosmo-ontology and culture as we use them in this dissertation. For that reason he could very well have been invited to be part of this brief review of thinkers in either sphere. But because his difference, his radical upheaval of traditional metaphysics, is precisely in the holistic inclusion of culture-and-being together, it is more fitting to refer to him here in Chapter Two.

In his Plato's Theory of Truth and On the Nature of Truth, Heidegger showed the folly of Western thought which eventually had produced a Nietzsche. The folly was that in the West (much different from the East) there arose a detachment of things (as clear and distinct forms) from the encompassing background of Being. In the West it became the pattern that truth resided in the intellect which apprehended Being. It would have been more accurate,

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Heidegger felt, the other way round - if the pattern had been that truth resided in a certain at-one-ness with the environing Being, or better, that truth was the awareness that Being saturated the intellect.

With a concentration upon the forms of differentiated things, there was a loss of sensitivity to environing ground of Being for these very forms.^{113b} Plato was to blame for sidetracking Western thought from "Being" to 'beings' and for the error of considering truth as a correctness of intellectual judgement about things. While the Greeks were able to develop science because of this emphasis, they also lost a focus upon true Being which was more fundamental, and wider than all "beings" and thus the richer truth, the source of the other.

Traditional thinking, traditional rationalism, was in the end the obstacle to authentic thinking at the most basic level of all. "Thinking only begins at the point where we have come to know that Reason, glorified for centuries, is the most obstinate adversary of thinking."^{113c} A truer existence, a better understanding of existence, is one which breaks through traditional rationalism, beyond concepts and mental representations, to the actual lived dimension of our being-in-the-world.

^{113b} William Barrett, Irrational Man, Garden City, New York, Doubleday (Anchor), 1962, p. 230.

^{113c} Ibid., p. 206.

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Heidegger tried to reach this basic facticity of ordinary awareness - i.e. to the level of reality - before traditional rationalism distorted it or went off on the wrong track.

His philosophy tries to avoid the extremes of objectivism (positivism) and subjectivism by overcoming the subject-object split. He begins by concrete participation in the world, not from either observation of the phenomena "outside" of us or from the introspective investigation of our own minds.

His view of thinking draws a contrast between many types but principally between calculative thinking and primordial thinking. Where calculative thinking has the active character of understanding, predicting and controlling empirical events, primordial thinking has the passive character of reception of Being (rather than of beings). Being for him is the totality of one's being-in-the-world as it really is, and so his appreciation of Being includes "becoming".

According to Heidegger, the ordinary understanding of Being is a useless and insignificant abstraction against which Nietzsche rightly raged. This popular understanding of Being produced the critical philosophy of Nietzsche but also modern man's alienation from value

and from Being Itself. For Heidegger the truth about Being is opposite to this popular understanding and solves Nietzsche's impasse. A proper re-thinking about Being would produce not estrangement from Being but, rather, the most concrete and closest of presences, the involvement in Being itself.

Thus, the problem is that the "is" of things is not examined (as in "This is Monday") but simply accepted without attention and without respect. But, upon examination, it is precisely the "is" - or the Beingness of anything - which permits man to understand things (as in the example just given, the presence of the meaning of Monday to the understanding as a now-reality).

"Truth", for Heidegger, is not the correctness of a statement or a proposition in that such statement or proposition corresponds to extra-mental fact. Truth does not reside primarily in the intellect but in a more basic sense than intellectual truth. For example, "Truth" can also exist in a work of art containing no literal statements; the truth of a work of art is in its being a revelation in a manner of a non-statement.

Truth, or that which is known, is not something apprehended from outside the subject as if the subject stood over and against the object of his knowledge with

some space between them. For there is no subject set apart from the world who then has to assimilate into himself the outside of himself, as subject to object. For Heidegger there is no use of the term "man"; rather, he speaks of Dasein (being-there). There is a Dasein, i.e. a field or region where subject and object have mutual interdependence. Thus, man's Being is spread over a field which is the world.

Men are not spectators of Being but participants in it, and if there is to be a philosophy of Being, this cannot be reared on any kind of detached observation, but only on the basis of our total participation.^{113d}

"The essence of Dasein lies in its existence".^{113e}

This means that Dasein does not have a fixed and unchangeable essence so much as a fixed number of possible essences which it makes as it moves along from one situation to the next. These possible ways of existing, Heidegger calls the existentialia. The horizon of possibilities (existential possibilities) can be described. The concrete (existentiell) possibilities of any actual Dasein would fall within such a description of the existential possibilities. Heidegger himself transcends the limitation of Being imposed upon him by the history

^{113d} John Macquarrie, Martin Heidegger, Richmond Virginia, John Knox Press, 1968, p. 11.

^{113e} Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, Tr. J. Macquarrie and E.S. Robinson, New York, Harper and Harper, 1963, p. 67.

of philosophy of Being in the West from Plato onwards.

Yet he says one can never quite escape the whole context of what produces the Dasein, i.e. historical circumstances, environment, culture (including inherited notions). Thus he is really saying that even his philosophical transcendence of subjectivism and objectivism in philosophy is itself historically limited, culturally limited, for one is always a particular Dasein and never can get a perfect objective view (see Marcel's idea of "mystery").

Granting that we are already in the world and that our first-hand understanding of it comes by way of participation, striving, practical concern rather than theoretical observation, we still have to inquire into this openness, ...113f

Dasein always finds itself in a situation where it has "to be". It never begins with wide open horizons, so to speak, for at any moment there are already a great many "givens". Some of these may have arisen from the Dasein's own past choices, but there will be others that it has not chosen at all, and that will have determined for it be society or history or heredity or other agencies.113g

Since man is not conceived primarily as a detached thinking subject, but as a Being-in-the-world, i.e. situated within a world to which he already stands in relation of openness and mutual interpenetration, Heidegger thinks

113f J. Macquarrie, Martin Heidegger, op. cit., p. 20.

113g Ibid., p. 21.

that what makes man "to be" is something which the world does to him as he lives in the world deciding his own existence.

In fact the detached scientific approach to the world derives as a highly specialized kind of understanding within a wider context or field of human concern. "Being takes the initiative in addressing man, in giving him speech, in setting him in the light and openness. Being is gracious toward man and constitutes him its guardian."^{113h}

The ordinary understanding of the everyday world is one of practical concerns of using things as instruments for these concerns. And all such instruments are interlocking.

However, we have to remember that Heidegger is talking of the everyday world, the world of routine tasks and conventional ways. [...] he considers that we can easily lose ourselves in such a world, and in an authentic existence, man is open to dimensions of the world beyond the merely instrumental understanding of it.¹¹³ⁱ

Thus, authentic existence involves being-in-the-world which surpasses utilization of the world as object.

Thus, man is not independent of his environment. Man is a part of the field of oneness which is the world.

^{113h} Ibid., p. 57.

¹¹³ⁱ Ibid., p. 17.

and therefore cannot understand anything as if there were a distance between man and the-world-in-which-he-is-immersed.

Man is therefore a field-of-being-within-a-field-of-Being. Thus we cannot "know" what man is as if he were an object with a fixed nature.

A child responds to the call of his name before he recognizes that he is supposed to confine the meaning of the name to himself alone. In the beginning he learns to respond to a field or region of Being with which he is concerned.

His name is not the name of an existence that takes place within the envelope of his skin: that is merely the awfully abstract social convention that has imposed itself not only on his parents, but on the history of philosophy. The basic meaning the child's name has for him does not disappear as he grows older; it only becomes covered over by the more abstract social conventions. He secretly hears his own name called whenever he hears any region of Being named with which he is vitally involved.^{113j}

The mine-ness of my existence remains a personal fact, but it is not an I-substance at the centre of the field, but rather it permeates the whole field. It is this total field that is my Being.

The everydayness of our experience confirms this

^{113j} Wm. Barnett, Irrational Man, op. cit., p. 219.

approach to Being. It discloses itself as Dasein (being-there!): Heidegger escapes the dichotomy of subject-object confrontation. Everyday experiences shatter the doubts which older philosophies ensure. These doubts need not be refuted; "they simply fade away, for they do not apply to the existence that we actually live."^{113k}

When Heidegger uses the term "the One" he means almost the opposite of Plotinus' usage. It ("the One") is, in Heidegger's view, the term for the everyday field-ness of our existence, the "public" quality of our existence, the impersonal and public creature we are before we are an "I", a real "subject", a "self".

Most people are controlled by the "One" and never rise to be a "Self".

Traditional qualities (quantity, quality, space, time, etc.) are qualities of objects. Since human existence is not an object, a thing, in this sense, it is categorized by qualities of (1) mood or feeling, (2) understanding and (3) speech, qualities of Heidegger's view of Dasein, human existence in a field.

Mood

Mood is more than an inhering quality within a soul. It is a certain way of being within a field. The

^{113k} Ibid.

mood pervades the field and colours all in it even ourselves. What we are is a certain mood (joy, sadness, etc.) in which we are vitally present. "A mood assails us. It comes neither from 'outside' nor from 'inside', but arises out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such Being."¹¹³¹

In the midst of this mood I find myself here and now in my world, within my situation.

The primary mood is Angst (anxiety) since it is precisely in the here and now (being in the field) that the precariousness of our contingency is felt.

This is more than psychology. It is ontology; moods or feelings are part of what makes us "to be" (in the field). Moods are modes of Being (or "being-there").

Understanding

We are rooted in the experience of existence. It is out of this awareness, however, unconscious, that judgements about propositions or theories can be claimed to be "true".) At the same time as we are what we are, we exist in a field which floods in upon us and makes us one with it. Our basic Beingness is the fundamental openness and receptivity to what reveals itself to us and of which we are a part - the field of Dasein. This

¹¹³¹ Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, op. cit., p. 176.

fundamental openness to the field allows us to exist, i.e. to stand beyond ourselves within the field which opens before us. Such openness is an axiom of knowing the world at all, even in the least sense. This is the fundamental "truth" in which we exist.

"Truth and "Being" are thus inseparable - and we are never without secure truth for we are in a field of truth and this is our being. We are defined in part by our being in the field and being secure in the influx of the field upon us. The moment we exist we are situated within this "truth-knowing", this understanding, that is, bringing the world into ourselves and ourselves out into the world.

Speech

Before sound language and written language (forms of expression to allow communication between one person and another) there is the silent language of a pre-existing context of understanding out of which these sound and written languages derive. What is this context?

The unexpressed but nonetheless accepted context of a more fundamental understanding is the very understanding in which our existence itself is rooted.

Being is then the total "context in which all

beings come to light".^{113m}

Standing in the context of Being permits communication of one person with another - for it is the context of Being which gives common ground for "being with" another.

We exist within the context of this language which is the root of all other language. This language is the communication with the context of existence, namely Being.

Man's existence is not only spread out over a field of mood, understanding, and language; it is also spread out over a field of past, present and future which saturates man's experience, as a basic fact of his existence.

Man especially projects himself into the future where he is in a sense, "to become himself more".

Man's very being is rooted in time. He is an historical being, situated in and essentially understanding himself in a time-frame of all experiences.

In dealing with "time" Heidegger considers that man orients himself in a certain way to his present and actual situation in life by selecting out of his past what strikes him as significant as his cultural inheritance. Man defines his being by projecting himself into a future toward which he always looks. Man must see himself as

^{113m} W. Barrett, op. cit., p. 224.

inextricably bound up with the whole tradition in which his thinking takes place.

Whatever Dasein encounters gets related to the totality of understanding that it already has. It gets an interpretation, an assigned meaning, according to a preconceived frame of reference.

"An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us".¹¹³ⁿ

We always interpret according to a pre-understanding which is part of the whole field of our Dasein. What is more the interpretation is an "as-structure". We interpret something as something which is already known to be part of our Dasein.

Thus what is held to be true is held to be so playfully, i.e. with a certain lightness and without too much rigidity. The perspective is free and open to change. These presuppositions in our understanding we may call the cultural (environmental) aspects of what is real.

¹¹³ⁿ Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, op. cit., pp. 191-192.

The philosopher Martin Heidegger holds with the poet Hölderlin that "man dwells poetically on the earth."¹¹⁴ By this he means that truth for man is a creative act of the free self, a product of man's existential relatedness to the world in a "waiting upon" of meaning.¹¹⁵ There must be a certain "letting be" (Gelassenheit) so that new meaning may come to be and so that the new meaning may not be obscured by the prejudices of old ones. Such new meaning participates in the wonder and awe of creativity and change of all being, in a kind of openness to possibilities. Such "openness" and "letting be" has two qualities: the openness for mystery (die Offenheit für das Geheimnis) and the letting be of things (die Gelassenheit zu den Dingen).¹¹⁶ They provide a certain freedom by allowing a person to get beyond his own cares and anxieties.

¹¹⁴ Martin Heidegger, Existence and Being, trans. Warner Bröck, Chicago, Henry Regnery, Gateway Books, 1949, p. 282.

¹¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, Discourse on Thinking, A Translation of Gelassenheit, Trans. J.M. Anderson and E.H. Freund, New York, Harper and Row, 1966, pp. 22-23, 54-57.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 68.

At bottom this "openness" and "letting be" would seem to be a centering of the self in purposelessness or "uselessness" - at least insofar as one does not pre-determine the outcome of one's thinking processes. Life and meaning must be allowed to disclose themselves in the growth of the self. Authentic human existence occurs when man, in response to his conscience, assumes responsibility for his existence, opens himself to the possibilities of existence which confront him in the world, and chooses among them. And this human experience of growth into authentic responsibility is grounded in the process of Being in Time. Here, Heidegger tells us, "The essence of Being is the game itself."¹¹⁷ In his later years, Heidegger turned to the modern poets to look for new stories, new songs, new dramas which are more "appropriate" to the moving-time dimension of the game of life itself.

Heidegger long used "play" terminology to indicate the unitedness of Being-itself and Dasein in Spielraum (a term from Being and Time that gave way simply to Spiel in later writings). "Spiel is a surrogate for Lichtung (Beckett's 'Light'?), meaning the 'clearing', the 'openness' of origina¹tive thinking, and the center of the horizontal

¹¹⁷M. Heidegger, Identitat und Differenz, Neske, Pfullingen, 1957, p. 64, quoted in, Kostos Axelos, "Planetary Interlude", op. cit., p. 8.

structure of Being as manifested in its dynamic mode
(the ek-sistence of Dasein).¹¹⁸

It is because of the problems of language that
Heidegger finds the term "play" of use.

If we talk here of playing games at all,
it is not we who play with words, but the
nature of language plays with us. [...] Is
it play with words when we attempt to give
heed to the game of language and to hear what
language really says when it speaks? ¹¹⁹

Language attempting to analyse itself through
language is a basic mysterious enterprise best understood
as play.

Heidegger calls the ontological aspect of play
"the as-structure of reality",¹²⁰ This "as-structure" of
reality is not so much ontological as epistemological.

Heidegger's interest in Reality has brought him
to see it through the "play" of man's openness to possibilities.
His interest is in the peculiar way of knowing of man,
obfuscated as it is, by imaginative "as-structuring". Man

¹¹⁸ David Miller, "The Kingdom of Play: Some Old
Theological Light from Recent Literature", op. cit.,
pp. 351-352. We have corrected the printed text
("horizontal" becomes "horizonal") to fit the version
received from D. Miller in a personal communication. Also,
see Miller's lengthy list of Heideggerian texts to
substantiate his view on page 352, n. 22.

¹¹⁹ M. Heidegger, What is Called Thinking?, New
York, Harper and Row, 1968, pp. 118-119.

¹²⁰ As noted by David Miller, "The Kingdom of Play:
Some Old Theological Light from Recent Literature", op. cit.,
p. 357, n. 30.

is a player and inevitably so even in pursuit of the truth about Reality.

Thus, reality as it is apprehended through the "as-structure" of man's mode of being-in-the-world is immediately and fundamentally playful. Whatever man makes of his world is coloured by this intrinsic playfulness of his manner of seeking meaning. Thus culture and reality for man are coextensive with play. One term cannot be seen isolated in practice from the others; reality, culture, play, for man, are facets of the same thing.

C. Jacques Ehrmann

In most treatments of the ontological value of play there is a preponderant view of play as "representative", "imitative", "imaginative" (for example, as we saw with Eugen Fink's view). This view stems per-force from a perspective of what is considered, a priori, a more fundamental and primary actuality, what we normally call "Reality". It is only by reference to this so-called "Reality", that a judgment about play is normally made.

There are, of course, as we have seen in Heraclitus, Nietzsche and others, definite suggestions of another point of view. This second point of view is sometimes relegated by rationalistic philosophers to the realm of mysticism or poetry and this too is automatically an

a priori judgment that it is inferior to or at least secondary to their prime concern which is empirically examined "Reality".

Perhaps the most articulate exponent of a defence position against such rationalistic a priori bias is Jacques Ehrmann. He feels that there is a foundational reversal of perspectives needed. Play, he says, may in fact be primary, or at least be of equal value to so-called, ordinary, "Reality" - and indeed of culture too.

In an essay entitled "Homo Ludens revisited"¹²¹ he offers a severe critique of several of the most renowned treatments of play: Huizinga's, Caillois', and Benveniste's, to be specific.¹²²

The most troublesome aspect of most theories of play, according to Ehrmann, is the traditional dichotomy between play and seriousness, as exemplified in Huizinga who was forced at the end of his work to call this problem "the troubling insolubility...play or seriousness". Ehrmann wants to quarrel with this fundamental split between "gratuitousness and/or utility; play and/or work; play and/or everyday life; the imaginary and/or the real; etc."¹²³

¹²¹ Jacques Ehrmann, "Homo Ludens revisited", op. cit., pp. 31-57.

¹²² We will deal with Huizinga and Caillois later in Chapter III.

¹²³ Jacques Ehrmann, op. cit., p. 32.

Though Huizinga and Caillois have divergent ideas about play ("the one finds transition between spheres, the other sees divisions"), they both share a more basic "world-view, a fundamentally rationalist view according to which human activities relate, on the one hand, to dreams, gratuitousness, nobility, imagination, etc., and on the other, to consciousness, utility, instinct, reality, etc."¹²⁴

Ehrmann's position is against this almost automatic cleavage between "reality", "ordinary life" and "play". The split into these separate categories will not occur:

if the status of "ordinary life" of "reality", is not thrown into question in the very movement of thought given over to play. [...] In other words, we are criticizing these authors chiefly and most seriously for considering "reality", the "real", as a given component of the problem, as a referent needing no discussion, as a matter of course, neutral and objective. They define play in opposition to, on the basis of, or in relation to this so-called reality.¹²⁵

It is in this concept of a given "reality" that Ehrmann finds his difficulty. Whence comes our certitude about what should be regarded as "real" (of fundamental value), against which the "unreal" can be judged?

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp. 32-33.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 33.

As the criteria against which play is measured are external to it, its nature remains necessarily second in relation to the "reality" that serves as its yardstick and is therefore considered "primary" (cf. Huizinga: "Play always represents something". [...]). But it is legitimate to wonder by what right "reality" may be said to be first, existing prior to its components - play in this case (although it might just as well be some other object of the social sciences) - and serving as their standard. How could "reality" serve as a norm even before having been tested and evaluated in and through its manifestations? For - we need not insist on it - there is no "reality" (ordinary or extraordinary!) outside of or prior to the manifestations of the culture that expresses it.¹²⁶

To guard against precluding a legitimate estimate of the nature of play, Ehrmann says, we must see that "the problem of play is therefore not linked to the problem of "reality", itself linked to the problem of culture. It is one and the same problem".¹²⁷ Most especially the proper method of estimating play (as well as other objects of inquiry in the social sciences) must not proceed "as if play were a variation, a commentary on, an interpretation, or a reproduction of this reality. To pretend that play is mimesis would suppose the problem solved before it had even been formulated. [...]"¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 33.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid., pp. 33-34.

This "reality" which is considered innocent and behind whose objectivity some scholars sheepishly take shelter, must not be the starting-point of any analysis but must rather be its final outcome. A necessarily disappointing outcome, because it is impalpable and fleeting to the extent that it is dissolved in the manifestations analyzed, i.e. to the extent that it has no other content beyond these manifestations.¹²⁹

To lend weight to this critique, Ehrmann proceeds to the detailed treatment of the theories of Huizinga, Caillois and Benveniste. An examination of their respective definitions of play shows that: "For these authors, one escapes from play either toward the lower realm (reality, practical life) or toward the higher (the sacred, divine efficiency) - with [...] the moral implications borne by the terms high, low, sacred, reality".¹³⁰ Even for Huizinga, who maintains that the realms of play and the sacred are not incompatible, there is a separation into two categories. According to Ehrmann, by upholding the statement that play does not exclude seriousness, Huizinga is really implying that this opposition was basically, or originally, present somewhere".¹³¹ Ehrmann goes on to

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 34.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 36.

¹³¹Ibid., pp. 40-41.

explicitate his criticism:

Our criticism bears precisely on this point, namely on the possibility of grounding an anthropology of play in the dual opposition of play and reality, of play and the sacred, this in turn entailing a division between the serious (the real, the sacred) and the non-serious (play), with play then being defined ~~privately~~ as non-serious, non-real, non-sacred. The preceding analysis [of the theories of Huizinga, Caillois, and Benveniste] permits us to conclude that the operative value of such a classification is highly contestable, for it rests on a simplistic and ethnocentric metaphysics of consciousness.¹³²

To further delineate his position, Ehrmann turns to what he calls "the tripartite economic role of play" and offers a detailed critique of the usual attributes of play as (1) free expenditure (gratuitousness), (2) depreciation of the serious-real, and (3) complement-luxury vis-a-vis the serious-real.

As to the first of these attributes, play as free expenditure of energy and gratuitousness, Ehrmann observes that "if play is detached from ordinary life, it must also be detached from its contingencies".

But even if play is understood as a "pure" expenditure, and expenditure for nothing, it consumes something nevertheless, if only time and energy, but sometimes also considerable property.¹³³

¹³² Ibid., p. 41.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 42. (Emphasis his.)

The trouble with Huizinga's and Caillois' theories on this point, Ehrmann argues, is that they account for this expenditure within what they think is an entirely circumscribed world with its proper time and space.

But they fail to see that the interior occupied by play can only be defined by and with the exterior of the world, and inversely that play viewed as an exterior is only comprehensible by and with the interior of the world; that together they participate in the same economy. Play cannot therefore be isolated as an activity without consequences. Its integrity, its gratuitousness are only apparent, since the very freedom of the expenditure made in it is part of a circuit which reaches beyond the spatial and temporal limits of play.¹³⁴

Play therefore is not entirely auto-telic even though on a conscious level play is experienced as an expenditure for nothing. Ehrmann holds that "the 'pure' gift is in fact an exchange. One gives, one spends, in order to receive. The so-called liberty of the gift is in fact liberality; the generosity, the gratuitousness of play are ways of acquiring prestige and power".¹³⁵

The second economic characteristic of play against which Ehrmann contends is play considered as a "depreciation". "Thus play appears not only gratuitous but also without value, an activity whose worth has been withdrawn [...]"¹³⁶

¹³⁴Ibid., pp. 42-43. (Emphasis his.)

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 43. (Emphasis his.)

¹³⁶Ibid. (Emphasis his.)

Play, according to the depreciatory view, is "what remains when seriousness has been taken away".¹³⁷ But Ehrmann holds that in play "there is no subtraction of value (depreciation) but relocation, redistribution...in pursuit of immediate satisfaction of needs and desires".¹³⁸

The function of play, then, consists in giving in order to receive later on, or in a different form. It fulfills a dual function of expenditure and savings. "We recognize here that, far from corresponding to a supposedly gratuitous, disinterested aspect of culture, play in the fullest sense is coextensive with culture."¹³⁹

Ehrmann goes on to criticize play in the third "economic role" viewed as complement and as luxury. After granting that Huizinga's final position on play allows that play is indispensable to culture, that play has a certain utility with respect to culture, Ehrmann summarizes Huizinga's analytic procedure by saying it can be broken down into three stages: 1. Play is gratuitous in relation to the seriousness of life; 2. Play affects all (or nearly all) aspects of culture; 3. Play, because it is gratuitous, is useful to culture. But, in Ehrmann's view, whatever concessions Huizinga makes to the cultural utility

¹³⁷Ibid. (Emphasis his).

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 43-44 (Emphasis his).

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 44.

of play derive from its "complementary" contribution to the more basic seriousness of life. According to Ehrmann's interpretation of Huizinga, play

could therefore be cut off, subtracted, without taking anything essential away from culture, in a word without depriving culture of what it is. Even deprived of play, life would remain life. It would simply be serious, dull, ordinary. In such a perspective, it is clear that play represents the gratuitous, the beautiful, the noble, the artistic aspect of life, the Sunday of life. As a costume hides nudity and embellishes it, so play "adorns life"; it is life's luxury.¹⁴⁰

Play, according to Ehrmann, is not a luxury. It is one (coextensive) with culture. Culture and play are two sides of one coin. Play as the power of creative meaning over and above naked existence and as the power of symbol and ritual which make life human is always operative in man's world of "the real". Arguing against Caillois' statement (that "play is a luxury and implies leisure. The hungry man does not play."¹⁴¹), Ehrmann states:

if play as the capacity for symbolization and ritualization is consubstantial with culture, it cannot fail to be present whenever there is culture. We realize then that play cannot be defined as a luxury. Whether their stomachs are full or empty men play because they are men.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 45. (Emphasis his.)

¹⁴¹ R. Caillois, Encyclopédie des jeux et sports, p. XV.

¹⁴² Jacques Ehrmann, op. cit., p. 46.

In fact the hungry man, far from being incapable of play, may be all the more apt to play - in the sense of being urged by hunger to beguile hunger by imagination.¹⁴³

What is more, Ehrmann argues, the idea that play "implies leisure" (Caillois) falsifies the very data to be analysed:

it is to oppose the notion of work to that of leisure (an opposition which carries with it all the others we have already noted; utility-gratuitousness, seriousness-play, etc.). Such an opposition may be valid in our society (and even there, less and less), but it certainly cannot be generalized to include cultures other than our own.¹⁴⁴

Ehrmann finds that the heart of the problem of the traditional dichotomizing theories is based upon an intrinsic contradiction. Play is considered essential to culture. Yet as so-called civilization advances, the play element seems to fade away. The reason for this, it is argued, is that the way out of primitive man's confusion between the possible and the impossible is found in the rise of reason over feeling, logic over intuition, facts over dreams.

Play, the realm of myth, dream, feeling and intuition, is left behind. According to the standard authorities on play, it is argued that while somehow a

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

stimulus or catalyst to cultural development, play leads eventually to its own demise.

Ehrmann puts the contradiction this way:

It now appears evident that the relations of play and culture are for these authors based on two "acknowledgements": on the one hand that man becomes more and more civilized, on the other that civilization becomes less and less play-like in the course of history. Therefore, if play has a civilizing influence (that is their thesis!), it becomes impossible to reconcile the contradictions implicit in such a point of view. Indeed, if play is essential to culture, civilization should become, not less and less play-like, but constantly and consistently more so.¹⁴⁵

Thus there are three intertwined notions, any one of which is built upon an intimate and inseparable connection to the two others: these are play, reality, and culture.

In other words, in an anthropology of play, play cannot be defined by isolating it on the basis of its relationship to an a priori reality and culture. To define play is at the same time and in the same movement to define reality and to define culture. As each term is a way to apprehend the two others, they are each elaborated, constructed through and on the basis of the two others. None of the three existing prior to the others, they are all simultaneously the subject and the object of the question which they put to us and we to them.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 55. (Emphasis his).

This is an important statement Ehrmann has given us, perhaps the most explicit corroboration of our original intuition that play is "mystery" in Gabriel Marcel's sense. Or perhaps, one of Ehrmann's "Conclusions" to his essay is even more explicit on this question of the mystery of play. He says:

the player, like the speaker - that is, each of us - is at once the subject and the object of the play. The pronouns I, you, he are the different modes of the play structure. The subjectivity-objectivity dualism is abolished because it is inoperative.¹⁴⁷

And again:

At the methodological level, play and reality, being inseparable, can only be apprehended globally and in the same movement.¹⁴⁸

According to Ehrmann, the errors of Huizinga and Caillois, and others who think their way, situate themselves principally in the belief that an observer of play can somehow be at the centre of play and dominate it. Huizinga and Caillois forgot that they were part of the play, part of the game. "They forgot that players may be played: that, as an object in the game, the player can be its stakes (enjeu) and its toy (jouet)."¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 56.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 55.

To treat play properly, justly, concretely, means to be aware of the very game involved in communication. That is Ehrmann's position. And it is ours as well. We have only to recall what we said of "mystery" once more to see that play is mysterious - and that language about play is itself a form of play examining itself. Communication in a play-mode and style, then, is articulated willy-nilly, even in the attempt to be scientific and objective about it. This is an assertion we repeat from our first words on the subject. Play, like reality or culture, "is thus not capable of being objectified, nor subjectified. However, it is never neutral. Nor can it be neutralized."¹⁵⁰

Just as culture is, in the last analysis communication, so is play...and game. Thus, any theory of communication (or of information) implies a theory of play...and a game theory. And vice versa. Here arises the necessity of a dialogue with our colleagues in the sciences.¹⁵¹

Summary of Ehrmann's Position

Most theories of play regard the subject of their study from an (a priori) bias. That is, these theories pre-judge the realm of play from the vantage point of the so-called "real" world. Ehrmann contends that a fair

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 56. (Emphasis his).

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

study of play is thereby prevented since the perspective of the scholar already has predetermined the value judgments about play which must follow from such a priori prejudice.

Play does not involve a completely separate world with its own proper time and space with complete detachment from the "real" world. There is only one economy, one circuit, one world. The activities called play are not isolated. They have real consequences in the one real world. Play, therefore, is not just free expenditure. It is not simply gratuitousness. Play is also not a depreciation of value. It is not less than the so-called "plus values" of seriousness. Play is not a complement nor a luxury. It is coextensive with reality and culture. The real value of play is in its symbolic and ritualistic uses which are inextricably part of the human dimension, not separate from culture and reality. No statements about play can, therefore, completely be outside of being included in the dynamic of play itself. Play is never mutual, never completely subjective nor objective. Play is, therefore, the ever-present undercurrent of all human existence. Existence is playful.

D. Conclusions

We have seen that there is a secondary sphere of the reality-play problem.

We now can ask the question: Why call it "secondary"? That is, how does it relate to the primary level of appreciation of play?

The secondary sphere of play is a realm in which reality and culture are coextensive with play. Here we are talking about human-dimensional reality and human culture: i.e. the totality of man's being-in-the-world. It seems to us, however, that one can distinguish a human reality from a cosmo-ontological one.

One way of putting the distinction between the primary (ontological) meaning of play and the secondary (cultural) meaning of play is to distinguish what reality-in-itself is and what human beings do with it in order to make cultural forms (human realities). Ehrmann and the other theorists in this chapter talk of human realities and human culture, and, insofar as they do, we have no quarrel with their view. Man's culture, man's reality, is inextricably ludic.

Yet the question of the really real-in-itself (apart from man's apprehension, and imaginative manipulation

of it) is not being scrutinized by Ehrmann and the others in this Chapter.

To make this distinction between primary and secondary appreciations of play, let us use Ehrmann's example of the starving man beguiling his hunger by the play of imagination.

In our view, the man's hunger is a fact, irrespective of his awareness of it as good or bad, real or unreal. The very fact of his hunger eventually breaks in on his cultural world of meanings and compels him to relate to it as fact. While it is true that the man might immediately try to beguile his hunger by imagination (by play) it is also true that the hunger is still there nagging at him for response. The hunger itself is real; what he does with it is play. In this sense play and the real are on two different levels of meaning. Or, in other words, the ludus of the primary cosmo-ontological (also biological) sphere and the ludus of "beguiling" by man are not the same.

In practice the man's cultural world of meanings is ludically produced and he "knows" no reality as meaningful except under this ludic mantle. Still, the world is there, his hunger is there.

Axelos would argue that the world and even the man's hunger are objectively ludic or part of a general

activity of the Game of Games. Man tends to play with this ludic reality with his own human ways of being. One level of play reacts to another.

Thus there is a difference between the play-of-reality itself (primary sphere) and man's apprehension of it (transforming it automatically into the real-to-be-beguiled by another sphere of play - the human sphere) which is a distinct sphere of play-reality.

Thus, Ehrmann, for example, is dealing with another, narrower idea of reality than that which is itself cosmologically-ontologically there. Consequently, his notion of play is coextensively dealing with the same other, narrower idea of reality.

It is, however, our hypothesis that this secondary level of play appreciation articulated by Ehrmann is enveloped by the primary one expositied by Axelos. They are dealing with the notion "play" on two different levels or in two distinct spheres, the primary embracing the secondary, the secondary reacting to the primary.

In the scheme of these two spheres of appreciating play Ehrmann's secondary appreciation is swallowed up into the greater Game of Axelos' - for all human activities and realities are but particular aspects of the greater Game. The secondary level of play is a sort of twist in the Game of all things where the game is raised to a

higher though narrower extension and involuted upon itself in the creativity of man's cultural achievements.

In brief, we have seen that "reality" may be considered playful in at least two ways, the way articulated by Axelos, for example, and the way articulated by Ehrmann. It is in this latter case that "reality" becomes identified with human culture. In both cases there is the coextensive identity of the play-real.

There is a usefulness for such terms as non-play and non-real, then, only when speaking of one sphere of the coextensives relative to the other.

It is important at this juncture to make special note of the fact that the regional-culture sphere is not just related to the cosmo-ontological one. It is most clearly also linked to the free imaginative concoction of man who is himself somewhat capable of transcending all past limitations of the cosmo-ontological sphere, as we will go on to develop in our next Chapter. The point we wish to make here and which will become clearer in the next Chapter is that the regional culture sphere is found mid-way between the cosmo-ontological sphere (as a finite realm [a ludus] of the Infinite Game of Games) and the free confabulating imagination of man which stands somewhat free of the limits of established cultural norms. Culture is thus also a ludus of man's playfulness or paidia in a third sphere.

It is because it is so close to the cosmo-ontological sphere as the unchanging "real" that the regional-cultural sphere appears as unchangingly "real", though its kind of "reality" is usually not recognized as distinct from the cosmo-ontological sphere, having its own kind of reality as a "region" of the primary sphere.¹⁵² At the same time, as an established human system of the real, the regional-culture sphere owes its origins to the imagination of man which is logically and temporally prior to socially accepted norms of the real (again as we shall see in the next Chapter). The secondary regional-culture sphere of play-reality thus is an expression both of the cosmo-ontological sphere as well as the third, free and imaginative sphere of man.

It can be seen from the foregoing that there is a need to be careful about the term "play" with regard to "reality". One level or sphere of play-reality must not be confused with another.

It is easy to see that whether or not one accepts the view of either sphere of appreciation of play presented in our first two Chapters, the spheres of appreciation themselves are complementary. It is possible to hold to Axelos' view and to Ehrmann's view too, if

¹⁵² This "union" of the primary cosmo-ontologically real with cultural reality is perhaps most clearly seen in the cosmic religions of archaic man and in the naivete of ethnocentrism.

the distinction of spheres is introduced.

It is apparent too that Ehrmann's view, as representative of the secondary level of appreciation, is fundamentally an attempt to analyse what he himself admits to be a mystery. Language is a form of cultural play. Play is intrinsically coextensive with culture. Language is play playing with itself.

At this juncture of our exposition of the secondary sphere of play-reality we feel it appropriate to offer a brief look at the term paidia (play) which we will use even more extensively later on. Paidia is intimately related to "culture" (paideia) and for that reason the term arises naturally in this Chapter. An investigation of the relationship of paidia to paideia helps bolster our appreciation of the secondary regional-cultural sphere of play-reality.

"Culture is paideia, something you absorb as a child", says Sebastian de Grazia.¹⁵³ Now paideia is education or upbringing. It is something you attain in the course of playing as a child. Hence paidia (play) and paideia (upbringing or schooling) are not just semantically similar; they are existentially associated.

¹⁵³Sebastian de Grazia, Of Time, Work and Leisure, Garden City, New York, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1964, p. 355.

It is for this reason, the convergence of play and education, that Greek and Roman culture saw "school" as something for youth, something to be enjoyable for its own sake, yet, peculiarly, something only for the cultured and leisured class. (The Latin ludus, likewise, means both play and school).

"Culture" as the anthropologists use it, however, is something wider and deeper than paideia in the sense of leisure-class upbringing. Culture in the wider sense, means virtually everything of a given society which shapes the outlook, the style, the goals and aspirations, the value-system of its participants. In a sense, of course, all of this is upbringing or education but in a broader and more all-inclusive sense than paideia meant. It is of interest to us to note that in this broader all-inclusive sense of a society's world-view and value system the same convergence of anthropological culture and play can be made. Paideia, when it is transposed to the anthropologist's notion of "culture" is coextensive with paidia.

As we did with Chapter One, we conclude here that there is a "common denominator" amounting to a tradition which makes the play-reality equation in the secondary sphere. We contend also that no theory of play or reality can omit or reject this "tradition" without battling it with reasons. As part of our hypothesis, we simply accept it as true - and we move on to see the third sphere of the equation.

CHAPTER III

THE TERTIARY (SUB-REGIONAL, CONSCIOUS) SPHERE OF PLAY

Despite the identification made between "play" and "reality" in the two ways we have seen in Chapters I and II, people still have a meaning for "play" as separate from the "real". They recognize particular phenomenological enclaves which they call "play" and which seem to have their own separate and self-contained meanings over and against their surroundings. "Play", in this view, is an enclosed sphere of meanings experienced as some-what removed from what is normally called "the real". A game of soccer, for example, while part of human culture in a wide sense, is a realm created by man's imagination and will, with its own created structure and rules superimposed upon "reality". Even a phenomenon like time (in the primary sphere of play-reality, as we would call it) can be re-shaped according to created modes of operation. It can be ordered to stop (in a "time-out", for example) and begin again, according to created human convention.

Most of the writing and discussion about the meaning of play as it relates to reality falls into this category which is neither of the cosmological-ontological kind nor of the human coextensive (culture-play-reality)

kind. This third appreciation of play has to do with the formal, the conscious and unconscious, the explicit and implicit but nonetheless structured and "nameable" modes of play. This phenomenologically analysable appreciation of play we call the tertiary (sub-regional or 'conscious) level of appreciation. It sees play as something other than "the real", a creation of a realm which, however real in and of itself, is constantly to be judged from what is presupposed to be more basic. This more basic realm is customarily spoken of as without play elements or characteristics and it supplies the setting as well as the material out of which, with the aid of imagination, the "play realm" is created. In this view, play is different and separate from the real insofar as the real operates as launching point and landing point for any explorations into the special time and space created by playing man and animal in imagination.

Thus any episode of tertiary play is composed within the more fundamentally cosmo-ontologically real and exists dependent upon it. (A tertiary-sphered game occupies real space and consumes real time in this sense, as well as occupying the special delineations of "space" and "time" proper to the tertiary-sphered game itself.) A game of soccer, for example, may be located in a playing field

but the field is basically there before it becomes also a separated realm with the label "playing field". So too, the time of the game can be halted at any moment and continued again when the generally agreed upon rules have been met. But in the mean-time, time of the real world goes on without any reference to the playing rules of the game.

Thus, in psychology, sociology, ethnology, cultural anthropology, and so on, the disciplinary disposition is ab initio to see play phenomena over and against what is usually called the realm of factual existence ("the real").

While play may be deemed important and even necessary for animal and human survival,¹⁵⁴ it is nonetheless the special, separated world whose structure can be, and indeed is, shattered often by the more basic givenness of "the real". Culture itself, some theorists say, derives from play impulses so that play is primary, culture is secondary. Nevertheless, play is an additive, a quality superimposed upon the order of "the real", no matter how much it is part of our cultural world as a constant interest and no matter how important it may be said to be.

¹⁵⁴ See, for example, the list of causes and purposes of play from a purely psychological point of view, pp. IX-XII of our Introduction.

Whenever play activity concretizes itself in observable forms, (e.g., theatrical productions, sports and gambling) it becomes itself a reality subject to phenomenological analysis. In this sense play-forms are real and much of our life is undeniably real and playful at the same moment in this tertiary-sphered sense - and in the sense that the tertiary sphere tends to "become" part of the cultural (regional) sphere.

We may distinguish the play of the tertiary sphere from the play of the secondary sphere insofar as it always remains possible for the player in the tertiary sphere to "stop" playing the particular games (ludi) of that sphere: whereas, with regard to the secondary sphere the player cannot escape the all-inclusiveness of play and must be part of "the game" of culture. In regard to the primary sphere of play-reality, the player is not free to not-play - for even this attempt would be but reverse play.

It is apparent, too, that play phenomena, qua play, exist in a distinct mode distinguishable from the way ordinary reality exists. But qua play they are real in a precisely playful way - and that is the point. They are real and playful at the same time; for "play" and "reality" of any play episode or phenomenon (within itself, as itself) are coextensive. A game of soccer exists

playfully. It is playfully in existence. It does not exist (is not real) precisely as soccer, except in the play mode, i.e. playfully. So too for other phenomena of play in this sphere in themselves. As most often happens, however, an analysis of play removes it from the realm it has in itself (in the tertiary sphere, where play and the real are one) and translates it into terms applicable to another dimension of the play-reality question, that is, into terms of the other spheres of the play-reality equation as if they themselves are not playful but, rather, "feal".

For this reason, our impression is that much of the confusion about play's meaning situates itself under this heading of the tertiary sphere of appreciation of play. Many scholars write of play as if it is of the secondary sphere but end up expressing their intuition in terms of the tertiary sphere. It is for this reason, for example, that we would relegate Huizinga's theory to the tertiary appreciation even though we feel he was basically tuning in to the secondary level of appreciation. For this reason we will examine his thought in this Chapter as an example of the need to crystallize the parameters of the meaning of the word "play".

We want to look at several typical and important analyses of this third level of appreciating play in order to get a more or less general feeling about it. We avoid the particularly psychological schools of thought as they seem to be absorbed on the whole by the general philosophical discussion. Besides, a special psychological treatment of play would require an entirely different purpose than we now have. We will examine the theories of José Ortega y Gasset, Geza Roheim, Johan Huizinga and Roger Caillois.

A. José Ortega y Gasset

José Ortega y Gasset, in an essay entitled "The Sporting Origin of the State", writes: "Utility creates nothing, invents nothing; it simply approves and registers what has been created independently. / Life's original, primary activity is always spontaneous, playful, superfluous in its intent. It is free expansion of a pre-existing energy. / What is most necessary is the superfluous."¹⁵⁵

He argues that civilization itself is something added upon naked, vacant existence, that culture is an added luxury, however necessary, superimposed upon reality by man's playful character.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted by Jacques Ehrmann, "Homo Ludens revisited", op. cit., p. 48, n.8.

Elsewhere he says

This, which is reality, is composed of myself and of things. The things are not I nor am I the things. We are mutually transcendent, but we are both immanent in that absolute coexistence which is life.^{155a}

In order to make a world, or to decide his own being which includes the being of things, man must adopt a play attitude since "the problem of being" is the problem of "his circumstances". Together, man's being and his surroundings "play the problem of being back and forth - the one tosses it back to the other".^{155b}

Commenting on Plato's famous passage from book VII of The Laws Ortega y Gasset advises all who approach the study of philosophy to follow Plato's advice and adopt a tone of playing a game - the game of philosophy (the pursuit of a theory of the real). Plato says that the best in life, its most serious endeavours, must be made into beautiful games. As Playo says, "Play, games, jests, culture, these we affirm are the most serious things in life for mankind".^{155c}

^{155a} José Ortega y Gasset, Some Lessons in Metaphysics trans. Mildred Adams, New York, W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1969, p. 158.

^{155b} Ibid., pp. 116-117.

^{155c} José Ortega y Gasset, What is Philosophy? trans. Mildred Adams, New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 1960, p. 118.

Well then, in order to become cultivated and mature, man must provide himself with an adequate emotional tone which will be to his life what the keel laid by the carpenter is to the ship [...]. The keel of culture, the state of mind which carries and balances it, is that serious jest, that formal jibe which resembles energetic play, resembles sport - understanding sport to mean an effort which, in contradistinction to work is not imposed upon us, not utilitarian nor paid for, but a spontaneous luxury effort that we make for the pleasure of making it, an effort that takes pleasure in itself [...].^{155d}

Plato, he tells us, played with the word paidia (play) and paideia (culture) so that

the copyist did not know when to write "paideia" - culture - or when to write "paidia" - a joke. So one is invited to a hard game, for man is in the game where it is most rigorous.^{155e}

At this point we can see Ortega y Gasset's distinction of reality and play. He says:

Culture springs forth and lives, flowers and bears fruit, in a spiritual tone that is instinct with good humour - a kind of joviality. Seriousness will come later, when we have acquired culture or reached that form of it to which we are now attending - namely, philosophy.^{155f}

^{155d} Ibid., p. 119.

^{155e} Ibid., p. 120.

^{155f} Ibid., pp. 119-120.

CHAPTER III

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Here we are able to recognize two threads in the philosophy of Ortega y Gasset. One recognized that being is a game of man and his surroundings, and the other is the game of culture. Both are distinct from basic reality in the cosmo-ontological sense. Both stem from man's response to his surroundings.

His notion of "culture" is the narrower one which we saw at the end of the last Chapter and which, therefore, is not that of the play-reality-culture coextensive which we have called the secondary sphere.

However important and inescapably essential to man's ~~being-in-the-world~~, this appreciation of culture can always be distinguished from "reality" in man's life. Cultural "play", therefore, is its own kind of "reality" which is not to be confused with ordinary "reality". This is to say that play-reality is a distinct sphere from the "reality" of "facts".

According to him, it is the sportive, agonistic quality of life which is the source of cultural achievements, like institutions of government.¹⁵⁶

This notion of the creative aspect of man arising out of a superfluous expansiveness in his being is "play". According to this view, the cultural dimension of man's life is inseparably interwoven with play forms. Whatever is cultural is so insofar as it has its origin in the playful - i.e., in the meaning-dimension of human existence. Culture then is "play" concretizing itself in social institutions and receiving a practical aesthetic

¹⁵⁶ José Ortega y Gasset, "El origen deportivo del estado", El Espitador, Madrid, 1930, vii, pp. 103-143.

use. "Play-reality" acts as the human force adding to naked "ordinary reality" the necessary meaningfulness and purpose it might otherwise not have.

B. Géza Roheim

Géza Roheim offers a theory that culture is the result of leisure activity, not the result of concerted effort for practical ends.¹⁵⁷ Thus, for example, flying was originally the playful whim of adventurous people who scarcely dreamed of its potential significance in the traffic of people on a commercial basis or its practical use in war. The primary motivation of their efforts was simply the yearning for the freedom of the skies, and the power and mastery of new experience.

Similarly, such practical cultural breakthroughs for mankind as agriculture and cattle raising, Roheim informs us, were not originally the result of purely utilitarian purposes. They developed, rather, from idle hobbies, playful past-times, or religious rites. Thus, animals were domesticated either for the fun of it - or because they were totemistic representations for the tribe. Only later was the domestication of animals developed for any economic end.

¹⁵⁷ Géza Roheim, "The Origin and Function of Culture", Nervous and Mental Disease Monographs, no. 69, 1943.

According to Roheim, it is play which is the origin of culture insofar as culture derives not from a motive to find practical usefulness or mastery of environment but from the freer self-motivation of activity for its own sake or for the formation of meaning. Thus culture is the product of leisure; that is, culture becomes possible when man is liberated from the necessities for survival. 157a

Roheim builds his philosophical theory out of the findings of ethnologists who are specialists in various aspects of cultural activities. From these observations he makes some general conclusions about human psychomental behaviour. Comparing man to lower animals he claims that when evolution produced man it entered a stage of paradox, a breakthrough to a sort of evolved retardation, an extended time of immaturity in the new species.

157a Franz Alexander, "A Contribution to the Theory of Play", The Psychoanalytical Quarterly, XXVII, April, 1958, pp. 187-188.

Roheim inserts his theory of the playful origin of culture into the phenomenon of man's "prolonged infancy". He points out the fact that man alone, among the mammals, has such a slow growth rate toward maturity that he never does reach a stage where he leaves behind himself the traits of childhood. Thus, the key to human nature, according to Roheim, is this ludic quality of his unfinished evolution. That is the reason why human culture in every age is inextricably ludic.¹⁵⁸

Thus, for Roheim, culture is a product of man's basic ludic character which tends to play with the "realities" of the world. Thus "ordinary reality" is primary, play-reality ("play") is secondary and culture derives from this secondary position ascribed to play.

C. Johan Huizinga

A special study devoted to play and its connection with culture was written by Johan Huizinga. His work is Homo Ludens¹⁵⁹ which we have mentioned earlier. The ideas presented in this work originated as a by-product of his studies of cultural history in the Middle Ages where

¹⁵⁸ (Géza Roheim, Psychoanalyse et anthropologie, 1950 (Psychoanalysis and Anthropology), trans., M. Moscovici, Paris, 1961.

¹⁵⁹ Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture, op. cit.

Huizinga thought that play, as a sort of cultural catalyst and sustainer, in forms of outmoded codes of chivalry, heraldry, and the like, had been originally very serious, sacred initiation rites.¹⁶⁰ His thesis is that play and culture are two sides of one coin, that there cannot be one without the other. In fact, Huizinga says, play is more fundamental than culture, the former serving as the seedbed of the latter. Play also is more basic than ordinary seriousness. Huizinga writes:

The view we take in the following pages is that culture arises in the form of play, that it is played from the very beginning... It is through this playing that society expresses its interpretation of life and the world. By this we do not mean that play turns into culture, rather that in its earliest phases culture has the play-character, that it proceeds in the shape and mood of play. In the twin union of play and culture, play is primary.¹⁶¹

[...] Here we have to do with an absolutely primary category of life.¹⁶²

So all-pervasive is play, according to Huizinga, that even apparent non-play activities - law, war, education, poetry, myth-making, philosophy, and art - originate in play. Viewing culture sub specie ludi enables Huizinga

¹⁶⁰ Johan Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages, Garden City, Doubleday and Company, 1954.

¹⁶¹ Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens, op. cit., p. 46. Confer also p. 4, for the same point. Huizinga preferred the words of his title "in culture" to read "of culture".

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 3.

to assert that the age-old dichotomy of "seriousness/non-serious" can be transcended. For play is more fundamental than this agonistic confrontation. Taken together, "serious/non-serious" are viewed as agon, a form of contest-play. All anthropological aspects of life cannot be adequately appreciated apart from the primal category of "play".

Play is a totality which is so basic it cannot be defined.¹⁶³ Huizinga holds that we must content ourselves with describing its main characteristics.¹⁶⁴

According to Huizinga, play usually assumes disguises of its own and becomes primarily absorbed into religion, the remainder going into philosophy, the arts, folklore and the various forms of social life.¹⁶⁵ Though play may assume shape in warfare which throws the individual and the masses into the "intoxication of an immense game",¹⁶⁶ it may also appear in movements of true civilization, for "real civilization cannot exist in the absence of a certain play-element".¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 47

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 211.

So far, in our presentation of Huizinga's thought, it might seem that his theory of play belongs to the secondary level we described in the last Chapter where play, culture, and reality are coextensive aspects of a whole. Yet (and this is the crux of the need for distinction made in this present dissertation) there is always the danger that an insight or intuition of something may end up being expressed as really something not quite what one had in mind. In the present case of Huizinga, it is our contention that failing to see the distinction between a secondary and tertiary appreciation of play he ended up expressing his intuition about play in third sphered phenomenological description (the sub-regional sphere) rather than in what he seems to have felt was in the secondary sphere (regional sphere).

That the secondary sphere of appreciation of play in Huizinga's case ended up being expressed in tertiary labels is shown in the following:

Huizinga's classic appraisal of play, Homo Ludens, offers this list of the characteristics of play:

Summing up the formal characteristics of play we might call it a free activity standing quite consciously outside "ordinary" life as being "not serious", but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds with its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed

rules and in orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their difference from the common world by disguise or other means.¹⁶⁸

[...] play is a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and space, 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".¹⁶⁹

We might summarize these characteristics of play by saying that play activities may be recognized as:

1. Free: Play may not be imposed ab extra. It can be initiated or curtailed by the player himself. It is unrelated to necessity or duty, per se.¹⁷⁰ "The need for it is only urgent to the extent that the enjoyment of it makes it a need."¹⁷¹
2. Separate from the ordinary: Play is "other" than what is required for day-to-day existence, according to "clock time" and the rules of "reality"; while it lasts, though separate, it is almost as "serious" as the ordinary.
3. Absorbing: In "tension" and "joy", play engrosses the subject. While being different from ordinary concerns, it involves "uncertainty, chanciness; a striving to decide

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 28.

and so end it [tension]". The "joy" is basic, all-enveloping ~~satisfaction~~ by being participant in the fact of play itself. Like play itself "the fun of playing, resists all analysis, all logical interpretation".¹⁷²

4. Useless: Play is non-pragmatic, useless with regard to the "ordinary" world: It produces no material, useful consequences. It is thus an end in itself, not a means to something else.

5. Self-Contained: In an "absolute" and "strict" world of its own, play is balanced, self-consistent, ordered.¹⁷³ Play "creates order, is order... Play demands order absolute and supreme".¹⁷⁴

6. Creative of new identity: Play has a tendency to produce a social by-product, based upon a shared participation in it, viz. the making of a social unity with its proper "play-ful" identity.

We may not be wrong in saying that in Huizinga there is a seventh characteristic:

7. Labile: The precarious, tenuous, insubstantiality of play makes it subject to sudden "spontaneous" outbursts and equally sudden collapse. In this sense it is always open to "discipline" by the "ordinary" world of reality. It is fragile, vulnerable.

¹⁷² Ibid., pp. 16-21, 1-3.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 10.

These characteristics of play, Huizinga says, may manifest themselves in any play-episode as either of two types, according to function: either "as a contest for something or a representation of something".¹⁷⁵ But, he says, "These two functions can unite in such a way that the game "represents" a contest, or else becomes a contest for the best representation of something".¹⁷⁶ The contest factor in play is created and sustained by the player and may be simply for the joy of striving-or-victory-itself.¹⁷⁷ The representation factor in play is the source of mime, ritual and story-telling. It is made possible by the faculty of imagination which has the capacity to straddle the line between total abandonment to illusion and total absorption in reality. Imagination encloses these extremes in the double-perspective of "make-believe" even and against a conscious awareness of the fact that it is "make-believe", i.e. removed somewhat from the "real" world.¹⁷⁸

Evaluation of Huizinga

Despite Huizinga's attempt to allow play and seriousness to be united; he ends up seeing play as a separate and distinct realm from ordinary seriousness.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 50.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 14.

The problem of play versus seriousness, as Ehrmann has pointed out, is not resolved by Huizinga. Culture seems to be a natural outgrowth of play but play itself is something added onto a more basically serious "reality". It seems that Huizinga's intuition that culture is serious play did not break away from the basic dilemma which customarily opposes reality as basically serious and play as a lesser form of seriousness to be judged by the more basic reality of the world. Huizinga failed to see that there are many levels or spheres of play which, if recognized, allow us to transcend the dilemma. In practice Huizinga found himself unable to express his intuition and ended up with expressing what we have called the secondary sphere of appreciation of play in terms of the third.

Moreover, had Huizinga been prepared to make the daring proposition that reality itself was ludic (the primary cosmo-ontological appreciation of play), then the basic "imitative" and "representative" characteristics of play which he recognized would be such because they were, in fact, actually imitating and representing a deeper level of themselves.

Huizinga had considered play as essential to cultural development yet found that as culture matured it

tended to put aside its playful foundations. This seems a contradiction. For surely, if play is essential to cultural forces, then the more cultural forces blossom the more play force should also be present. Perhaps the way out of the predicament in Huizinga's thought would have been an introduction to the distinctions made in this essay. In our terms the tertiary forms of play tend to become part of the accepted pattern of "the real" so that culture and the real become coextensive. Thus it appears that play elements seem to die out as culture develops but this is because they go on existing at another level called the "real", the tertiary level becoming the secondary. At all levels they are still play.

The list of Huizinga's characteristics of play (free, separate, absorbing, useless, self-contained, creative of new identity, labile) would seem, then, to need new alignment according to our distinctions, and according as a given phenomenon or episode tends to become customary or taken-for-granted and so assumed by a culture as "natural" (or "real"). Insofar as such a play phenomenon or episode is subsumed into the ordinary pattern of life it becomes more and more identified with the culturally real (the secondary level of play). Thus we might suggest the following reassessment of Huizinga's characteristics of play:

What is deemed as "absorbing", and "self-contained", "creative of new identity" in Huizinga's list we would call characteristics proper to both the secondary and tertiary levels of play. For on the secondary level what is called the real is surely absorbing just as much as a named and "separate" play-event, only in the case of the secondary level it is so much a part of a culture's pattern of values that no advertance to it as "special" need be made. Likewise reality on the cultural level is "self-contained", for in practice little heed is given to bare factual existents as they are assumed to be under certain definite rules and "laws" of Nature, and the distinction between such "facts" and the valuations culture gives them is also seldom made. And certainly play on the secondary level of our appreciation gets so identified with the real that whatever "identity" is known by individuals is known only by the coextensive reality-play-culture totality. When Huizinga calls this attainment of identity "new" he is already talking of what is new vis-a-vis what is already assumed as ordinary serious reality. In our terms, the "newness" is meaningful only in the tertiary realm of appreciation of play and may be replaced by the word "different" which changes the connotation from time-awareness ("new") to something closer to what he called the "separate" ("different") characteristic of play.

On the tertiary level Huizinga's other characteristics seem less ambiguous. Thus in the experience of a given play episode recognizable as "different" (i.e. as we would say, in the tertiary sphere of appreciation) the playing activity seems relatively "free" from the "reality" of the "givens" of everyday; it also appears to be "useless" (indeed it may be relatively so - but never absolutely) but somehow fulfilling and satisfactory in itself (a quality which tends to get it moved down to the secondary level or sphere); similarly such play-activity is generally "labile", i.e. weak compared to the play forms and patterns in the cultural sphere and so is subject to modification and curtailment by the secondary sphere.

All in all, Huizinga's theory seems to benefit by the basic distinctions of this paper and the contradictions and ambiguities seem to evaporate with their application.

D. Roger Caillois

Roger Caillois challenges Huizinga's understanding of play as the fundamental category of culture.¹⁷⁹ To begin with, we may note that Caillois considers Huizinga's

¹⁷⁹ Roger Caillois, Les Jeux et les hommes, 1958; English translation: Man, Play and Games, trans. Meyer Barash, New York, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961.

appreciation of play to be too broad in its inclusion of secrecy and mystery. Play tends to evaporate secrecy and mystery, not create it, Caillois says.¹⁸⁰ Where Huizinga included the sacred under "play", Caillois thinks that the sacred is separate from play. What is more, Caillois finds Huizinga's theory is also too narrow in restricting play to forms of contest or competition, without material gain. On the contrary, Caillois asserts, play can be "extremely lucrative or ruinous." Three other major forms of play (i.e. in addition to the competitive-form which Caillois calls "agon") are ignored by Huizinga, Caillois contends. These three other forms of play are: alea (choice) or gambling in all its forms; mimicry (simulation) or imitation in many forms of illusion; and ilinx (vertigo) or all activities productive of varying degrees of ecstasy.

These four classes of play run along a continuum whose extreme poles are paidia (free, spontaneous, unstructured play) and ludus (stylized, formalized, structured play). The four classes thus can range from highly improvised and random delightful activity (paidia) to "absolute" rules and regulations as in highly organized games (ludi) with their own quality of delight. The scheme Caillois provides us looks like this:

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 4.

Classification of Games

	AGON (Competition)	ALEA (Chance)	MIMICRY (Simulation)	ILINX (Vertigo)
PAIDIA				
Tumult	Racing	Counting-out rhymes	Child's imitation	Children "whirling"
Agitation	Wrestling		Games of illusion	Horseback riding
Immoderate laughter	Athletics (not regulated)	Heads or tails	Tag	Swinging
		Betting	Arms	Waltzing
Kite flying		Roulette	Masks	
Solitaire	Boxing		Disguises	Valador
Patience	Fencing	Simple, complex and continuous lotteries		Travelling carnivals
Crossword puzzles	Chess		Theatre	Skiing
	Checkers		Spectacles in general	Mountain climbing
	Billiards			Tightrope walking
	Football			
	Contests			
	Sports in general			
LUDUS				

N.B. In each vertical column, games are classified in such an order that the paidia element is constantly decreasing while the ludus element is ever increasing.¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 36.

The agon category of play has "superiority" as its goal. It is for this reason that competitive games assume training, discipline and a desire to win.¹⁸² In alea, on the other hand, "winning is the result of fate rather than triumphing over an adversary."¹⁸³ However, both agon and alea follow the same general law, "the creation for the players of conditions of pure equality denied them in real life."¹⁸⁴

Mimicry is the category of illusory self-identification as someone else and has a curious relationship to agon in fact that spectators may identify with the competitors.¹⁸⁵

The category of ilinx serves to group all activities of surrender to "a kind of voluptuous panic...to a kind of spasm, seizure, or shock which destroys reality with sovereign brusqueness."¹⁸⁶ Ilinx partakes of a primitive drive, normally suppressed, for chaos, disorder, and destruction.¹⁸⁷

In human development, Caillois contends, the beginning of life is characterized by the pole of paidia, the infant being the supreme example of uncontrolled, happy

¹⁸²Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁸³Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., p. 24.

exuberance which seeks change and disturbance for its own sake.¹⁸⁸ Generally ludus begins to assert its own pleasure - in solving problems by discipline, rules - and soon the opposing ways of the four categories emerge.¹⁸⁹ Ludus (ordered play of games) is strongly supported by agon also. In fact, it is compatible with alea and mimicry in some cases, but not at all with ilinx since ilinx's very essence is its disordered, undisciplined dizziness. Ilinx seems then to be associated with paidia.

Cailllois goes on to describe the six theoretical combinations of those categories, including two "forbidden relationships" (agon-ilinx; alea-mimicry), two "contingent relationships" (agon-mimicry; alea-ilinx) and two "fundamental relationships" (agon-alea; mimicry-ilinx). In any particular play episode one of the categories always dominates.¹⁹⁰

Through this analysis and schematization of play, Cailllois hopes to provide more than a sociology of games. He says: "I have not only undertaken a sociology of games, I have the idea of laying the foundations for a sociology derived from games." For him "the spirit of play is

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 28-29.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 72-79.

essential to culture, but games and toys are historically the residues of culture."¹⁹¹ They tend to be more and more social as they move from paidia to ludus on the scale. But without balance or harmony, all forms of games make for social instability.¹⁹² Moreover, each game activity tends to find an echo in the non-play world of ordinary activity. "The question is to determine the role played by competition, chance, mimicry, or hysteria in various societies."¹⁹³ This social function of games is charted by Caillois this way:

The Social Function of Games¹⁹⁴

	Cultural Forms Found at the Margins of the Social Order	Institutional Forms Integrated into Social Life	Corruption
AGON (competition)	Sports	Economic competition Competitive examinations	Violence Will to power Trickery
ALEA (chance)	Lotteries Casinos Hippodromes Para-mutuals	Speculation in the stock market	Superstition Astrology, etc.
MIMICRY (simulation)	Carnival, Theatre, Cinema Hero-worship	Uniforms Ceremonial etiquette	Alienation Split personality
ILINX (vertigo)	Mountain climbing, Skiing, Tightrope walking, Speed	Professions requiring control of vertigo (air-line pilot, etc.)	Alcoholism and drugs

¹⁹¹Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁹²Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁹³Ibid., p. 86.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., p. 54.

Caillois' summary of the characteristics of play specifies that play is:

1. Free: in which playing is not obligatory; if it were, it would at once lose its attractive and joyous quality as diversion;
2. Separate: circumscribed within limits of space and time, defined and fixed in advance;
3. Uncertain: the course of which cannot be determined, nor the result attained beforehand, and some latitude for innovations being left to the player's initiative;
4. Unproductive: creating neither goods, nor wealth, nor new elements of any kind; and, except for the exchange of property among the players, ending in a situation identical to that prevailing at the beginning of the game;
5. Governed by rules: under conventions that suspend ordinary laws, and for the moment establish new legislation, which alone counts;
6. Make-believe: accompanied by a special awareness of a second reality or of a free unreality, as against real life.¹⁹⁵

Caillois believes that the evolution of civilization required the gradual displacement of a primitive, Dionysian emphasis upon "simulation" and "vertigo" to maintain social cohesion. Gradually as they gave way to "competition" and "chance", an Apollonian emphasis, civilization came about.¹⁹⁶

In regard to the process toward civilization, Caillois is clear in showing his humanistic prejudice for the Apollonian (game) end of the play continuum. It is

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 9-10.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 86-87.

ludus (ordered, structured, play as "games") which civilizes the chaotic, inferior, and inhibiting paidia. In concluding a special chapter on the "corruption" of play he writes:

It is easily understood that they (the instincts of competition, pursuit of luck, mimicry, vertigo) can only be satisfied positively and creatively under ideal and circumscribed conditions, those which are provided in each case by the rules of the game. Left to themselves, frantic and ruinous like all instincts, these elementary impulses can only lead to disastrous consequences. Games discipline the instincts and institutionalize them. During the time that games grant them a formal and limited satisfaction, they are being trained and fertilized; the soul being vaccinated against their virulence. At the same time the games are preparing the instincts to make a useful contribution to the enrichment and the stabilization of cultural patterns.¹⁹⁷

Evaluation of Caillois

It appears that Caillois' view of play (in a wide and loose sense, paidia) tends to become ludus in the form of civilizing games which are pointed at an eventual "useful" return to reality.

There are evidences of Caillois' bent for the notion of phylogenetic inheritance of play forms in our unconscious. This is another way of saying that Caillois

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 121 in a translation by Cathy and Phil Lewis (emphasis by Jacques Ehrmann) in Jacques Ehrmann, op. cit., p. 38.

feels that the forms of play of any given generation tend to be passed on in sublimated institutes of society. The unconscious tends to legitimize the forms of play by giving them expression in cultural forms, socially acceptable.

While Caillois has offered a useful phenomenology of play, he has put himself into a position subject to Jacques Ehrmann's critique of the "play-seriousness" dichotomy.¹⁹⁸

Applying our distinctions of spheres of play to Caillois' work, we can see that his observation that the civilizing forms (games) he calls ludus would appear on the level of our tertiary appreciation of play (after rules have been applied to the instinctual forces of paidia) and become qualified, as it were, for integration into civilized culture (our secondary sphere).

Caillois sees play as diversion from the real (his first quality of play), hence liberated from the quality of necessity which blankets the real. In our terms this element of freedom has to do with the tertiary level relative to the second and is attractive as the first movement in a play episode as exploratory search for new or different possibilities of experience, again relative

¹⁹⁸ Caillois' prejudice for the so-called superior real-world over and against the play-world shows itself in the article "Jeu" in the Encyclopaedia Universalis, Vol. 9., Paris, 1971. We surmise that he himself wrote at least part of the article.

to the level of custom (the secondary sphere of play appreciation).

Caillois' qualities of separateness and unproductiveness (his second and fourth) fall under the same observations we made about them in reference to Huizinga's list of play attributes.

Caillois' third quality, uncertainty, is a quality of the exploratory first movement of a play episode as the player is open to new possibilities of being, without setting limits beforehand. This is a quality of the third level of appreciation of play as paidia before it becomes ludus and tends to return to the secondary cultural level of play meaning. As such it is close to his note of freedom.

Insofar as paidia moves to ludus and adopts rules for itself there is already built into Caillois' theory a tendency toward a civilizing return, i.e. a return to the secondary level from the third. This would seem to cover his fifth characteristic namely, that play is governed by its own conventions or meaning ("governed by rules").

Caillois' sixth element of play is "make-believe". The player (and this seems surely true for human beings, less so for lower animals) has what we may call a "bisociative awareness"¹⁹⁹, a split-vision of two realities, "real-life" and "play", the first acting as judge of the

¹⁹⁹ After the vocabulary of Arthur Koestler, The Act of Creation, (Revised Danube Edition) London, Pan Books Ltd., 1970.

second. In our own terminology, what Caillois calls "real life" we call the secondary sphere of play, and we agree that it tends to act as judge of the third.

Caillois has run into a problem which could be resolved by our present work, the distinction of spheres. The spirit of game, he argues is "essential" to culture yet he also argues that play is "separate" from reality itself and that it is basically "unproductive". We find that a contradiction which is resolved only with our distinctions being made.

E. . Conclusions

As we noted in the case of Huizinga and Caillois, play is separate from reality only in a narrow and relative sense. In the primary and secondary spheres of appreciation it is not so at all. In the tertiary sphere it is true but in a weaker position than most make of it. The "separateness" and the "unproductivity" of play is but one movement in a continuous ebb and flow from one sphere of play-meaning to another, from the secondary to the tertiary and back again, but never escaping into "separateness" or "unproductivity" in the primary sphere.

There is room, therefore, to see play as indeed "separate" from "ordinary reality" provided we regard the

whole context of such valuations of "the real" and "play" in the clear perspective of more than one sphere of meaning for each.

It should be clear too that, as we said in the beginning of this Chapter, any given play episode which is judged as separate and "non-real" may be legitimately regarded in itself as real and playful in a coextensive meaning of each term. As such the reality of play is autonomous and may not be rightly judged as it is in itself from criteria outside itself. Thus, per se, in the tertiary level of appreciation play and reality are one.

Relative to the other spheres, the element of human freedom is clearly part of the tertiary sphere of play-reality, where the player may agree to play or not. This freedom is the freedom to allow imagination to explore possibilities of different experiences. Relative to the other spheres, the tertiary sphere also shows a certain paidian element as compared to the ludi of the other spheres. In fact, it would appear that there is the clearest conjunction (in terms of human understanding) of freedom, imagination, exploration of possibilities and our notion of paidia (playfulness) in this tertiary sub-original sphere of reality.

On the surface, it would seem to follow that since in our hypothesis the third sphere is the vanguard of

the paidian movement of the primary cosmo-ontological sphere - that there must be something very much like a conjunction of the qualities of freedom, imagination, exploration of possibilities and paidia at the heart of the primary cosmo-ontological sphere.

This insight would seem to need more substantiation, which our next Chapter will attempt to provide.

A third sphere of meaning has been sketched in this Chapter. So many different perspectives on the play-reality equation in this third sphere argue for a certain common denominator, the widest and most general appreciation of the "idea", making it distinct from the other two spheres we described in Chapters One and Two. This most general meaning in this third sphere, and not any particular author's depiction of it, has been the subject of the chapter.

This image-making, psychological sphere of the play-reality equation is the last sphere necessary for the ground work for our own metaphysics.

CHAPTER IV

THE ESSENCE OF PLAY

In this Chapter we want to outline the heart of our new metaphysics of the play-real. It is more than an integration of the three play-reality spheres. It is an attempt to get at the essence of play and a clear understanding of the meaning of paidia and ludus. It also aims at a sharper focus upon the third sphere, especially the paidia proper to man in its wonderous and adventurous accents.

The full development of our metaphysics of play must be left to another time and space, for we have in mind our next section, Part Two, the theological review of our work so far. This Chapter confines itself, therefore, to outlining only the salient features of our intuition, sufficiently enough, we trust, to establish the respectability of our metaphysical appreciation of play and reality as a theory.

A. Summary of Our Findings So Far

We have theorized that there are three distinct, yet complementary, ontologies of play. Each ontology

presents a distinct sphere of the problem of how "play" relates to "reality".

While the major theories of play do not formally recognize the three spheres, they can be categorized according to them and evaluated in the light of them, with allowances that some articles of some theories may ambiguously overlap more than one sphere. Much confusion and self-contradiction in the major appreciations of play can be put aside as a result of the application of our three-sphered schema.

Some of the characteristics ascribed to play by traditional theorists seem relevant and meaningful at one moment of consideration yet inappropriate at another. We have seen that with the three-fold distinctions of spheres and the notions of paidia and ludus of our critique such apparent contradictions can be resolved.

To take one example, there is an agreement among some theorists (Huizinga and Caillois, for instance) that certain play patterns are "separate" and "unproductive". Nonetheless, in some form or other, these play patterns are also part of civilized culture or reality. Though they are "separate" and "useless" they nonetheless become essential to any development in cultural life.

In our terms this would suggest several spheres of meaning and a relationship between what we have called the tertiary and secondary spheres of appreciation of play. Once the random, exploratory, movement of tertiary sphered play has been expressed enough to dispel its initial energy there is a tendency for a consolidation of its energies into regular patterns. Playfulness (paidia) tends to become game (ludus). With this, the movement back into society's cultural reality is also begun and the shift comes back from the tertiary sphere to the secondary. What was "separate" becomes "essential".

In this way, we can argue, that although the spheres of appreciation of play are distinct, there is a flow between them. In general, the primary level of play (the Grand Game) exhibits itself in part in the game of culture which in turn has a pattern of movement from certain automatic identifications of reality (the play-culture-reality coextensiveness) to new or different explorations of possibilities.

As long as one can isolate a given phenomenon from the whole cultural context one would be deemed to be in the tertiary sphere of appreciation. This would be so even if most of the time we never advert to its presence in our cultural lives, (for example,

the forms our unconscious manipulates about sexual attitudes which are part of our cultural values passed on for many generations). When it is impossible to so isolate a given phenomenon of play and it becomes identified with what is (i.e. reality as yardstick for making valuations), this would mean that we have moved from the tertiary to the secondary sphere of appreciating play and are in the midst of "mystery" in the Marcelian sense and in the sense that Ehrmann appreciates play. The secondary sphere of play-reality tends, in turn, to be associated with the givenness of the primary sphere as cosmo-ontologically "there", i.e. as fundamental reality.²⁰⁰

Thus, the three levels of appreciation play are "mysterious", each in its own way.

At the tertiary level where there is something at all - some episode, some imaginary creation, or whatever (a "character" in a drama, for example), - there is something. This means that in this respect it is not nothing. It is really there. Such realities are playful in their essential mode of being.

²⁰⁰ Confer n.p. 82, Supra.

What is peculiar about the tertiary sphere of appreciation is that a distinction between play and "reality" seems possible in one respect, whereas, in the other sphere, it is not so. In the tertiary sphere, our "character" in a drama (to keep our example) is a very real playful creation of imagination, sustained in his playful reality by the continuing operation of the imagination of the audience and the "player" on stage. In both the player on stage and the audience there is a bi-fold appreciation of the real; one judging the other, and only one being labelled "play" - or (relative to the other) "unreal".

A dramatic character definitely is really playful (i.e. playful and really so in his own sphere, the tertiary) but un-real only when being judged vis-a-vis the commonly accepted rules of reality (what we have called primary, factual reality, and sometimes also the secondary cultural reality). But, as we have seen, these primary and secondary spheres themselves may be regarded as play-realities. Thus, the tertiary level is judged by the primary and/or the secondary and all three spheres are playful - yet real too. Play is coextensive with the real in three distinct ways.

In summary, our hypothesized three-sphered play-reality gives answers to the following questions: Is

play divorced from the real? Is it separate from "ordinary" reality? Is play itself useless and unproductive activity? Can the real judge play legitimately? Can play judge the real legitimately?

The answers we offer in our hypothesis are: Play itself is not divorced from reality; it is identical to it in three distinct spheres of meaning. Play is "useless" and "unproductive" only in a relative sense of one sphere of play-reality vis-a-vis another and that in the last analysis play is never "useless" or "unproductive". It is as legitimate for play to judge the real as vice-versa. These assertions are made on the basis of the distinction of spheres of meaning for "real" and "play".

At the core of this play metaphysics is the idea that Paidia is the absolute realm of playfulness - possibilities transmuted into finite and definite forms in the various ludi, or spheres which we identify as the world, culture, and man's free and creative imagination. In each of these spheres, there is a play-reality equation.

At the profoundest human level of all, the interaction between the secondary sphere and its separated tertiary sphere is inter-play, one sphere judging the other. Thus "the Game" includes the action of the interface between spheres and we have one sphere of play embracing a second which distinguishes within it a third.

Any philosophy of play must take this schema into consideration and distinguish the three spheres of meaning for "play" and its relationship to "reality". Each sphere of appreciation of play carries its own meaning, and a holistic schema of play and reality gives an integral and balanced view of a three-sphered mystery.

B. The Core Meaning of Play

Can we now dare ask: what is the core meaning of play which would tie all the spheres of meaning of the play-reality mystery together? Can we define play? Can we list its essential characteristics, each applicable to each separate sphere in its own way? Will such a core meaning, a definition, or a list of characteristics, give us an integrated appreciation of play, showing how each sphere relates to the others?

It should be apparent by now that what is difficult about the meaning of play is that it is itself beyond the scope of definition - for three reasons:

The first reason for the ineffability of play is the limitation of language. Language, as we have said, is a cultural phenomenon, intricately and inextricably interwoven with the very fiber of the way man sees his world and conceptualizes his experiences. In our view, the nebulousness of play itself is a result of what we do

to it as we examine it. As soon as we conceptualize and de-fine play in language there is a transformation of an insight about play into a form or pattern of it; that is, we transform play itself (paidia) into games (play with limits and rules or ludi). There is, as it were, a built-in deception by the very dynamic of language so that it never becomes possible to define play - and this almost by "definition". Thus play remains mystery in a special sense.

We are back to the problem of mystery versus problem, intuition versus logical analysis. Here we would like to refer to the classic problem of thought at an impasse, the problem of philosophical mysticism. The problem of dealing with play in rational discourse is that the rational discourse seems inadequate to the task. Any findings through philosophy, especially with regard to the essence of play, the ontology of play, play's essential dynamic, and so forth, end up threatening the very conditions of their validity.

It is, of course, widely held that rational discourse cannot do justice, as it were, to reality. True knowledge of reality is not discoverable by reason alone. Henri Bergson, for example, offers intuition, in contrast to reason or "analysis", as the proper method of attaining knowledge of reality. It is pointed out that there are three distinct arguments for irrational metaphysic:

- (1) the Generality Thesis; (2) the Stability Thesis; and
- (3) the Polarity Thesis.

Briefly summarized, the contention of the Generality Thesis is that analysis can only represent objects in terms of common properties symbolized by general terms; it, therefore, fails to comprehend the uniqueness of reality.

The Stability Thesis adds the charge that analysis alters the characteristic of mobility of the real by forcing it into a category of immobility; analysis, thereby, fails to comprehend the true nature of motion and change.

The Polarity Thesis against analysis by rational discourse holds that analysis polarizes reality by subsuming it under mutually exclusive categories governed by the principle of contrariety. By so doing, analysis produces a way of understanding the real in terms of oppositions which are logically irreconcilable.

Because of these inherent weaknesses in rational discourse any valid philosophical analysis must in fact cease to be analysis proper and become a discourse on intuition. The true nature of reality cannot be comprehended by analysis expressed in language.

The crux of the problem is that language is, of its nature, a facet of analysis. It is a way of labelling "so-called" reality according to the three inherent weaknesses we have discussed.

How to express an irrationalist metaphysic? What is more important, how to express the results of intuition? Language, as philosophers use it, seems to be incapable of grappling with what intuition realizes. Language distorts reality.

The peculiar thing here is that philosophical claims about the inadequacy of language are themselves expressed in language. What is more, such claims imply their own repudiation since they attack rational discourse but are themselves instances of rational discourse.²⁰¹ Thus each of the three weaknesses of rational discourse are really discovered by rational analysis. We can only trust that they have been discovered by intuition in the first instance and adequately translated in analytical terms in the second instance.

But this problem is fundamental to any philosophical discourse. It is even more of a problem when the topic for discussion is reality itself or culture, or...play: in fact, any "mystery" of experience.

In the second place, play is undefinable because of its nature as activity coextensive with the real. As we saw with regard to the three distinct spheres of the

²⁰¹ Bonnie Ruth Aarons Clancy, Thought at an Impasse: A Case Study of Philosophical Mysticism, Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Michigan, 1971.

play-reality problem, play is itself such that it can be identified with the real in three separate yet connected ways. An attempt at definition of play is a process of trying to put limits of categories around it from a realm outside of play itself - but there is nothing beyond it. For, as we have seen, any judgment about the nature of play itself arises in a sphere which is also play too (or, more properly, "game"). It is tantamount to an attempt to define reality itself. Play cannot be defined because reality cannot be defined. The best we can get is an examination of one play-reality sphere by another. We never get to the heart of play-itself.

Lastly, whatever intuition we have been able to grasp about the internal core of play itself gives us this following impression: playfulness (paidia) is what happens at the forefront of breaking away from definitions altogether. Its very meaning is non-definition, the exploration of what is not prescribed beforehand - that is, freely (beyond ludi).

It is our impression that playfulness (paidia), in man at least, is a two-fold openness to meaning. Play (paidia) is at once an a-rational openness to "what is" in itself (before it has been incorporated into human society's labelling system of meaning), and it is also an exploration of "what could be".

This "openness" (Marcel's disponibilité) to possibilities, this sort of "mindlessness" (Zen) is a sort of eager "waiting upon of meaning" (Heidegger). Play is all these as a happy exploration of what is before categories are put upon it by the mind. It is a relaxation of the rational quality of mind which tends to step in and order the perceptions of intuition and the senses. In this sense, play is a surrender to the body and the unconscious and an engagement in marvelling at the is-ness of things and the myriad ways in which the is-ness of things manifest themselves (the "laws" of Nature). We may call this first accent of paidia its movement of wonder.

Our intuition is that playfulness (paidia) is also an exploration into the un-real, that is, into the possibilities of the un-"real"-ized in any of the three spheres and perhaps even un-"real"-izable happenings in the secondary and primary spheres. We may call this second accent of paidia its movement of adventure.

Because play is this two-fold openness to meaning, it is at the heart of the aesthetic being of man. Man's aesthetic being is his tendency to express this two-fold openness of playfulness.

We may offer a description of the meaning of "play". We may say that "play" is a generic name encompassing two emphases: first, "playfulness" (paidia) with its double

accents of wonder, at "what is" and adventure-exploration of "what is not"; and, second, "game" (ludus) with its emphasis on self-contained meaning according to created patterns and rules. Game (ludus) gets its material from the realm of wondrous facts and the adventurous explorations furnished by "playfulness" (paidia).

What makes paidia itself, the core meaning of play, indefinable is that even the accents of wonder and adventure-exploration are but what it ~~seems~~ "seems" to our limited perspective of it (engulfed in ludi as we are).

The common experience of engaging in an activity of the third order of play and recognizing that it has its own intrinsic purposefulness without reference to any outside itself (for example, engaging in a card game) is never totally frivolous and outside of ontological meaning. It is a "time out" from the ordinary realm of play-reality, and engagement in the third realm because the third realm is closer to ontological paidia (in the spiralling cycle of spheres) and so is a kind of "oasis of happiness" (Fink), a glimpse in the now of the Eternal Now of Cosmic Playfulness of the Game of Games. It is thus close to the eternal pulse of the world permitting us to perceive the pure eternal Playfulness in the midst of its ever-changing forms. Even within the so-called escapist and frivolous play-episodes (games) of life we perceive the

Playfulness (Paidia) of the cosmos as their inner core.

The structure of the human game imitates the structure of the Game of Games. In one sense, from the perspective of the "playfulness" of the cosmos, all human endeavour must appear equivalent; all equally frivolous, all equally meaningful.

So, too, Axelos' view is of a Game whose intrinsic playfulness is indefinable, frivolous and meaningful at once, because its evanescent and creative power is beyond labels and categories (themselves instances of structure and part of the Game).

At all three levels the intrinsic playfulness of the really real (Axelos) is never captured by any other dimension or understanding of play. Thus Axelos' Game is not the playfulness of the Game. It is the abstract labelling of its recognizable game forms, i.e., it is a ludus of Paidia. Ehrmann's play is really cultural game - and does not capture the fullness of playfulness itself. Caillois' play (ludus) is really game too for the same reason. To his credit, however, Caillois recognizes a type of un-structured playfulness at the extreme end of noticeables, on the fringe of what is recognizable (paidia).

Play's core must be described at this level of our questioning only in the language of Axelos' playfulness (paidia) of the Game. Playfulness (paidia) is, then, the

limitless expansiveness of things (discharge of energy) seeking new possibilities and tending in the wake of expansiveness to be consolidated into recognizable forms (ludi). Play is thus the pulse of the real. The real is a pulsating thing, in this sense, with these two movements. The real may be called play, with the two movements of paidia and ludus.

If we cannot define play, may we describe its elements? We answer:

There are no elements to play except these movements of discharge of energy and consolidation into form, without limit. All so-called elements of playfulness are, therefore, elements of something one step away from paidia, that is, ludus.

We may conclude that it is the enigmatic paidia of things which is the core meaning of play. Paidia is the wondrous and adventurous playfulness operating in the realm of the possible. It is the notion which gives unity to our whole work.

In arguing that play, or more properly paidia, is the activity which is the bi-fold absorption in the wonder and adventure of the possible we are aiming at understanding it clearly for three reasons:

First, the "wondrous adventure of the possible" explains play as paidia, that is, as an energetic "reaching

beyond" the confines of ludus. Play gets to remain play and to remain indefinitely a mystery.

Second, the "wonderous adventure of the possible" accounts for the apparent separateness of playfulness itself from the actual in ordinary phenomenological appraisal. Paidia is distinct from ludus.

Third, the "wonderous adventure of the possible" permits a recapitulation of the secondary and primary spheres in terms which are consistent with the third sphere. The play-real (ludus) of the second sphere is one human reality as against many other culture-play-real possibilities. The ludus of primary (ontological) sphere (the Game of Games) is understood as one of many possible world-games in an unknown number of possible universes.

Our metaphysical hypothesis affirms the freedom of man in direct proportion as it supports the all-embracing cosmo-ontological Game of Games. For the more free and playful is the cosmos (the play-reality identity is absolute), the more free are all its aspects. Now since man is but an aspect of the Game of Games, he does not escape its fundamental nature as free and playful.

In fact, man's freedom is but the freedom of the world come to consciousness. Man is the vanguard of the freely evolving playfulness of the cosmos, extending the possibilities of its ludi. In this conception of

metaphysics the problem of freedom and determinism is rendered meaningless. For both the world and man are one: insofar as they are free and playful.

This truth has to be integrated with our general axiom that paidia moves freely but tends to consolidation into ludi: In this respect, the free paidia of man's native creativity tends to be socially expressed and shared and thus patterned into cultural institution. Thus paidia of the tertiary sphere tends to become ludus in the secondary sphere. This is to say that the vision of a possible new way of being stemming from the actual newness of the tertiary sphere then tends to want to be "actual"-ized in the other spheres. The anticipation of hope causes attempts to reproduce the hope into actualization in the here and now. It is as Goethe said of the ideal world, that it tends to become the ethical world, that is "to treat the impossible as if it were possible" and as Cassirer who quoted him once said "the ethical world is never given; it is forever in the making".²⁰² Or as Leszek Kolakowski said, "A mere possibility materializes and becomes real before it exists in fact".²⁰³

²⁰² Ernst Cassirer, An Essay on Man, Garden City, New York, Doubleday & Co., 1953, p. 85.

²⁰³ Leszek Kolakowski, Toward a Marxist Humanism, New York, Grove Press, 1963, p. 36.

All revolutionaries - and all mystics too - recognize or believe that some of the "reality" of the tertiary sphere may be inserted into the "reality" of the cultural sphere and so transform it to newness, an alternate way of being. Paidia may correct ludus even though the ludus once was germinated in some prior paidia and even though paidia is not done "for a purpose".

At the simplest of levels this revolutionary power of the tertiary meaning of play shows itself in the freely accepted fantasies and rules of socially accepted "games" - in sports, in card and board games, in social rules of etiquette, and so forth. At more profound levels, the whole realm of aesthetics, morality, and intuition into being is activated by this "play" of man, at which levels the movement from the tertiary to the secondary sphere takes place as man tries to crystallize his conception of the unchanging centre of the Game of Games; pure paidia in the primary cosmo-ontological sphere.

87 What is important about this tertiary (sub-regional) sphere of the play-real is that it may encompass a great many diversified "games" (play with rules) going on at one time - in different levels of importance or seriousness - in the life of any one individual or group. More interesting is the fact that many of these "plays" or "games" may be unconscious or given in the social structure

of a culture.²⁰⁴ They remain distinguishable from the type of play-reality which operates in the secondary (regional-cultural) sphere insofar as it still remains possible to recognize the contingency and the conventionality of their existence. They are not absolutely identified by the people of a culture with the fundamentally real. Consequently, it still remains possible not to play - that is, to opt out of the given rules of the particular game at hand. Though the social group might very well call this opting-out-of-the-game rude, neurotic, even psychotic, the educated observer may recognize the freedom of the choice made by the one who opts out of what is deemed unnecessary and free.

As we have repeatedly made clear the spheres of the play-real are distinct but nevertheless exist in a state of mutual influence. It is important again to bring out this point in regard to the tertiary (sub-regional) sphere because it is the sphere which is normally recognized as "play" but with the popular connotation of frivolity or uselessness (unproductivity). The paradoxical truth is that play in this, most proper of human spheres is the most productive and useless at the same time - for it is

²⁰⁴ A proliferation of books in this area has recently brought this level of play and games to the attention of the general public - for example, Eric Berne, Games People Play, New York, Grove Press, 1964; A.H. Chapman, Put-Offs and Come-Ons: Psychological Manoeuvres, New York, G.P. Putman and Co., 1968; Stephen Potter, The Theory and Practice of Gamesmanship, New York, Bantam Books, 1965.

the sphere of activity for its own sake (as an end, not a means) - but it defines man's orientation to meaning and value in the absolute (the primary cosmo-ontological sphere), and consequently has a powerful bearing on all facets of his life. It is for this reason that the useless and unproductive sphere of play (in the tertiary sense) may nevertheless have the most profound effect upon the assumed and accepted norms of "reality" in the regional-cultural sphere.

In fact, the most fundamental insight in this tertiary (sub-regional) sphere of the play-real (after the joy of its own "reality") is that, in hindsight, the secondary (cultural-regional) sphere is not the absolute horizon of man's possible world. The insight shows that the secondary sphere itself is subject to human choice; it is not fixed and eternal. Thus, the tertiary sphere develops a tension with the secondary sphere and the beginning of hope is kindled. Both the secondary and the tertiary spheres judge each other, the secondary generally regarding the tertiary as "unreal" because it suspends the rules of the game (ludus), while the tertiary generally regards the secondary as also "unreal" because it is too narrow and removed from the freedom of playfulness (paidia), the most fundamental aspect of happiness in man and the basic "reality" of the whole cosmos.

C. The Elements of Paidia and Ludus

The full picture of the integration of these three spheres in terms of paidia and ludus may be painted this way:

The primary cosmo-ontological sphere of play-reality is the Game of Games in which Absolute Paidia (wonderous and adventurous playfulness, the pure realm of possibilities) structures a finite ludus of itself (the playful world). The world itself plays its own proper games. That is, the world has its own autonomous finite paidia actualizing itself in many ludi. The forms and patterns of the physical world which are discernible to science disclose something in the depths of the world beyond neatly fixed ludi, a certain non-structuredness, a certain free energy which presents real chance, real unpredictability, and real possibilities of change in the cosmos. The world is not just a ludus, as it were, with its own self-sufficient order; it is a ludus within which there is real finite paidia.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ The company of thinkers who question the world's order and self-sufficiency includes Heidegger, Scheler, Jaspers, Merleau-Ponty, Camus, Marcel, Brecht, Samuel Beckett. Modern cosmologists regard the "universe" as a pure hypothesis for, in the last analysis, it may not be a fixed and harmonious unity, but rather a varied and self-contradictory multiverse. See, for example, the work of G.T. Whitrow, W. De Sitter, R.H. Dicke, F. Kahn and R.A. Lyttleton.

Within this world is a sub-ludus, man, whose very nature echoes creatively the Paidia of the Game of Games and the paidia of the world and thus constitutes a unique paidia-ludus in himself. (He is a microcosm of the world and of the universal Game of Games.) In his imaginative creations man creates a sphere of play-reality (the tertiary sphere). His playfulness (paidia) concocts forms (ludi) which if socially accepted tend to become identified with "how things are" in the primary sphere. This identity of play-forms (ludi) of the tertiary sphere with cosmological reality constitutes another sphere of play-reality (the regional-cultural). Meanwhile, the tertiary sphere of playfulness (man's paidia) goes on exhibiting in finite form what the world's paidia does and the Infinite Paidia of the Game of Games does in the cosmological sphere, that is, moving to new possibilities, by being true to itself as pure playfulness without limit, without ludi. Man's paidia, therefore, is an instance of the world's reality and of the Game of Games. He is also (by his very paidia) extending the horizons of "possibilities", i.e. stretching the boundaries of the Game of Games. Man's paidia, therefore, is the vanguard of the Game of Games and by attempting to break the limits (ludi) of its past forms, confirms itself as the finite image of Perfect Paidia (Playfulness beyond limits, beyond ludi).



Situated mid-way between the Pure Paidia of the cosmos and the paidia-ludi of man's imagination is the cultural realm, a ludus of both the primary and the tertiary spheres, for culture is made up of "real" matter and energy (materials, "things") in the cosmo-ontological sense of the world and "real" imagination in man.

D. The Meaning of Possibility and Act

We should be precise about the meaning of "possibility". Other words for possibility are "potency" and "capacity". What it means is not an abstract possibility (a mere ens rationis) but the disposition of a real entity to be further determined and perfected by an accession of being that is distinct from it and yet possessed as its own, so that possibility and act (its antonym) [the subject of potency - the determination as act] are really one (the determined subject as actuated potency) without being absolutely identical. As Rahner and Vorgrimler explain,

A grasp of this metaphysical dialectical structure of finite being is essential if one is to understand what is involved in creatureliness and finitude, the possibility [...] of a thing truly becoming something else which it was not before and need not be. ²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, "Possibility", Theological Dictionary, New York, Herder and Herder, 1965, pp. 366-367.

This is the meaning of possibility in the normal use of the term, that is, as related to all finite spheres of reality or "act". In our thesis, however, as we will see in Part Two, the meaning of "possibility" may be absolutized so that the usual designation of God as "pure act" may be reconceptualized as "pure possibility" without the usual meaning that this terminology would carry, that is, that pure possibility is pure non-act or non-being as if this would necessarily be the same as nothing at all. Rather the opposite is true, as we will see. Pure possibility may be the Absolute Reservoir of all finite acts (beings), in relation to which pure possibility may "appear" as pure nothingness (non-being). But, in fact, pure possibility is the most fundamentally real of all "realities" since it is Infinite and all other "realities" are finite and, therefore, limited imitations of "pure reality" or "pure realm of possibilities" (God). Therefore, in the finite spheres of reality, there are merely ludi, (patterned, structured, de-limited) reflections of the unfathomable Progenitor of them all - the free realm of Absolute Possibilities (pure Playfulness or Pure Paidia) which this present thesis conceives as the best way of thinking of God.

As Ernst Bloch has said (quoting William James):
"Realities float in a huge ocean of possibilities from which they have to be selected."²⁰⁷ In his own words, Bloch has said:

Existing reality is surrounded by an ocean of possibilities, and out of this ocean, again and again, new bits and pieces of reality still rise to the surface.²⁰⁸

In the postulation of this "ocean of possibilities" as Pure Paidia and the conception of God as this Pure Paidia we are translating Bloch through the prism of faith and are thus anticipating Part Two of our work.

E. The Relationship of Paidia to Ludus

As pure paidia, play is ethereal and un-structured energy wondrously and adventurously exploring possibilities of self-actualization (new forms, ludi). Ordinarily, however, it is known only vis-a-vis something else already in act, already structured, already ludus.

Paidia in the sub-regional, conscious, or tertiary sphere of play-reality may be recognized, though only vaguely, at the heart of its own proper ludi but only when

²⁰⁷ Ernst Bloch, Philosophische Aufsätze, Frankfurt, 1969, p. 64.

²⁰⁸ Ernst Bloch, Zur Ontologie des Noch-Nicht-Seins, 1961, p. 32. This quotation and the previous one are cited by Jürgen Moltmann, "The First Liberated Men in History", in, Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Play, New York, Harper and Row, 1972, p. 73, n. 19.

seen from the perspective of the secondary sphere or regional meaning of reality (the ludus of society and culture as well as the ludus of the psychological realm of self-recognition, self-reflection, and self-awareness). This perspective of reflective self-awareness bridging two spheres of the play-real accounts for the apparent "separateness" of sub-regional play episodes vis-a-vis the regional sphere of play-reality. This "separateness" allows for the power of judgment of the sub-regional sphere by the secondary.

However, the reverse is also true. The recognition of the paidia at the core of the secondary sphere of play-reality is an act of the tertiary sphere's ludi (ideas, concepts, notions, rules of logic, rational analysis, reasoning, etc.) giving it a critical power of the secondary sphere's ludi. The tertiary sub-regional ludi judge the "games" of the realm of culture as just that - "games" - one set of many possible ludi in any number of possible cultures.

Paidia may also be intuited at the heart of the ludus of the primary cosmo-ontological sphere in moments of the tertiary sphere's activity. It is here that the connection of the tertiary to the primary realm is made in an act of awareness. This is to say that sometimes the mediation of a ludus may be by-passed. In these cases,

the tertiary sub-regional sphere's paidia seems, a-conceptionally, a-rationally to "feel" a sympathy of its overture of wonder and adventure with the same aspects of the primary-ontological Paidia. A sympathetic harmony is established in this case, in a distinctly non-rational (non-ludic way) by a direct congruency of the nature of the third and the first spheres of the play-real. These moments of immediate union are part of mystical contemplation. (1)

For the most part, it is to be understood that from the perspective of the finite world, for reasons of fatigue, or the expenditure of initial energy, paidia in all three realms may be "slowed down" or jelled into patterns or structures (ludi). For the most part, too, these ludi become identified with the full range of the real, making reality distinctly playful in its mode of actuality.

These ludi have defined limits and within these limits the normal wonder and adventure of paidia is disciplined to concentrate upon the region determined by the rules of the Game. Thus a given game (like some board games - chess) may have its own excitement and interest because within it there is still room for some discovery either through wonder or adventure. Once the full range of possibilities has been exhausted the game loses interest as such and a new game (even in the mind of the player) is

concocted so that wonder and adventure may go on. The relatively high degree of interest in sports is due to the fact that the range of possibilities for individual "plays" remains vast enough to arouse widespread wonder and adventure. Some other ludi are so commonplace - so identified with reality - that their wondrousness and adventurousness goes unnoticed.

Yet, occasionally, ludus provides us with an intuition of paidia. This is to say that ludus sees within itself an inner core in relationship to which it has offered a form or structure.

It is the relationship of paidia to ludus, the dynamic transaction between them, that accounts for the impression of evolution, of growth and development. For it is the varying forms of ludus, animated by a common paidia, which are recognizable as varying structures of organic life.

This is similar to the difference between the recognition of movement in viewing a set sequence of photographs taken of something alive and in motion. The photographs fail to capture the life qua life: They rather artificially and imperfectly suggest life - and this only when the photographs are seen in close proximity of time and space, one to another, as in cinema.

Life, too, cannot be categorized in rational terms qua life, but only at particular moments and in particular respects, as if life were frozen. But the dynamic of life is something which escapes the categories of these frozen forms. It is the same thing with regard to paidia. We may recognize it but only in the limiting and somewhat unfaithful renderings of it in ludi.

It would appear that there may thus be a phenomenology of games but not so of playfulness. There are, however, certain human feelings associated with the activity of paidia in man. These feelings are a-rational sympathies of man's own paidia with its own ground of being, the Paidia which inspires the whole of the Game of Games. These feelings or impressions of an a-rational kind may speak to us in their own way of finite paidia or even Infinite Paidia but still they are understandable in an analytical way only through a mode of ludus.

We may call these feeling-sympathies for paidia, disclosed through analytical ludi, the elements of human play. In fact, the elements of human play are the elements of ludi which may serve as occasions for intuition into paidia.

But, as we have repeatedly seen, ludus is the core mode of actuality of all finite things, in one sphere or

another, and, consequently, an attempt to describe ludus in terms of something which is not ludus, as if its elements were not ipso facto ludi and our conceptualizations of play were not ipso facto ludic in a self-contradictory procedure.

Still, for the sake of the remainder of our discussion of play in man, the distinction between paidia and ludus must be kept, despite the difficulty.

F. Is Man's Paidia His Own?

We may now get into the question of utmost importance: the identity of man's paidia as distinct from the paidia of Nature (the ontological sphere).

As we have explained the distinction between the three play-reality spheres, they are complementary and even cumulative appreciations of the meaning of reality and play. Thus the tertiary sphere, the sphere of man's creativity and identity, is in some way an instance of the ontological sphere insofar as man is a part of Nature, a part of the scope of the ontological play-real. Yet man's paidia is distinct from the paidia of the ontological sphere in some way. How is this so?

Man's paidia is distinct, autonomous, and his own because his paidia, his nature, is organic. It lives. It

grows and develops, matures, and in the process transcends the limits of its forms (ludi) of the past. In the same way in which any organism develops, man moves from potency to act, out of the past forms (ludi) to new ones, by a dynamic life-principle of energy (usually called a soul) which we call paidia.

Man's paidia is his own. It is not just an instance of ontological paidia. In the same manner in which we may say that a flower has its own existence, even though it has derived from a seed which was part of another flower, so too we may say that man's soul (his paidia) is his own even though he has been generated by previous life. Thus it is not just the ludus of man which is distinct from all previous forms of ontological paidia. Man's totality (ludus plus paidia) is his own. His paidia is his own, therefore, and distinct from other spheres of paidia, though related to them. In fact, each individual man has his own numerically distinct identity, his own paidia and his own ludus, even though he shares generically the same general patternings (ludus and paidia) of the whole human race which in turn is a ludus of the ontological sphere.

Thus the paidia of each man is not a false or illusory paidia, as would be the case in positing it (over simply) as only a ludus of the ontological sphere. Nor

is each man's paidia simply part of the same paidia of the ontological sphere. To say otherwise, would be to say that man has no distinct soul, no distinct and autonomous identity and that he ought to surrender an illusion of selfhood in favour of dissolution into the soul of the universe. This latter option has its own logic but not as if it were the only way to appreciate how man and nature connect.

In our view, man is the vanguard of the ontological sphere insofar as he is in the position of expanding the horizons of ontological ludi through his own proper paidia. As we have explained beforehand, man's paidia, like all paidia, tends to become consolidated into given ludi in both the ontological and cultural spheres and so become coextensive with them and in this way bring the scope of these spheres in line with his new explorations.

At the evolutionary point of developing ludi where cosmo-ontological paidia produces man, paidia becomes conscious of itself in the new ludus, man. In this sense cosmo-ontological paidia becomes involuted upon itself and produces an image of itself, with its own proper paidia tending to its own proper ludi. Man is thus a microcosm in the ontological macrocosm. Virtually everything ontological paidia can do in its sphere, man can do in his sphere.

In some respects, the ontological sphere seems more powerful: its ludi are more rigid, more basic, than are man's. Man's paidia, however, moves beyond the established limits of the scope of ontological paidia, developing his own explorations of the possible and thus stretching the horizons of the tertiary and primary spheres ipso facto.

Man does not explore the possible for the sake of bringing the ontological sphere to new heights of extension. He explores for the wonder and adventure of the act of exploration itself and for the outcome it produces for its own sake. He counts his acts of wonder and adventure as his own.

Theoretically, of course, we can entertain the likelihood that such paidia in man, by continuous exploration of the possible, is aimed at some absolute but finite degree of ludus wherein all the wonder and adventure of his paidia may be centered in a given form to which he would be everlastingly glued by attraction. In this absolute human and finite sense man's paidia meets perfect embodiment in perfect human ludus corresponding at the same time to an objective encounter with an omega point of the movement of ontological paidia, in which case we have a confluence of all three spheres of paidia in a state of perfect self-wonder and self-adventure. This latter stage of the convergence

of paidia and ludus is either going to dissolve human identity as such or retain it. If the former, we have a position which seems like an Eastern notion of perfection; if the latter we have a position which seems like a Western notion of perfection.

On this very question, put into the terms of our hypothesis, the religious philosophies of the East and West are divided. In the East, the general religious philosophies seem to favour the interpretation that, in the absolute sense, man ought to lose his identity (ludus) which is, in any case, an illusion, and melt into the ocean of the Absolute (Paidia). In the West, the tradition seems to favour a retention of a separate identity in the state of union with the Absolute. In another respect, the difference is between tranquility as absolute and love as absolute. In one there is an end to separateness in peace. In the other, there is an end to separateness in dynamic interchange and harmony in love.

G. The Paidia-Ludus of the Primary
Cosmo-Ontological Sphere

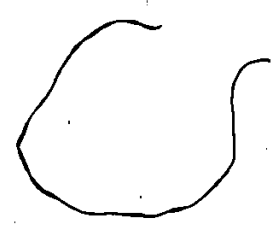
The foregoing discussion of the authenticity of man's paidia raises the question, in turn, as to whether the paidia of the world is Infinite or finite (that is, as a theologian

might say, that it is the world's own or God's). In our presentation of the three spheres of play-reality there is no way to establish an answer to this question. The answer remains open and ambiguous. For according to our explanation of the primary cosmo-ontological sphere, the playfulness (paidia) at its centre may be called (in traditional language) either God or simply Being. (A third possibility would be that there are two levels of paidia here, the one the Infinite God and the other the finite world as a ludus-paidia conjunction as an "image" of the first.) Our own vision holds to the third option, i.e. that the world has its own paidia just as man does in terms of his own tertiary sphere, and that the world's totality is a finite paidia-ludus of Infinite Paidia.²⁰⁹

H. The Tentativeness and Lability of Sub-Regional Play

Paidia, we have said, is a playful, energetic force moving in the direction of actualizations of possibilities (ludi).) In the conscious, sub-regional sphere of the play-real, paidia has a certain quasi-autonomy from the ludus of "the world" in the ontological sphere and the ludus of culture in the regional sphere. As long as man's imagination

²⁰⁹ The discussion of this question we have left for Part Two, Chapter VIII.



gives creative attention to what it is doing paidia is active. But with regard to the ludi within the sub-regional sphere itself, there seems to be a certain weakness.

Sub-regional ludi are usually weak, vis-a-vis the other spheres, and they are tentatively fabricated by the imagination even in their own sphere. In themselves, of course, the forms of play in the sub-regional sphere are not tentative; they simply do happen; they are real in that sense. Yet their stability in act is shaky; they are subject to evaporation by inattention by the imagination, by clash with one another, by invasions from the other spheres. They are labile.

Certainly some of these sub-regional ludi are more substantial and powerful than others and may serve as anchoring points for man's self-understanding and orientation to his experience. We would suggest that certain mythological archetypes as propounded by Jung and others may be much more substantial ludi based upon powerful experience. These more substantial ludi may operate to shape the felt-experience of all other stimuli (ludi) from environment and the imagination itself. They soon become aspects of the secondary or regional sphere of play-reality.

For the most part, however, sub-regional ludi are relatively insubstantial and subject to evaporation.

The player knows all the while that he plays that unless he can institutionalize the mode of play, it will cease to be the moment he relaxes his sustaining imagination from it (for the ludus of the tertiary sub-regional field is imaginative). Only where such play forms go on in some actualization outside the creator's imagination and can take on their own consequences in the other spheres, can the player let his creations go - to exist by themselves. The best example of this self-existent play-form might be the art object put into play-form on a stabile base by incorporating the primary and secondary spheres of reality - "real" matter, "real" space, "real" shape, colour, etc.

The art object has a meaning on its own - apart from what the creative genius of the artist may have envisioned or willed it to have. It is only then that a play-form (ludus) may get sufficient objectivity and identity in the secondary (regional) sphere to become part of the sustaining imagination of culture and so coincide with reality, as we have seen.

There seems to be a problem about how purely imaginary creations of the mind (e.g. dreams - which are undisciplined and free of being "realistic" in a second-sphered sense) - may be examples of human paidia (in wonder and adventure for the possible). From the point of view of

the secondary sphere, dreams may be paidia regarding the impossible, in many respects. Things which are dream-realities may be absurd in the second sphere. Yet, while still a dream, they are accepted for what they seem to be uncritically. Only upon waking does the human being immediately relegate what he has dreamed into categories of "realistic", "logical", "possible", "impossible", "absurd", etc.

This would seem to argue for the integrity of the dream-world - on its own - or that some things of the dream world are explorations not only of the possible - but even of the impossible (in terms of the logic of the second sphere).

I. The Transforming Power of Paidia

It is important to recognize that once paidia has become patterned and consolidated into ludus it takes on the aspect of givenness. In the ontological sphere such ludus is primary and basic, and the second and third spheres, which are mere outcroppings of the primary sphere, ordinarily can do very little to alter the given rules and regulations of the primary ontological realm. In one sense it seems that Nature's laws are more basic than man-made ones, since man himself is but a part of nature. For this reason, ordinarily, even the most powerful transcendences

brought about in the third sphere will not have much effect upon the patterns of the ontological sphere.

Occasionally, however, (as in instances of hypnosis, hysteria, and auto-suggestion), the normal patterns of order in the human organism may be altered because of the psychosomatic unity which is man's nature. In this sense the third sphere of paidia has altered the ludus of the primary sphere. This leads us to the most important point, whether man's play in the tertiary, sub-regional sphere may cause changes in the ludus of the ontological sphere and in this way expand the Game of Games.

In an absolute sense, according to our theory, pure ontological Paidia has been expressed in only one of many possible worlds, and the interface-exchange is the Game of Games. The Game of Games is theoretically subject to correction by ludi outside its present expression in another possible world.

Our hypothesis has it that the limits of the Game of Games have, indeed, been so transcended when the Game of Games produced a ludus with its own capacity to fashion new dimensions of possibilities, that is, man with his own proper paidia. Man's proper paidia, the sub-regional sphere of the play-real, thus obviates the absoluteness of past patterns of the Game of Games and theoretically

man has the capacity to fashion a ludus which transcends and transforms the presently understood or given aspects of the ludus of the Game of Games.

Thus, despite the tentativeness and lability of the ludi of the tertiary sub-regional sphere, the force of paidia in that same sphere may be such as to give sufficient strength to its ludi as to get them to affect the other spheres and their ludi (that is, to alter them in some way). This movement from tertiary ludi to secondary ludi, for example, is the origin of culture.

J. The Wonder and Adventure of Human Play in the Tertiary Sphere

Since our chief interest is the play of man, our concentration will now focus upon paidia in humanness. The Pure Paidia underlying the Game of Games finds in man an image of itself, especially in the ludus of human imagination, the sphere of creative exploration of possibles, the tertiary sphere of the play-real. In man the ontological sphere of paidia finds a ludus which in turn is a form of paidia. In fact, man is a paidia-ludus with his own form of paidia. Thus, man is a microcosm of a macrocosm, creating ludi out of his paidia.

As we have said, in man the chief elements (ludi) of his paidia are found in the feelings of "wonder" and "adventure", each prompting an intensification of the other and corresponding respectively to a concentration on "what is" (with a ludic emphasis) and "what could be" (with a paidian emphasis).

Why is wonder a part of play if play (more properly paidia) is ordered to possibilities rather than "what is"?

Wonder is, indeed, ordered to "what is" but not blankly in a simple moment of static union. Wonder is also an on-going discovery of new depths of "what is"; it thus has its own kind of adventure into the range of possible insights or degrees of union with the thing contemplated. Play thus is indeed concerned with "what is" as well as with "what could be", the difference being between an exploration of possible depths of contemplative union on the one hand, and an exploration of possible new entities fit for contemplating wonder on the other. The two accents of wonder and adventure are so closely related that, though they are distinct notions, one leads to the other and tends to add to the intensification of the other. Hence, the dynamic of play as an on-going process.

Whatever "could be" (seen in the perspective of and existing in the third sphere) has no intrinsic necessity

to be reduced to being in action in the secondary or primary spheres. It may be wondrous and adventuresome in the sphere of the possible (in the third sphere) without leaving it.

The more closely we can pin down the ludi of wonder and adventure the closer we can get to a satisfactory "appreciation" of paidia, the core meaning of play. For a closer focus on what paidia means, especially in the third sphere of humanness, we will concentrate on what seem to be some of the chief characteristics of its wonder and adventure. Our main concern is an appreciation of play in man, with an accent on paidian feeling.

A general observation may be of help here. We may link the notions of paidia and ludus very roughly to "adventure" and "wonder" respectively, insofar as both paidia and "adventure" lay stress upon the possibilities of reality, whereas both ludus and "wonder" emphasize the actuality (structuredness) of reality. This correlation, however, is not perfect since in our thesis both of the elements, "wonder" and "adventure" belong to paidia itself and may be said of ludus in a secondary sense only, insofar as ludus is given its essential meaning as a patterned form of paidia.

The elements of "wonder" and "adventure" which follow, then, are to be understood as predicated of paidia in man first and foremost.

Wonder

Wonder is the capacity of astonishment, amazement, awe, enrapturement, fascination or contemplation. It is a concentration on "what is" and "the mode of what is". At its most basic level of focus, wonder is a marvelling at facticity, at the very fact that a thing - or things in general - are. Existence itself, the actuality of something; the givenness of things is wonderful. Concomitantly with this positive recognition of "what is" is the implied marvel that "it is" though "it need not be" (It is not necessary). Thus, there are two aspects of wonder: wonder at reality and wonder at contingency of reality.

The Wonder of Reality

The most obvious marvel of "what is" is precisely this - that it is. The "is-ness" of "what is" is an astounding wonder. For with thorough openness to the facticity of any contemplated thing comes a deep impression of the force of its very facticity; it is there; it is actual; it exists as a unique and incontestable presence over-and-against the observer; it is boldly, powerfully, resolutely asserting itself as marvellously, awesomely there.

What is more, "what is" is marvellous not just in its bare facticity, however powerful that facticity may be. It is marvellous also in the unique mode of its being actual. Each individual thing exists as this kind of thing, not another. And each individual thing exists not only as a certain kind of thing but also as the numerically unique this that it is. Thus a peach blossom on a tree, for example, may be marvellous in three ways: in the fact that it is, in the manner of the way it is (i.e. as blossom), and as this particular blossom and no other. In each of these three ways it is an actuality out of the realm of many possibles; it is a ludus of paidia in each of the three aspects of the wonder at "what is".

The Wonder of Contingency

What is also remarkable and mind-boggling about this basic "this-ness" of a thing is that it is obvious that it is despite the equally powerful fact that it need not be at all. It exists in spite of the fact that it has no requirement to be in act. Thus, it is an actuality out of a realm of needless possible existents - one of many possibilities of actualizations, none of which need be. Still, despite its utter contingency and non-necessity it nevertheless stands there really existing. It is a reality

which is freely actualized - and as unwarranted and immediately unaccountable. It stems from non-necessity, from pure possibility. How did it get into act?

The answer to this last question is that the realm of possibility moves as an energetic force called paidia in the direction of actualization (ludus). The dynamic of the possible accounts for actuality - for the realm of the possible is not static. It is the active ingredient of all that is as its dynamic energy.

According to our thesis, the realm of possibles is the realm of playfulness. In the absolute, Pure Paidia is Pure Playful Centre of Possibilities of ludi.

Thus the wonder of "what is" is a wonder at a perceived ludus with the implication of a wonder at the paidia which accounts for the ludus perceived.

The difficulty of seeing wonder as oriented to the is-ness of things (in their ludi) stems from familiarity with what is (ludi) and the loss of a sense of special-ness about what is, in the fact that it is. So immediate is the demand of an experienced thing to be recognized as real - and so constant is its insistence upon its reality - that we grow to take it as a given, as a fundament, as part of the basic backdrop against which new and un-usual experiences can be judged. Thus reality as a whole ceases

to be appreciated as fresh and startling. It is only by a "secondary act of reflection" (Marcel) that the wonderousness of "what is" can be re-kindled. A "secondary act of reflection" brings us back to the first experience of something but with a critical attitude.

A crucial question about wonder has to do with the question of why - i.e. the cause of wonder. We may put the question this way: Is something wonderous primarily because its being is immediately recognized as contingent - as not necessary - yet it nonetheless is? - or is something wonderous because its very beingness (even beyond the question of contingency) is a demanding presence of organized power?

While we are inclined to think that, indeed, it is true that a large part of our sense of wonder derives from the awareness (however dim) of contingency (the thing is but it has no necessity to be!). Still, we may ask: Is our only appreciation of its "being" an immediately negative one, i.e. from the vantage point of its possible non-existence? Is this the principal focus of our sense of wonder? We are persuaded that this is not so. The first reason for wonder does not derive from an immediate perception of contingency. The sense of wonder stems from what is, in the thing as it is, that is, as it is now making its demanding presence known. The source of wonder

is the is-ness, the being-ness of something in itself (a given ludus) and not simply that it is a curiosity, a puzzle, an anomaly without ontological necessity (stemming from a realm of possibilities, paidia).

Put into the terms of this present work, the wonder of something derives because its very actuality as a ludus is marvellous in itself - as a form, a structure - existing, as it were, on the same plain as oneself as coequally real (actual).

The notion of its non-necessity, its contingency, heightens the marvel of its mode of actuality - for one sees that it is only one of many possibilities, one of many possible ludi, and stemming from a realm of pure possibilities (paidia).

Direct access to a Necessary Being, paradoxically, would not deprive us of a sense of wonder but on the contrary would increase it limitlessly. In the first place, the Necessary Being (call it God) would be wonderful because it would be apprehended nonetheless through a "form", the ludus of man's nature, i.e. God would be apprehended "as if" God were in a ludus-mode of actuality. Moreover, since the Necessary Being would be recognized as Pure Paidia itself it would be seen as the fountainhead of all ludi, the total realm of possibilities, thus more real than all ludi. It would thus be seen as endlessly wonderful.

In any other instance (that is, a non-necessary and imperfect ludus) we are dealing with something other than God and the distinction between paidia and ludus seems clear. The actual ludus of something occasions wonder - simply because it is an actualization, a presence of a power in recognizable form. Upon reflection this ludus is seen to be un-necessary or contingent. This too becomes an occasion for wonder and is a first glance into the realm of the possible - but-not-actual (Paidia).

Thus the logically (but not experimentally) first marvellous quality of "what is" is that it stems from the realm of the possible (paidia); its second marvellous quality is that it has been structured from a state of pure paidia into actuality (ludus). Its actuality (ludus) was the occasion of an intuition into its origin in a realm of possibility (paidia).

The reality of paidia, therefore, is logically prior to the reality of ludus and it is the more wonderful of the two. Whatever exists, therefore, exists out of the realm of possibilities, a single instance of actuality - one among many possibles.

In fact, it is only in a sphere of absoluteness that the power of possible being can be so perfect that it must be, as first principle. It is in this last sense that

possibility is the first necessity. God, the Absolute, the One, the Other, and so forth, are words for the absolute first principle which is, by its nature, the only Possible-Necessary. Such a givenness of reality in the absolute may be implied in all episodes of wonder, suggesting that the Centre of Reality is Pure Possibility existing in a Playfulness mode of activity, a playfulness-reality-possibility conjunction.

Yet, in most episodes of wonder, it is not the absolute which is immediately contemplated; it is the givenness of the present, proximate, immediate fact, (a stone, a flower, a man, a sunset, and so forth). Each singular and numerically unique instance of fact in time and space has the given unconditionally that it is. It has the capacity to arouse in man a sense of wonder. There can be no play without it.

Wonder counters what is perhaps the worst of the Deadly Sins, what the Fathers of the Church called acedia and what we call sloth, boredom, and disenchantment with life - the deepest degree of which is a melancholic nausea and a suicidal disposition. Let us examine the elements of wonder.

For wonder, we will list the following elements: trust, letting be, freedom, concrete immediacy, participation mystique, peace, joy, humour and celebration.

Trust

Wonder cannot happen, if one is threatened, for in being threatened the concentration becomes too self-centered, rather than being other-centered. Trust is the feeling of assurance about the power of another without being threatened. In a state of wondrous concentration on "what is" one trusts the very "facticity" of the contemplated object. One relies upon the reality of the object and feels supported by its power and in relation to it one feels confirmed in one's own reality.

Basically, the trust attitude in human play is trust with regard to the widest base of reality (paidia) beyond transitory, accidental, and limited necessities (ludi) of life.

Letting Be

The respectful recognition of "what is" implies a certain surrender of the compulsion to control the power of "what is", a certain relaxation of tension so that "what is" may, as it were, speak for itself. Letting be of another amounts to a certain letting be of one's own mind, a relaxation from pre-conceived notions, rational control and analytical categories, a humble allowance for

inner enlightenment, a sense of not being threatened by the givenness of things or by one's own "education" (being led on to the unknown).

Freedom

The feeling of wonder is an internal activity within the human being, with internal control and internal motive (that is, activity for its native satisfaction as activity). The activity of wonder is self-authenticating. The person who wonders feels free to regard what he does for its own sake. He feels free for the thing he regards and not just free from what would prevent him from giving it importance.

Concrete Immediacy

In a state of wonder, the person is concentrating on what is present here and now in immediate experience. He is not concerned primarily with practicality or ends. What is being marvelled at is being scrutinized for its own sake, simply because the knowledge of "what is" is its own reward. The fascination is with the fact and the ~~m~~ of what is at hand, considered as a worthy focus of attention. Every numerically given aspect of any thing is a worthy object of contemplation. Each is in some way unique. Nothing perfectly is the same as anything else.

(At least the time and space of the experience of each thing is unique.) Play gives attention to just such uniqueness as special.

Participation Mystique

With proper respect for the givenness of what is, the state of wonder brings a loss of concern for one's own self-interest and it allows for an at-one-ness with the subject in focus. There is a concentration of mind and feeling so that the person feels a participation mystique with his contemplated subject. Wonder operates in an attitude of ease and confidence.

Peace

The lack of self-interest and the participation mystique brings a paradoxical at-one-ness with self, a centering of the self in ease and concord with reality in its depths. Thus peace within the person seems a usual outcome of active wonder. It is a state of happiness within the self, a contentment with present experience which is recognized as one of inner harmony of the elements of the psyche. Man's paidia seems at home with the ludi of his intellectual perceptions and his emotional feelings. There is a balance of psychic energies and forms within him. Peace leads to:

Joy

The feeling of joy is the self-satisfactory nature of the act of wonder. It aesthetically satisfies itself by its own activity. It makes the person feel that for the time of the wondrous activity nothing else is necessary and that human happiness is essentially bound up with what the person is then doing. The reason for peace and joy is that wonder is in touch with "what is" but "what is" is ultimately a "realm of possibilities".

Humour

Humour means the thrilled fascination with the interaction of one mode of existence with another, where they are viewed as relativized by the agreeable disposition of the viewer. The way in which something meets another may be incongruous in a relatively harmless but awkward way. During the time when such awkward but safe incongruity operates, the viewer may be amused at how they interact and find delight (wonder) in the mode of activity of such interaction. The element of relative safety for the viewer and his set of values not being countermanded by the interaction of these modes seems essential to humour.

If safety is lost, the threat of pain, of disorientation of basic meanings, and so forth, transforms the comedic and humorous into the tragic for him. In the highest degree, the sense of humorous wonder may relativize all so-called tragedies (as ludi) by its feeling for a transcendent paidia in all things. An ironic and humorous attitude to experience is thus a sign of a sense of wondrous paidia in tune with transcendent Paidia within the Game of Games.

Celebration

Celebration in the paidian tertiary sphere is the expression as tertiary sphered ludus. Laughter, partying, dancing, singing, and the like, seem to be the natural embodiment (ludus) of such tertiary paidia. These celebrative ludi are both expressions and intensifications of the significance of tertiary paidia.

Adventure

Adventure is the second disposition of the human dimension of paidia. It is a hopeful turning to the "not-yet", an orientation from "what is" to "what could be" in eager anticipation. From one's experience one is led to expand one's horizons to new experience. In a highly active degree adventure may be called the zest of life.

No adventurous disposition can be active without the following elements: confidence, openness, juxtaposition, conscious excess, creativity, and prophesy.

As hopeful attitude to new experience, for deeper and deeper enjoyment of the core of one's own humanity and interaction with reality's depth, the adventurous spirit counters what is perhaps the second part of the deadly sin of acedia, that is, paralysis of the will and despair.

Confidence

There can be no enhancement of one's being without confidence both in the outcome of the future and one's personal capacity to adjust to it. Adventure requires a bold and positive attitude with regard to the possible, a trust that the realm of the not-yet is basically friendly or at least neutral with regard to man's fulfilment, his wholeness, his happiness.

Openness

Man's basic orientation to the possible is his openness of spirit, his availability, (disponibilite: Marcel). Openness is his receptivity to new experience, the disposition to eagerly add unto his being whatever

the future will bring. As such, "openness" is adventure's correlative to wonder's "letting be".

Juxtaposition

In a sort of pre-conceptual attitude of openness to new experience, the adventurous player does not impose the patterns of past knowledge of experience too rigidly upon new experience. He is open to the need for newness, for an experience beyond the limits of the past.

Such an attitude must allow that there may be many occasions when an experience will be unclassified and deliberately so. To rush ahead into categorizing new experience according to old labels may destroy the very freshness of the new experience in the first place. Many such unclassified experiences may have to stand side by side and interact with each other and with former categorized experiences to produce what they will. A refusal to simplify, to synthesize, to generalize, is what we mean by allowing for juxtaposition. It is an attitude of letting each new experience speak for itself and letting all experiences interact without prejudgment for a time, thus allowing the fullness and the richness of fresh experiences to be absorbed aesthetically, intuitively, mystically, before labels of rational thought are imposed upon them.

A child at play sees no problem with such acts of juxtaposition: each experience is its own, valid for itself, and so-called "learning" comes later. No playful attitude can dispense from such adventurous juxtaposition of new and old experience.

Conscious Excess

There is an awareness in the player that as he pursues the adventure of the future for its own sake he transgresses in some form or other the limitations of order imposed by past categories of "what is". The player is conscious that he exists in the world of "what is" but is also moving into the sphere of the possible at the same time. What he actually does as player will appear exaggerated, comedic, un-real, excessive, undisciplined, chaotic to the side of him which resides in the sphere of "what is". The player must be aware that he may exist in stasis and ek-stasis at the same time.

Psychologically he may even have to calculate and orchestrate a certain degree of excess in his breaking of the order of the past in order to get into the spirit of play proper and to permit the free adventure of his spirit to take place.

Creativity

When the adventurous spirit operates in man's play, new break-throughs to new depths of meaning, to entirely new insights, new synthesis, and so forth, may transpire. This is to say that adventure in man's play creatively expands his awareness, his learning, his being.

In the adventurous movement of play the grand scale of interrelationships is given focus whereas with the movement of wonder it was the concrete immediacy of particulars which was the centre of attention. It is in this area of creativity that grand meanings and significances are explored. Art, philosophy, religion derive from this adventurous creativity of play.

Prophecy

After a period of juxtaposition, a new judgment of old categories in the light of new experience and a projected vision of the future may result. While this critique is a result of adventurous play rather than an essential ingredient of it, it is important to see that it is so closely allied to the adventurous play spirit that almost always a prophetic outcome results from play.

The foregoing list of wonderful and adventurous attributes help to clarify the meaning of the paidian element underlying all ludus. Any element of wonder and adventure is ipso facto an element of playfulness, some episodes stressing some elements more than others. Of the elements of wonder, the first seven (trust, letting be, freedom, concrete immediacy, participation mystique, peace, and joy) seem essential. The last two (humour and celebration) seem to be extensions of essential play, sharing in the characteristics of the first seven but not essential to every play episode. Of the elements of adventure only the first two (confidence and openness) seem essential, while the last three (juxtaposition, conscious excess, and creativity) may accompany them. We believe that these elements of wonder and adventure will serve to test any observed episode as properly playful or not.

K. The Special Quality of Play Awareness

A logical objection can be raised against our metaphysics of play. It can be phrased by two sets of questions:

First, isn't play something special? Doesn't it contribute a new dimension or a new slant on our appreciation of things in our experience? Secondly, but how can it

be special, or give a new dimension or slant on our appreciation of our experience if, in fact, all things are play or in play? Play is nothing if everything is play!

If play is something special it ought to add something: but whatever is would "add to" is already play. Thus, we have a case of play merely reflecting upon itself, convoluted upon itself, compounded by different spheres of itself. There is no possibility of appreciating play if the very appreciation of play is also a facet of play. There can be no distance from it and consequently no evaluation of it. Hence, play, if indeed universal, is a useless notion, even for a new metaphysics of play.

How do we answer this objection?

The only answer is in terms of the notion of mystery as we have already explained it. Just as reality itself, in the usual meaning of the word, is universal and all embracing, and even in some respect, part of the process of evaluation of reality, so too is play. In fact, play is coextensive with reality and explains, in terms of our hypothesis, how it can be that a reality can be judged un-real by another. It is precisely because of the all-pervasiveness of play in a three-fold understanding of the play-real that it is useful, though mysterious. One sphere may be seen relative to another even if all are play-ful.

The question still remains as to what is gained by viewing reality as playful, even if we identify the real and the playful. What is gained is a new respect for the possible-but-not-actual. Play lays stress upon the "un-real", the not-yet, facets of what is called real. Our three-fold hypothesis, moreover, points out that the realm of the possible (what we have called the energy of paidia) is powerfully operative as the base for all that is understood, as recognizable in ludus. In this scheme of things nothing is irrelevant and a new positive regard for the accidental, the unstable, the details, the concrete, the immediate aspects of experience is made.

Also, and very importantly, an appreciation of paidia-become-ludus gives us an appreciation of the style of the all-pervasive mystery of existence. We begin to have positive regard for intuition, for imagination, for dreams, for ideals, for the quest of fuller and happier existence. We begin to participate knowingly in the mode of what is. We enter into the mode of reality consciously, ever growing from what is to what could be. We are consciously aware of what and how the real is and what and how we are. Thus, all qualities of the real, seen as play, take on connotations and dimensions in our total awareness and attitude to our experience.

The understanding of reality as the "realm of the possible" because the heart of what is real is its paidia, gives us an appreciation of the real as free, opportune, challenging, promising, open to creativity and joy. It makes confidence, hope, and love in our experiences more central. Man especially is understood as a nexus of wondrous and adventurous possibilities in an even stronger way than he is a convergence of actualities.

Play is the avenue of authenticity as well as self-transcendence. In fact, it is in play awareness that man recognizes that he is authentic and whole only by self-transcendence, a movement to possibilities. One remains oneself but also stretches to the limits of one's own becoming at the same time. In this latter sense, playing is a deep penetration into the realization in the here and now of one's possibilities and one's future fulfillment. It is in this sense, too, that playing is a valid way of being oneself - one's real self. Hence, in this same sense, it is truly practical living, at a level of the practical which is not subject to challenge since it is ordered to the eternally valid. It is a way of realizing one's freedom without losing it. One who plays, steps outside of himself without selling himself. Homo transcendens is homo ludens.

In short we gain from play-awareness all that is lost in the business of trying to analyse and pigeonhole reality in the purely rational way. As we have already laboured to make clear, the process of articulating an intuition in rational discourse tends to lose impact precisely because the immediate, the concrete, the accidental, the special, the unique qualities of individual things as well as our unconscious and emotional reactions to them - all of these - are lost. Play awareness gives us a new positive empathy with them where rational discourse does not. It gives us legitimate and positive grounds for embracing the full range of the elements of wonder and adventure we have described - and so to become more and more "realistic" and whole.

Further, the mode of activity of things, when appreciated as play, can be consciously adopted into one's style of life even if such appreciation is non-translatable in words. Man no longer need fear experience as such: he need not feel estranged from life, from meaning, from himself. Man, by playing out his existence, can relax his narrow and shallow compulsion to control the world, as if he is not part of it. He is able to feel at home with it, to participate in it, to celebrate it - not only occasionally, and not only in certain peak experiences

or formal liturgy. He realizes that he celebrates the way things are by simply going on living in trust, in hope, in love. He need not do more than to grow more intensely into these virtues and he fulfills his destiny of wholeness, of integrity, of authenticity for he is aware that he moves from actuality to possibility to new actuality.

Play, then, does add a new dimension of awareness to man's consciousness of how things are. It is important. It is even a joyous awareness, allowing man to truly play his way to happiness, giving a measure of happiness even in the wonder and adventure of the quest.

Play-awareness allows man to live life as promising and wonderful adventure. His tertiary sphered episodes of "play" become formal, basic signs that life itself can be playfully lived because the way things are ultimately is playfully.

A use of play awareness in the manner proposed by this present work also allows a respect for the well-springs of emotions, of feelings, of intuition, of aesthetic awareness as valid approaches to the core of reality. There is a great over-stress on rational analysis and a depreciation of this area of a-rationality which play awareness may help open up. Much of the zest of life goes out of one's awareness of the real when we have to

"ex-plain" it in terms of commonly accepted jargon, the concepts and notions of philosophy and science. It amounts to a situation much like the surprise-delight of a joke being killed by an explanation of why it is funny. Like a body undergoing autopsy, if it is not already dead, it soon will be.

Philosophy must begin to respect play, else it will lose its contact with the fundament of what is real, before analytical dissection cuts it to pieces.

L. The Playful Attitude as Against the Sombre

We have seen that the immediate and categorical opposition of "seriousness" and "play", or "reality" and "play", is illegitimate and that there is much to be explained before a narrow meaning (a perspective of one sphere relative to another) of such oppositions can be accepted.

Still, as far as the style or behavioural attitude of a human being is concerned, there is a place for saying that something may be done "playfully" and not "earnestly". What meaning is carried by this switch of attitude and style from earnest to playful?

What is implied in such a switch of attitude is a switch in perspective and weight to be assigned to a

reality (for example, an activity). There is a transfer from the second sphere of play-reality (the ordinary real world) to the tertiary, a deliberate breaking away from cultural norms of the real to the freer realm of creative, tensionless play. But it is also possible that such relativizing of the secondary sphere of play could arise from an awareness of the primary realm of play-reality. Indeed, in some Eastern religions, a consciousness of the ultimate degree of play-reality (the Tao, for example) renders a certain sardonic playfulness to all human activities and a wise man simply plays along with what is seen as really an instance of cosmic-play in humanized forms. Thus, there arises a psychological mind-set which straddles two spheres at once, the ordinary realm of reality (termed illusion, maya, "play") and the Ultimate, the Really Real (the Cosmic activity: Tao, "Play").

The play-attitude is, therefore, a result of an implied vision of a transcendent world - either as the given legitimizing basis for play-activity or as free adventure into the unknown which in turn, implies the same basis. In our terminology, a switch of attitude and style from the secondary level or realm of play-reality is made because it is founded on a basis of another play-reality justifying the switch in the first place - either the primary or the tertiary realms of play.

We have said that essentially a playful attitude is a relativizing of values of one sphere in favour of what is intuited as more basic. But to be more precise, rather than call this a relativizing of one sphere of the play-real by another, we prefer to say that the playful attitude is a relativizing attitude to ludus because of an intuited, though often unconscious, awareness that it is but one of many possibilities of more basic paidia, the core meaning of play, and the core mode (playfulness) of all that is real. And it is Paidia in the cosmo-ontological sphere and paidia in the tertiary sphere which are central to all such instances of ludus.

The curious play-attitude, therefore, sees itself as separate from or different from what was deemed serious before (ludi). The human playful attitude is proper to the tertiary realm of play and is a humanized and finite example of primary cosmo-ontological Playfulness transcending all ludi.

M. The Problem of Evil

Perhaps the problem of evil may be understood as the problem of incongruences of paidia and ludus. By this we mean that the energy of human paidia seeking embodiment in ludus is an ontological orientation of energy

for perfect expression in consolidated structure. As such, human paidia's search for appropriate form is absolute. Absolute finite paidia seeks absolute finite ludus. Until such a point of perfect convergence of ideal form to absolute energy, there is evil (corrupted or imperfect embodiment of paidia).

This ideal form of paidia, its absolute finite ludus, would be a ludus completely appropriated to the characteristics of paidia as we have articulated them in our discussion of paidia in man. Thus, in this perfect state the whole of life indulges in manifestations with no purpose or utility of any sort, for the mere "pleasure" of affirming itself.

The ideal human ludus of absolute finite paidia would eliminate all evil by definition. All playful experiences in the third sphere of life thus proclaim that the order of life should be without pain, free, self-authenticating, and so forth; - in short, these "play" experiences in the sub-regional sphere proclaim a yearning for absolute playfulness embodied in perfect ludus, a triumph of perfection and good over imperfection and evil.

N. Conclusions

Ordinarily and unfortunately, man tends to judge the tertiary sphere of play from what is assumed a more

basic reality - either the facts (ludi) of nature, or rules (ludi) of society (our primary and secondary play-realities) - without recognizing that these two other realms are also play-realities. Man's creative genius, however, moves in the sphere of the tertiary play-real, even though his energies soon get dissipated there. Out of weakness, he then seeks the comfort of the customary realm of play (ludi). Thus his creations in the third realm tend to be "corrected" by the recognized patterns of the first (the so-called hard laws of Nature, factual existence) and the second (the "facts", obligations, and necessities of everyday life).

In the sense that play is the supreme category and the fundamental notion of our new metaphysics, we may affirm that in the ultimate sense of reality, the Really Real, play and reality coincide. What is Ur-reality is playfulness. In this respect, all the other traditional transcendentals of being - unity, truth, beauty, goodness - all are balanced symphonically, as it were, in a play mode of reality.

Thus, contrary to traditional thinking, we boldly affirm that the more realistic one wants to be the more deeply one must assume the playful attitude. The more playful one becomes the more realistic one becomes.

Conversely, the more grave and morose one is about viewing things in the cold analytical way, the more un-realistic one becomes.

This paradoxical affirmation is paradoxical only in the respect of its being what all paradoxes are: apparent un-truths which upon closer examination are disclosed as being true.

There is a decided danger in such an affirmation, namely, that it will be immediately put aside as a statement of intellectual cuteness and irresponsibility, a conceit. It will be declared so because the common presumption of our cultural heritage has equated "play" to frivolity, with strong hints of Dionysian excess. "Play" is simply "not serious" - or, in any event, not serious enough to be the basic notion for understanding everything else. It most certainly is not serious enough to be the core meaning of the real. In the minds of most people, "play" may be allowed to be considered "as if" equated to the real but this equation is too simplistic, too naive, too casual, to be more than a tool for comprehending something more basic, more real.

As we have learned in the course of this work the position of assuming "play" as useful for an "as if" understanding of the real is a position of ignorance - for

the very idea of "as if" involves a double level of play itself; thus providing intrinsic, logical evidence of the primacy of paidia. "As if" is the intellectual juggling of something in terms of another based upon some felt fittingness or some recognized common or analogous traits. It is also an agreed-upon convention, a fiction that we will "play the game" of such analogies because they, in practice, often turn out to have practical and utilitarian results, or because we simply enjoy the adventure of such an enterprise for its own sake. For this reason, play has to be taken seriously - not just because it pervades our way of looking at things (thought categories, comparisons, synthèses, analogies, language, and so forth) but says something about how things are in themselves, objectively, as we have pointed out. We must get beyond the cowardice of calling play a "metaphor" for reality. It is reality.

The dynamic relationship of self to environment reflects the playful-becoming process of the universe. In tertiary sphered play the dynamic transactional relationship between self and self, self and society, self and world, self and the "un-real" is recognized to be the very stuff and activity of the creating, evolving, changing, cosmos. One recognizes, albeit most of the time unconsciously, and intuitively the centre of life! With

full play awareness, one recognizes that one is in touch with reality when one plays and reality's intimate core, paidia. Conversely, in man the play of the universe recognizes itself.

Buytendijk has stated that play has an internal contrasting nature because of three of its characteristics. Eva Analiese Neumann has summarized these three characteristics for us:

Play is a transaction, namely playing with something that plays with the player. Play is a joining of reality and possibility, of known and unknown. Play consists of a back and forth dynamic, such as tension-release, or surprise-recognition.²¹⁰

Such a view of play is entirely compatible with ours and seems in its own way to be expressing in terms of the third sphere of play-reality what we have said of play in the primary (cosmo-ontological) sphere.

There is no escaping it: - paidia is ultimate, all-pervasive, fundamental, the ground and the superstructure of our whole world. Whatever is real is playful. Whatever is playful is real.

Plotinus once said:

Things that play, play only because of their urge to attain to the vision of God, whether they are the seriousness of the grown man, or the play of the child.²¹¹

²¹⁰ Eva Analiese Neumann, op. cit., p. 64.

²¹¹ Plotinus, Enneads, III. 8.1., op. cit.

Hugo Rahner has asked, in regard to this remark of Plotinus':

Now, why is this so? Is it not because mere seriousness does not get down to the roots of things, and because a spirit of fun, of irony and of humour often digs deeper and seems to get more easily because more playfully - down to the truth?²¹²

We may add that the style of playfulness (paidia) gets down to the truth - because the truth of things is itself playful. One knows the intrinsic playfulness of things best in a manner suited to them - that is, in a playful style.

0. Reviewing the Criteria of our Hypothesis

At this point our distinctions and our development seem grossly simple, if not simplistic. But only now, after a view of each level of appreciation on its own merits, can the apparent simplicity of such a vision of things appear as a conclusion of a very complex analysis of many divergent appreciations of play; it is the result of the creation of a new metaphysics.

The theory of our presentation seems probable (though not quite provable) and gives proper respect to each evaluation of "play" and "reality" as found in the

²¹²Hugo Rahner, Man at Play, op. cit., p. 29.

literature studied.

The theory is, of course, incomplete and subject to corrections by the insights of others - or, indeed, of its author at another time. It is, therefore, tentative.

Thus, all the usual criteria for an hypothesis seem present here.²¹³ There remains only the question of heuristic value and it is the substance of Part Two of our work to attempt such an exploration, given the necessary methodological change of gear as is necessary when switching from philosophical speculation to theological considerations.

²¹³ Confer our Introduction, p. XXXIII ff., supra.

V. CONCLUSIONS TO PART ONE

The play-reality equation is not new. It can be found in philosophers of the West from the time of Heraclitus. Still, the equation is not widely known, or, at least, not given the respect of the mainstream of thought which holds to the popular and rationalist view that play and reality are distinct, a prejudice which we feel has kept "play" out of the mainstream.

Even among some thinkers who accord a positive and important place for play, and even among some who support the play-reality equation in one way or another, there is a built-in prejudice to the effect that play is somehow an extra, a superfluous luxury, added to a more basic kind of reality which apparently is not playfully what it is.

This popular prejudice against the integrity of play carries the contradiction that while play may be essential to the make-up of man and his "world", still it is an "extra" for that very same man and his "world". This view has been seen several times implicitly present in the course of our exposition of opinions on the subject.

One of the objectives of the thesis in Part One particularly (but also to be supported by the "application")

of Part One to Part Two) was to make a three-fold distinction in the way in which the play-reality could be organized in the literature so that we might see three distinct spheres of the equation's meaning. The way around the built-in contradiction about play's "importance" yet "non-importance" - or "essential necessity" yet "superfluous addition", we felt, was to support both sides of the contradiction by saying that the contradictions, when closely examined, yield an exit.

The way out of the contradiction derives from a holistic view of play and reality. This understanding allows that the contradiction may be transformed into a complex of relationships between spheres, in terms of which the contradiction may be transformed into categories permitting interpretation. This transformation of categories re-situates the whole question of play and reality so that they are no longer contradictory.

We have contended that play may be essential in one sphere and yet be seen in another sphere as superfluous relative to the first sphere. When one of the three spheres is confused with another the contradiction easily arises. When the distinction is made between spheres, the contradiction is resolved.

Yet we have held that each sphere is intricately connected with the others in an intimate and ultimate unity.

Many authors have supported the equation without seeing the apparent contradiction clearly, both with regard to its apparent absurdity, and also with regard to the holistic vision as a way out of the absurdity. This thesis simply makes this fact clear.

At this juncture, we would contend that the holistic vision of the three spheres is already implied in any theoretical acceptance of the validity of the equation in any one sphere; as a corollary of this contention, we would contend, also, that the apparent contradiction can be resolved only by this holistic vision.

Thus, for anyone to accept the reality of play as something at all - in any sphere of the equation (and it is difficult to imagine anyone not recognizing at least one of them) - it is asserted that the acceptance of the equation implies an acceptance of the holistic vision of all three interconnected spheres.

Thus we contend that the recognition of play at all is an implied acceptance of the play-reality equation in all spheres of meaning. As a consequence, any simplistic rejection of play as of "the unreal", as "superfluous", and the like, is not logically consistent with its acceptance as real in any sphere. Such "un-real", "superfluous" labels show ignorance of the nature of both

play and reality, and are acceptable only in the sense in which this thesis uses them.

Let us explain:

In our mind, one sphere of the equation implies the other two. Of the three spheres the one where the equation seems most self-evident is the tertiary one, the one of common experience of the activity of imagination. Now, if the equation is valid there, there is an implication that it must tend to be valid also in the secondary sphere, else we would end up saying that shared imaginative concoctions have no effect upon culture or the establishment of customs and society's structures. But in having effect in the secondary sphere, we argue, they exist in the manner of a coextensive of meaning between playful (imaginative) acts and cultural ones (as Ehrmann, for example, shows).

To say this, also implies that in the last and ultimate analysis, the primary cosmo-ontological sphere's meaning, the equation must also be valid since both secondary and tertiary spheres are but instances of it.

Hence, we argue the integrity and mutual inherence of all spheres and the need to uphold all, or none.

It is our contention that where an author might be ignorant of the equation in one sphere or another he

should be instructed about it. If he knows about it, he should either confirm it or reject it and give reasons why. If he explicitly rejects it, in one sphere we suggest he is implicitly rejecting it in the others. If he espouses it in one sphere, he implicitly embraces it in the others. But, as we have seen, some thinkers are partially blind to the implication in either direction.

Thus it is that authors may be lined up as either for or against the hypothesis.

Believing in the venerable tradition of the equation in each distinct three spheres of meaning, it is important to see where each author has or does not have this awareness of the coextensive of play and reality in all three spheres or is limited in his appreciation to only one or two of them. It is important to see that a full appreciation of play must show awareness of all three distinct spheres. If an author embraces all three spheres of the equation he must work out how each sphere is meaningful and yet distinct. He must also show how the spheres tie together by some common principle. If he rejects any part of this tri-fold vision he should know the formidable body of thinkers he opposes and offer reasons for his rejection and recognize the implications of acceptance or rejection of parts of the holistic

vision for, as we have said, in each part is implied the whole.

In our own theory, the organization of Part One of the thesis, in addition to making the distinction between spheres, aimed at constructing an appreciation of the unifying principle between the spheres; a holistic vision of a metaphysics describing the ground of realities as a wondrous and energetic realm of playful possibilities (Paidia) with a free tendency to finite actualizations (Ludi).

The benefit derived from viewing play as "the wonder-ous adventure of the possible" is that it does justice to each distinct realm of the play-reality equation.

Moreover, play gets to remain play; that is, it gets to remain what it is said to be in the literature in each distinct treatment of it in each distinct sphere of meaning.

Paidia, as the core meaning of play thus links "playfulness" and the "wondrous adventure of the possible" as the same thing. Paidia so understood, makes playfulness the realm of the possible and makes "the possible" a reality which then gets to be dispersed into various spheres of actuality (ludi).

Relative to the spheres, playfulness (paidia) must appear as "un-real", as non-being, and as beyond actualities (i.e. ordered to possibilities). Thus, playfulness (paidia) is the active ingredient which permits change and possibility beyond present actualities, as well as the cohesive connection between all actual realities. It is what accounts for finite actualities and the phenomenon of change to new actualities. It is in this sense that play must appear at once mysterious, "useless" and yet essential to the actual.

It is felt that the hypothetical construct of a play metaphysics in a schematic way shed light upon the whole meaning of play while not doing violence to the various and manifold findings of other thinkers on the subject.

Our study was not an historical dissertation on previous views of play but moved within the common academic inheritance of these previous views so that it could pursue its own "idea".

The selection of the particular authors and the limited treatment of their thought was with the objective in mind of finding examples and illustrations for the various spheres of the equation, so that each sphere of meaning could be clarified - as a sphere. In each sphere

it was the play-reality equation in a sphere of meaning which was the focus of attention and not the authors' particular works per se.

The judgment about the "truthfulness" of the hypothesis is, as with all metaphysical systems or theories, not demonstrable in a scientific way, of course. All that can be done is to show the all embracing self-consistency of the theory and to suggest that it sheds light upon the nature of what is, and its ground.

Against the popular need to "scientifically" verify the project we might accommodate some remarks of Karl Jaspers about the so-called "scientific" approach to metaphysics:

Such an approach is based on the assumption that these are problems that can be investigated and solved; it presupposes an objective standard by which the truth and error of metaphysical ideas down through history might be judged with universal validity, as though they were scientific statements.

A radically different approach is rooted in a metaphysical awareness which goes back to the grounds and finds itself again in knowledge. The true metaphysical discussion to which it gives rise is guided by a fundamental knowledge with the help of which it re-enacts the questions and possible answers, the arguments and counter-arguments the decisions and questions that have been left open. [...] Anyone who expects to arrive at results resembling scientific findings will be disappointed. To recapitulate metaphysical speculation in their original spirit is not a scientific operation.^{213a}

^{213a} Karl Jaspers, The Great Philosophers, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 5.

And what does metaphysics do, then? What does it supply? Jaspers is quite forceful:

Metaphysical speculation results in images of the totality of being, which cannot stand up to investigation if taken as objective truth, demonstrable and valid for all. [...]

Should we forego metaphysics? Even if we wished to, that would be impossible. From time immemorial men have fashioned metaphysical images, and such thinking has not been devoid of truth [...]

As mere representations of the objective world, such visions are no more binding than poetry. But they are not poetry; they are truth, grounded in the thinker's subjectivity [...] they do point out possible paths to a transcending apperception of the absolute.^{213b}

^{213b} Ibid., pp. 3-4.

PART TWO: THE THEOLOGICAL MEANING OF PLAY

PRELUDE TO PART TWO

The first part of our work has been done. We have laid down a philosophical appraisal of the "play-reality" problem and have offered a scheme which seems to answer many of the questions about play and reality while confirming an intuition that play is a profound "mystery" - if not the most fundamental mystery of existence.

Our task in Part Two will be to use our findings in Part One as a way of shedding some light on the significance of play in theology. In this way, we will show the heuristic value of our hypothesis.

We want to ask many questions about play and Christian "realities". To posit that play may have positive links to the Christian experience of the real opens up grand vistas of possible investigation. Virtually, the whole realm of theological studies becomes transformed if our metaphysics is a valid view of what is. A theology of play itself, operating out of its faith-valuations of the real could be seen as operating out of its innate playful mode of speculation and might even adopt a deliberately playful style.

The Purpose of Part II of our work is simply to frame the basic questions which would seem to arise for a theology of play from what we have built up in Part I. To engage in this dialogue with play theology as it now stands we must listen to what the theologians understand of the meaning of "play" and respond to them with what our hypothesis might add. We feel that our response will be a dialogical one which also criticizes and organizes "appreciations" of play in theology. At the same time, as we said in our "Introduction", we hope to expand the heuristic value of our hypothesis by a theological application of it. Thus, Part II is not simply an application but a development of the hypothesis itself.

The Use of Philosophy in Theology

Both philosophy and theology attempt to shed light on being in general and existence in a reflexive, systematic way and thus both claim to be basic sciences. Traditionally theologians have made use of philosophy in conjunction with faith postulates and have found that ultimately it is by the use of philosophy as its handmaid that theology gets to the deepest humanly appreciable levels of life's mysteries.

Philosophy itself, while claiming to be an ultimate and basic science, is but a transcendental reflection upon concrete existence and experience.

Such reflection can never wholly exhaust the concrete reality of existence, though the concrete itself is experienced as the ground of existence, and not its unimportant remainder: historicity, is less than real history, concrete love more (not less) than the formal analysis of subjectivity (the ability and the duty of life), the anguish that is experienced is more (not less) than the concept of this basic condition of human existence [...]. Of itself, therefore, philosophy is not the fundamental science in the sense of claiming that it alone illumines and masters concrete human existence.²¹⁴

A true philosopher will always entertain the possibility of another light shed upon the mysteries of reality. The theologian hopes to shed this new light by reflection upon the attitudes, values, and perspectives of the real afforded him by the data of faith. The theologian thus may be a philosopher as well as a believer and there need be no contradiction in that. The theologian, moreover, uses reason in reflection upon reality which is disclosed to him by faith as well as his findings in philosophy.

Because theology is a science (an organized body of knowledge, a systematized branch of intellectual study) it cannot fail to utilize whatever light is afforded by a

²¹⁴Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, Theological Dictionary, op. cit., p. 357.

reasoned assessment of reality. It consequently makes use of intellectual knowledge attained from observation, study, and experimentation carried on in order to determine the nature or principles of the real. But because theology deals with ultimate questions by its very nature it relies upon philosophy especially, for philosophy is devoted to just such questions in the light of human reason. Therefore, to the findings of its faith appreciation of reality, theology has applied philosophical information - such as - categories of thought, basic conceptual distinctions, logic, metaphysics, and so forth.

Whether adverted to - or not - there can be no theology without some application of philosophical principles to faith appreciation of the real. Any faith-life which is self-aware as faith and is understood as such in any degree has already employed philosophy in one way or another. The best theology, therefore, will be the theology which is fully aware of the philosophical principles it utilizes for its own self-understanding. It will always regard its work as subject to correction not only by other systems of philosophy, but especially by the faith-life itself on which theology is but a reasoned reflection. Theology sees philosophy as a tool and subject to correction by the faith underlying its very interest in pursuing

philosophical aid. Faith, therefore, may judge philosophy in this sense.

It is important, in this connection, to become fully conscious of the use of our own philosophy of play when we apply it to faith-understanding. In the first place we must be aware that our metaphysics of play is in large part a reflection upon an intuition of how reality is. It is not the only appreciation, however reasoned, of reality - or of play. It therefore, carries no a priori power when transferred to the theological scene.

Theological Overview

Play has been a generally neglected aspect of the real in Christian theology for most of the history of Christianity. One might venture a guess that, at least in the light of recent theological interest in play, the reason why modern man seems open to the concept is that he has more or less escaped from the strangle-hold of a long tradition of anti-play attitude which has choked Christian theology and which in fact has coexisted with Christian faith in the mind of Western man from the beginning. The anti-play attitude derives from a time prior to the Judaeo-Christian tradition and has yet to be fully eradicated from the popular Christian mind-set as fundamentally alien

to the spirit of the "good news" which is the Gospel. We refer to the severe matter-spirit dichotomies with deprecations of matter and materiality in Gnosticism, Zoroastrianism, Manicheism, Albigensianism, Puritanism, Calvinism, Jansenism, and so on. "Worldly" enjoyments and material concerns were despised in an over-emphasis on "spirit". This life was a testing ground for authentic life to come. Enjoyment had to be postponed. Playing now was equated to devilish frivolity.²¹⁵ The really "serious" value of life lay in its ultimate telos.

In general, Christian theology has not had a very positive estimation of the value of play - viewing it, at best, as a necessary rest-and-relaxation-realm, or recuperative functioning of the imperfect human being. Even the greatest of the Western theological giants, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas for example, generally did not see play as any more than that.²¹⁶ Most of the Fathers seem to fit this evaluation of play.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Confer, for example, Robert Barclay's Apology for the True Christian Divinity, written in 1676, esp. Proposition XV "Concerning Salutations and Recreations Etc.", in M. Conrad Hyers, ed., Holy Laughter, Essays in Religion in the Comic Perspective, New York, The Seabury Press, 1969, pp. 252-261.

²¹⁶ Augustine, De Musica ii, 14 (P.L. 32, 1116A); Enarrationes in Psalmos, 127, 15 (P.L. 36, 1686).
Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica II-II, q. 168, a.1-4.

²¹⁷ Confer for example, St. Ambrose, De Officiis, I, 23, 103 (P.L. 16, 54f) and St. Chrysostom, Commentary on Matthew (P.G. 57, 70 D).

Apart from the mystical tradition there has been relatively little use of "play" in any formal sense since the time of the Fathers. It is the general contention of the present theology of play theologians that our time is now apt for an open examination of play - without accompanying guilt feelings about "useless", wonderous, and adventurous enjoyment of things for their own sake. For the present moment and life "now" is a participation through grace (a foretaste) of the telos of man, God himself.

Locating theology and play studies in the field of recent theology, David Miller has suggested that play may be considered as the common denominator "for circumscribing a fifty-year separation of theological left and right"²¹⁸. In sweeping generalizations which he himself recognizes as "too simple, to be sure" Miller suggests there have been two streams of theology in recent history. On the one hand: "Paul Tillich and Rudolf Bultmann, clustering with Martin Heidegger, moving into theology of hermeneutics, theology of culture, including studies in religion and the arts and phenomenology of religion."²¹⁹ On the other hand:

²¹⁸David Miller, "Theology and Play Studies: An Overview", Journal of the American Academy of Religion, September, 1971, Vol. XXXIX, No. 3., p. 352.

²¹⁹Ibid., p. 351.

"the cluster of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth, moving through the work of Ernst Bloch, into theology of secularity and theology of hope." 220

While the first stream "tends toward talk about being and ontological bases for theology", the second stream "looks to time and historical fundaments". These two movements in theology find a common denominator in play.

For Heidegger play is the opening of the world of being in the earthiness of our being here; that is, it is the pristine topos of authentic existence and therefore the basis for ethical life. For Bloch play is the dynamic by which in daydream man opens the possibility of creating and realizing a hope for the not-yet-become; that is, it is the potential locus of authentic existence and therefore the basis of aesthetized life. A common notion transforms Heidegger's aesthetic into ethic and Bloch's politic into aesthetic.²²¹

It should not be surprising then, that a theology of play should have appeared. It seems a natural outcome of the theological confluence of these two streams of theological movement. There is no need in other words to allude to contemporary social revolutions, the rise of leisure as a problem of society, or any other sociological phenomena to account for the advent of play theology.

It should not be surprising either that we see parallel insights and points of intersection of our Part One

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid., p. 351.

with the current theological scene. "Talk about being and ontological bases for theology" is precisely the emphasis of the present study. For that reason, we might suggest that, in terms of Miller's generalization, the present work fits more comfortably into the stream of Tillich, Bultmann, and Heidegger.

The contemporary theologians of play are bold. They do not hesitate to treat of traditional themes of the utmost importance sub specie ludi. Their basic understanding is that seriousness and playfulness are not mutually antagonistic. The intimation is that the deepest degree of seriousness will disclose itself as play - and vice-versa. Consequently, nothing profoundly important to Christian life can escape the all pervasive importance of play. Thus, for example, Hugo Rahner does not hesitate in profound seriousness and solemnity to speak of God as Deus ludens, or man's basic nature as homo ludens or the Church as ecclesia ludens nor even of eternal bliss as a heavenly play, a heavenly dance. So too, David Miller speaks of salvation and morality as play. Romano Guardini speaks of liturgy as "a kind of holy play in which the soul, with utter abandonment learns to waste time for the sake of God."²²²

²²² Romano Guardini, The Church and the Catholic and The Spirit of the Liturgy, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1935, p. 179.

For one unaccustomed to the treatment of Christian themes sub specie ludi the prejudice will be to regard such comprehensive use of play, as if play applies to everything, as frivolous and second-rate theology. One hears a voice stammering, "One simply cannot regard everything in the light of play, for such an undertaking yields little substance; it seems to make a mockery of any serious attempt at in-depth treatment of play, to say nothing of the profundity of Christian theological tradition."

The answer, of course, to all this is that the theologians of play are to be heard before a judgment is to be made. If, indeed, play is as deep or as basic as they contend, then there may be reason to see play as a central and pivotal idea for faith-understanding. According to our own thesis (if it has any merit) play is coextensive with the real in a many spered application and thus is inescapably an intrinsic aspect of all Christian faith-realities as well. Consequently, nothing in Christian tradition cannot gain significantly from a review of it sub specie ludi.

The themes we will consider (the few among many possibles) are: God, God and creation; the cultural milieu of society and church; and lastly, man's intrinsic nature as imbued by grace (including the meaning of faith and hope).

These themes obviously relate to the distinct play-reality spheres we have indicated in Part One and are given here for the chief purpose of applying Part One to Part Two in some sort of hermeneutical unity as well as to make explicit the most immediate and direct heuristic value in theology of our findings in Part One. The biggest problem here will be the problem of God and how He is connected to our three-fold schema.

In response to each of our selected themes (as given in the theology of play literature) we will enter into our general appraisal in the light of our metaphysics. In this regard our hermeneutic and heuristic tools, as we have said, will be the multi-sphered coextensions of the play-real, the notions of paidia and ludus, and the elements of wonder and adventure.

Theologians

The theologians of play whom we will examine are the leading body: Hugo Rahner, Jürgen Moltmann, Harvey Cox, David Miller, Sam Keen, and Robert Neale. This list, of course, does not exhaust the full body of self-conscious theological sources on play. However, together, our choice of themes, as well as our choice of theologians who formally attend to them sub specie ludi, provides us

with a representative font of theological information sufficient both to give us a status quaestionis as well as to supply a body of work against which we may apply our philosophical findings.

Because of the importance of the distinction between philosophy and theology we must first of all examine globally the meaning of the theological enterprise before proceeding to the explicit theology of play. Accordingly, we will first examine its theoretical method and style (Chapter V); the next three Chapters focus upon the vital questions of: first, God (Chapter VI); second, the world (Chapter VII); and third, the relationship between God and the world vis-a-vis our primary cosmo-ontological sphere (Chapter VIII). Then, the following Chapters deal with the secondary (cultural) and the tertiary (sub-regional) spheres, respectively. These are followed by a brief "Conclusionsto Part Two".

CHAPTER V

THE THEOLOGICAL ENTERPRISE: ITS METHOD AND STYLE

Basic to the theological method, as distinct from the purely philosophical one, is a double footing; reason and faith, working in conjunction.²²³

We had promised in our Introduction that when we reached the theological section we would advert to this switch from philosophy to theology. At this stage, it should be apparent that the very question of method in theology may be intrinsically part of the mysterious problem of distinct but interconnected realms of the real. Is theological enterprise outside of the three-fold schema of reality-play? Or is it embraced by it as an instance of the secondary sphere of reality-play?

Looking at the question of theological method from the perspective of our three-fold appreciation of play-reality we can situate the theological enterprise within it. It follows from our schema that theological speculation arises in the second sphere of play-reality (that is, in our culturally absorbed categories of understanding what is real). It also follows that theology moves in the direction of the third realm of play (that is, a certain

²²³ Confer, for example, Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, "Theology", op. cit., pp. 456-459.

attempt to break away from the limitations of the cognitive categories of culture). In so doing, theology attempts to get 'into the deepest incorporation with the primary level of play through higher consciousness. That is, it aims at an immediate understanding of primary cosmo-ontological play in a state of wonder, to disclose insights in an exploration (adventure) of the "not-yet" aspects of primary ontological play, namely, paidia.

However, looking at our schema of play-reality from the perspective of a believing Christian, a new dimension is seen to transcend the mere philosophical view of the three spheres of play. For, a Christian who accepts our scheme sees that it does not go far enough. The Christian says that it is through the deep appreciation of the primary ontological sphere of play (the Game of Games) as well as cultural play-realities, and his own transcending nature that Christians attempt to glimpse into a Divine sphere of reality. This is to say that for the Christian there is a Divine Reality, the adequate Knowledge of Whom it is disputed whether philosophy alone can give, and, therefore, "God" may not be touched by our metaphysics.

Needless to say, the problem of whether theological method and subject is embraced by the Game of Games, as simply an instance of the secondary sphere of play, is

central to our thesis. Does our schema include everything? From the philosophical viewpoint, the Game of Games is absolute; there are no dimensions of the real behind it.

Thus there arises the dispute about whether God is involved in the Game of Games intrinsically or is a fourth sphere of play-reality.²²⁴

These questions about theological method are precisely part of our main thesis. Because of the fact, we cannot, at one point, and in one respect at least, separate Parts One and Two of our work as if they were completely isolated arenas.

Still our concern is not to prove one view over the other (even if that were possible) but to examine theological understandings of the real from within the valuations given to it by the believer. Our concern here is to hear what faith says and how to understand what it says in the light of philosophy. We assume, in this Part of our essay, to see things as the believer does, and so we take up only one point of view. And (again as we will see), even within the realm of faith-understandings the possibility of a fourth sphere of reality (God) may remain a proper theological question.

²²⁴ This discussion is the subject of our Chapter VIII, "God, the World, and the Game of Games".

Faith sees itself as offering more than what philosophy can offer about the nature and significance of the real. Yet, how should a Christian view his faith-life vis-a-vis our schema? How is theology able to offer something new to mere philosophical understanding of the "play-reality" mystery?

As we have said, the Christian claims that the primary and the secondary spheres of play, so often disclosed through man's awareness of his play in the tertiary realm, are but signs of the God who transcends but is intimately connected with the Game of Games. The question of whether God is the fourth realm of play, though logically first because He is creator of all others, may, perhaps, be debated but the question of His "playfulness" may still be a subject for play theology in either case.

The question may then arise, from within the faith of the believing Christian, as to whether it is legitimate to speak of even God's Reality as playful.

Before we get into that question proper, let us remind ourselves at the very outset, of what all theologians must know, that is, that any theological enterprise is attempting the impossible. That is, theology tries to say something about how things are ultimately - i.e., at their most significant level - or, from a divine view-point.

Obviously, man can never adopt it on his own - nor, even with divine help, can he ever do it perfectly for he, as a finite being, would be attempting to fathom more than he could possibly absorb. Still, what he does manage to say about God, and God's dealings with man, man's true destiny, and so forth, he says more or less accurately when he is aided by the Holy Spirit. At least, this is what the Christian believes.

Essential to this problem of the theological enterprise is the very manifold nature of what is real - and what is playful - as we have outlined in Part One. Thus, in our terminology, the reason why theology is always going to be lagging behind the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and why theological language can never do adequate justice to the life of faith is that theology arises out of a given cultural milieu. It arises out of the secondary sphere of play-reality. Yet its basic orientation is to the transcendence of that secondary play realm so that it can grasp something of the first realm by way of the tertiary sphere. Its trajectory is tertiary, its launching point is secondary, its goal is primary as revelatory of God who may or may not be fourth dimension of play-reality. No wonder the theological enterprise is difficult and is mysterious; and no wonder it requires a play-ful mode of approaching the truth!

Theology of Play vs Play Theology vs Playful Theology

We may start off our theological speculation, therefore, with this following three-fold distinction: there can be a "theology of play"; there can be a "play theology"; and there can be "playful theology". These are distinct businesses. How are they so?

A "theology of play" is a rational and scientifically ordered examination of the meaning of play in all its many facets and connotations. As such, a theology of play is like the theology of any other thing, for example, a theology of art or a theology of justice. What makes a theology of play special in our sense is that it is like a theology of meaning - or a theology of philosophy - an examination of first principles, an examination of mystery. Thus, a theology of play would also embrace a scientific analysis of mystical theology - or mystical intuition. It attempts a critical evaluation of the meaning of play, objectively.

A "theology of play" is one which operates in the secondary sphere of play, that is, which accepts the "game" of theology, its categories, its methods, its rules and regulations. Whether it sees itself as such is beside the point. Its mode of operation is according to the sphere

of meaning about what is real which we have called secondary.

Here we may introduce our first distinction: that between a "theology of play" and a "play theology". We may refer to the distinction made by David Miller in his "Theology and Play Studies".²²⁵ Miller sees a "theology of play" as an application of well-instantiated categories of known classical theology to the phenomenon of play. He includes Harvey Cox and Robert Neale as theologians who have done a "theology of play". He sees a "play theology" as just the reverse. "Here the phenomenon of play whose structures and dynamics are apparently good without any equivocation, and are obvious for all to see, is applied to ailing or otherwise obtuse and abstract theology, thereby giving it new life."²²⁶ The works of Hugo Rahner and Sam Keen fit this category, Miller says.

There is, however, a second distinction, a third possibility, that is, of a "playful theology" - not to be confused with the objective treatments of play we have just described. A "playful theology" is one already committed to a meaning of play as basic to theological enterprise

²²⁵David Miller, "Theology and Play Studies: An Overview", op. cit., pp. 349-354.

²²⁶Ibid., p. 350.

itself. "Playful theology" embraces in a conscious and formal way the active ingredient of play. It recognizes play as operative anyway - even if its presence were not consciously or formally recognized. Such a "playful theology" is conscious that the anonymity of play must be cleared away and that play itself must come out into the open and show itself wherever it is present. It is fully conscious of play as operative in the many intersecting spheres of reality. Consequently it is a playful style of theology. It operates in the sphere and in the style of the tertiary play-reality identity. Its style is what it means. Its style is its way to the truth. Such a "playful theology" permits the Christian theologian to self-consciously re-evaluate his total being and begin to have immediate sympathy with an aesthetic or mystical mode of articulating his faith.

This is not to say that a "playful theology" cherishes nebulousness and imprecision for their own sake. Rather, it tries to express what it has recognized as useful but inadequate (the detached, scientific approach of rational theology) in terms which seem humanly more expressive of the ambiguous, poetic, and multi-levelled meanings which escape the categories of rational discourse. Corita Kent, David Miller and Sam Keen have done this sort of theology.

A "playful theology", therefore, deliberately builds upon the ground work of systematic, rational theology by the employment of a play-ful style in all its utterances. Such a style is incomprehensible to one without both a solid background in a systematic and rational approach to theology and who does not at least intuitively acknowledge the value of play as a valid way to approach mystery - and as operative in any human enterprise willy-nilly. Only the true mystic who intuitively goes to the heart of the mystery in some immediate fashion (like love), may get intended theological meaning from playful theology, without the labour of a rational systematic background in theology as stepping stone into the tertiary sphere. The mystic may do this because he lives close to the mystery already; that is (though he may not advert to it as such), he plays with it by an awareness that it is playing with him.

We may argue, that if play is as all-pervasive as Part One of our essay sees it, no theology at all ought to exist without an awareness of the theological enterprise itself being playful and that all "realities" of the faith are consequently to be understood and lived playfully.

At this juncture of our appreciation of play in a theological vein we are reminded of our observations about method and style in our Pre-lude to Part One. There we

adverted to the lamentable difficulty of dealing with play as mystery without having recourse to artistic or poetic (play-modes) of expression. We are conscious of the tension inherent in our present work and simply see it now as the kind of undertaking which can never do justice to play itself. A philosophical enterprise may never touch the mystery of play. But as we have just hinted, a theological one (and a philosophical one too) may be legitimate if they, themselves, become instances of self-conscious play-theology. This will be so insofar as faith recognizes its own playfulness and, therefore, feels free to express itself in a playful theological style.

Any such playful theology will formally exhibit a style of play. Its style will explicate its awareness of the all-pervasiveness of play in the separate yet interwoven realms of the real. The play style of theology acts consciously to demonstrate that, even in so-called rational discourse in theology, play elements are present and should be acknowledged. Moreover, the play style is most clearly proper for those dimensions of discourse which attempt to grapple with mysteries beyond the categories of rationality. A play-ful theology knows that its style is appropriate to its subject and its aim. It knows that it itself is an instance of what it means to make clear. It is what it says.

Theological language is "event-inverbalizing" language (Hart) and, as such, is imaginative language of

metaphor, juxtaposition, suggestion, poetry, i.e. ordered to understanding in such a way as to produce a further event, i.e. more faith-activity (not just understanding simpliciter). It is language which always is imperfect as far as translating event to understanding is concerned. Its significance and worth rests upon its fidelity to the background for faith, i.e. the graced event of the encounter of divine and human in human history. As such, theological language is only partly intellectualized (and comprehended so). It is language which points to something beyond itself - the event itself. Grace and faith are "appreciated" intellectually, i.e. partially for man - for grace and faith are mystery-phenomena - not puzzle phenomena (au Marcel). Imagination is integrally part of theology's enterprise.

All theology is poetic: it is play, to begin with; it is serious and it does yield truth but not precisely in the same way that scientific laboratories yield truth. All theology is based upon analogy of being. That is to say that whatever we can get into our heads about the true nature of God has to be gotten by way of something which is not of the same order or sphere of reality as is God but which may give us a true glimpse of what He is like because all the orders of the real are somewhat similar. Thus, whatever theology posits about God, it does so

confidently but with tongue in cheek. It yields truth but not exactly proportionate to the way God is in Himself.

It is only by straddling the operant analogies of being that theology can be viable. It is in this sense that all theology is playful. It is real but "un-real", truth-yielding but not in exact proportionality.

The style of theology ought to be, therefore, part of its teaching. To talk gravely and heavily about God and man living together is to miss the point. When man and God unite there is dynamic joy and fun happening. A theology arising out of belief in a joyous union with God as real will never play its part, unless it does so "playfully". The minute it loses its playfulness it ceases to be from faith. In fact, it ceases to be theology.

On the important question of seriousness versus playfulness as attitudes to our experiences in this present salvific economy, our thesis quarrels with Hugo Rahner's view that seriousness is for the things of the next life, play for this life.²²⁷ As we have explained this question, seriousness and playfulness are coextensive terms regarding any given sphere of reality. The proper destiny of man is a movement from this world to the next without invalidating the reality of either. Also, as we understand the question,

²²⁷Hugo Rahner, Man at Play, op. cit., p. 39.

there can be a distinction between playfulness and seriousness in human/or animal attitude only when an introduction of the third sphere of creative paidia is superimposed upon the structure of the first two spheres and seeks to transcend the limits of their ludi.

It follows from what we have said, that faith-life itself must be playful and be imbued with the paidian movements of wonder and adventure. Consequently, a theology which is to be faithful to its roots in such a play dynamic must exhibit strong paidian elements and be ordered to furthering wonder and adventure into the Reality above all realities, the Divine Player Himself.²²⁷

²²⁷While it is tempting to branch out at this point in an exploration of the elements of a "would-be" playful theology, we restrain ourselves from any such systematic work. However, we may mention that a theological use of the elements of paidia as we presented them in Part One would seem to be of use.

CHAPTER VI

THE THEME OF "GOD" AS PLAYER

For the Christian, of course, God is Ultimate Reality.

Our first play theme which the theology of play touches upon, therefore, is the nature of God Himself. That God Himself may be addressed as Deus ludens by the Christian believer is already a remarkable thing. For if we were to consult theological dictionaries, theological encyclopedias, and classical treatises of systematic and dogmatic theology we would find scant reference at all to play - let alone that it is an attribute of the Christian God.

Still, there were a few of the early Fathers of the Church to see play in a more positive light than as mere time out from the serious business of life. It is remarkable that some even went so far as to attribute play to the Godhead. Gregory Nazianzen, for example, once attributed play to the life of the eternal Logos. He said, "the Logos on high plays, stirring the whole cosmos back and forth, as he wills, into shapes of every kind."²²⁸ Maximus Confessor developed an entire mystical theology on

²²⁸ Gregory Nazianzen, Casmina, I, 22, vv. 589-590. (P.G. 37, 624 Af).

this playing of God.²²⁹ On one occasion Thomas Aquinas speaks of play as intrinsic to the nature of the divine wisdom itself. For divine wisdom in its self-contemplation can be said to be playing. Contemplation in play may be spoken in the same breath. The reason for this is "because of the leisure that goes with contemplation, the divine wisdom itself, Holy Scripture says, is 'always of play, playing through the whole world' (Proverbs viii, 30 ff)."²³⁰ Meister Eckhart, too, wrote of the inner ~~life~~ of the Trinity as play.²³¹ Cornelius a Lapide supports the theme of God as Player in his theology.²³²

Walter J. Ong has observed that studies on play may prove of benefit for today's theology if grounded in God as Player.²³³ Karl Barth has stated clearly that God has freely created this world, one among many possibles.²³⁴

²²⁹ Maximus, Ambigua, 2619 (P.G. 91, 1408 ff).

²³⁰ Thomas Aquinas, Commentary in Proverbs, I, d, 2. (expositio tertus). See his:

Opusc. lxviii, in libr. Boetti de Hebdom; cited in Alan Watts, Beyond Theology: The Art of Godmanship, New York, Pantheon Books, 1964, p. 52.

²³¹ Meister Eckhart, cited by Robert A. Durr, "Life as Play", Ergo: Supplement to the Daily Orange, Syracuse, New York, October 6, 1967, p. 5.

²³² Cornelius a Lapide, Commentaria in Proverbia, 8.31 (P.L. 113, 1091 D).

²³³ Walter J. Ong, "Preface" to Hugo Rahner, Man at Play, New York, Herder and Herder, 1972, p. xiii.

²³⁴ Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1961, Vol. III, Part 4, Section 53, Freedom Before God, 1. The Holy Day, p. 51.

He also speaks of

"the true notion of God, the notion of God the dancer".²³⁵

The question of God as Player, though rarely scrutinized in theology, is, therefore, not a new object of speculation. There is some traditional ground for re-examining this theme. Recently, the theme of Deus ludens has received new attention.

A. Hugo Rahner

Our first contemporary Christian theologian of play we will examine on the question of Deus ludens is the late Hugo Rahner.²³⁶ One Chapter of his book is entitled "The Playing of God".²³⁷ Rahner's chief interest was in elucidating the Christian faith-life. Because of this purpose he found he could discern the foundation of the playing of man only by a view of man's Creator as Player.

²³⁵ Cited by Joseph C. McLelland, The Clown and the Crocodile, Richmond, Virginia, John Knox Press, 1970, p. 76.

²³⁶ Hugo Rahner, Man at Play, op. cit.

²³⁷ Ibid., pp. 11-25.

We cannot truly grasp the secret of Homo ludens, unless we first, in all reverence, consider the matter of Deus ludens, God as the Creator who, one might say, as part of a gigantic game, called the world of atoms and spirits into being; for not even the most inspired gesture of man at play can be other than a clumsy, childish imitation of the Logos, who, since the beginning of time, has made play before the face of the Father.²³⁸

The activity of God ad extra, that is, directed outside of His Inner Life Itself, is free, spontaneous and self-justifying, engaged for the glory it has in itself, reflecting back to its Creator. Because of this motionless and spontaneous authenticity in God's creative activity, Rahner attests, we may call God's actions ad extra real play.

The words "meaningful but not necessary" bring into focus the essential content of this idea of the playing of God, yet they do not detract in any way from the enormous seriousness of God's creative activity - for that act is too full of a most profound meaning to be anything but immensely serious - but we do, in so conceiving of it, avoid falsifying its quality or presenting it as an act which flowed from God's nature as a metaphysical necessity, as though God were in some way subordinate to his own works or, in some pantheistic sense, identical with them.²³⁹

²³⁸ Ibid., p. 9.

²³⁹ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

It is interesting to see that Rahner immediately follows up his description of God's creative activity as play with a reference to a realm of possibilities. In so doing he gives support in theological terms for our understanding of the world within the Game of Games as a ludus among many possibles and so confirms our description of playfulness (paidia) as energy moving in the direction of possibilities; he also corroborates our reality-play coextensiveness not only of the intrinsic nature of the whole of creation (the Game of Games) but also of God's Nature too (for God is One and the manner of His activity even ad extra is consistent with the nature of His Being). Rahner says:

The Creator is free. Out of the vast multiplicity of possible ones he calls one particular order into being [...]
In this way a cosmic game is played before God [...].²⁴⁰

In this same passage we may note that the distinction between God's activity as play and the world's activity (in se) as play is not clear. It seems that he is positing both realities as if they are one - or, better, as if the playful activity of the world (the cosmo-ontological sphere) is under the direct control of God's playfulness and thus

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

has no intrinsic playfulness in itself. It is mere instrument - or toy.

Yet, Rahner's words also seem to mean that the creation's native dynamic is play or game which, as he says "is played before God". Does it do its own playing - or not? The passage, of course, is dealing mainly with God's activity in se only secondarily. For this reason, perhaps, we can understand the vagueness about the inner dynamics of the cosmos in Rahner's words here. However, as we will see in the next Chapter, the general context of his whole work gives us an understanding that he feels the cosmos itself has its own inner playfulness.

The connection of the Divine Player to his plaything - his toy - the world, Rahner says, is in the activity of creation and redemption, especially in the entrance of God into the game by incarnating Himself in Jesus. Everything about God speaks of his loving playfulness.²⁴¹ Rahner feels that man, as a plaything, a toy, in the hand of God is not belittled by ~~such~~ an understanding but rather that, as with Plato,²⁴² man is best and most nobly described when called God's plaything - for play and seriousness are not opposed.

²⁴¹Ibid., p. 24.

²⁴²Plato, Laws, 644 DE.



Only the man who has grasped this transcendence inscribed in the very essence of participated, created being can truly "play".²⁴³

[...] for, since God is a Deus vere ludens, man too must be a creature that plays: a Homo ludens.²⁴⁴

Thus Rahner holds that man is a player because he is part of a playful creation and reflects the playfulness of the Creator Himself. This description of man fits our many-sphered play-reality coextensives, for within the Game of Games man is (in the individual subregional and the cultural regional spheres) but a microcosm of the macrocosm, as we explained in Part One. In theological light, the Creator Himself is independent of His Creations and thus exists in his own realm of play-reality coextensiveness.

Rahner says less about the inner life of the Trinity than he does about God's activity ad extra. Still he is bold enough to say that:

the mystical play of the Logos finds a place in the innermost being of the Triune God. If we look at the matter from this point of view, we begin to understand why the delight of the Father in his Son could overflow on to the earth and all its varied beauty which had been prefigured in the Eternal Wisdom.²⁴⁵

²⁴³Hugo Rahner, op. cit., p. 14.

²⁴⁴Ibid., p. 25.

²⁴⁵Ibid., p. 23.

This last quotation from Rahner provides an enticing suggestion at a possible further elaboration of play as the inner dynamic within the heart of the Trinity so that play and reality in God are identical. At any rate, this supposition seems consistent with Rahner's position on Deus ludens. It makes for a reasonable conclusion that Rahner's view supports an identification of playfulness and reality even for the inner life of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, where the Trinitarian "Persons" are "Ludi" of one eternal Paidia.

Because of its importance in later play theology discussions, we should refer to Rahner's comment on the suffering and death of Christ as part of the play as God. He says:

What at the surface appears as fate, as suffering, or - in the Christian sense - as participation in the seemingly senseless destruction of the cross, is for the mystic, whose vision penetrates all veils, the wondrously conceived game of an eternal love, a game so painstaking and manifold in its conception that only love could have devised it.²⁴⁶

This passage is to be situated in the context of Rahner's discussion of mystical awareness of the freedom

²⁴⁶This translation is found in Jürgen Moltmann, op. cit., pp. 28-29. We follow it here (though it is less felicitous than the version in our text of Rahner's work, op. cit. (p. 56), because it is the rendition which commentators like Moltmann and Neale follow - and find offensive.

of grace and the fact that, paradoxically, grace is God's play with the soul allowing the fundamental rule of the divine game: "He who loses, wins". The suffering and death of Christ are part of the Divine Plan of love which operates through the passion and death of Christ - both as summons from the Father and as response from Jesus. The mystic sees into the depths of the meaning of the cross and resurrection and finds no offence in seeing the whole salvific event as the love-play of God.

In summary, we may see that, theologically, Hugo Rahner's view supports our hypothesis of a multi-sphered identification of play and reality. More precisely, his view situates the essence of play in the notion of wonderful and adventurous movement toward possibilities (what we have called paidia) - both within the life of the Trinity as well as His Creative Acts - including the nature of man's own creative activities. Consequently, we may say that Rahner's theological view on the question of Deus ludens corroborates our philosophical speculations, though, of course, by the positing of a Creator - of the world within the Game of Games. This creator God, is, in Himself, a Player, distinct from all His creations.

B. Jürgen Moltmann

Jürgen Moltmann has written an important essay for the theology of play movement. It is called "The First Liberated Men in Creation".²⁴⁷ Moltmann echoes the words of A.A. van Ruler in saying that "if there is no firm ground for the world, within which all things are nailed down by grounds and purposes, then the world is either a desert of absurdity or it has to be the game of the totally-other".²⁴⁸

With an allusion to Heraclitus' symbol of a child playing with the world and a critique of Eugen Fink's "groundless" world, Moltmann goes on to say:

This is the wisdom of creation. It does not take the world and life either more seriously or more lightly than creation demands, a creation which is neither divine nor anti divine. Not Atlas carries the burden of the world on his shoulders, but the child is holding the globe in his hands.²⁴⁹

The whole of creation, Moltmann tells us is God's creation and it is God who is responsible for the is-ness of things accounting for our wonder that something exists

²⁴⁷ Jürgen Moltmann, "The First Liberated Men in History", op. cit.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 16.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

rather than nothing. "There is no purposive rationale" for the is-ness of things for they are freely created by a free God.²⁵⁰

The world as free creation cannot be a necessary unfolding of God nor an emanation of his being from his divine fullness. God is free. [...]

Hence the creation is God's play, a play of his groundless and inscrutable wisdom. It is the realm in which God displays his glory.²⁵¹

Though Moltmann does not elucidate this point further, it seems that we can find in it a promise of an appreciation of the first movement of wonder wherein, from the point of view of a believer, the astounding fact that something is - though it need not be - is obliquely a glimpse into the very act of God's creation as free-making (out of many possibilities). The fact that something is - and is, freely - sparks wonder because it is a recognition that it has its existence freely, without necessity. Ultimately, the act of wonder is, therefore, grounded in the free play of the Creator who acts without necessity and whose only necessity in Himself is that He is, playfully. That is, wonder rests upon an oblique recognition that the manner of how something exists freely bespeaks the manner of a Necessary Free Creator who acts playfully.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 17.

Moltmann proceeds to make a distinction between divine and human play:

The creative God plays with his own possibilities and creates out of nothing that which pleases him. Man can only play with something which, in turn, is playing with him. When man is playing he is himself at stake in the game and he is also being played with.²⁵²

We note that his references to "possibilities" and to the fact that man is both the player and the played in creation seem to suggest connections with our reflections in Part One, as to the nature of Paidia (playfulness in a realm of possibilities) and the distinction between the divine and our primary (ontological) and secondary (cultural) spheres of the play-real.

Whereas God may "play with his own possibilities" [as the divine realm of the Play-Real], man plays as part of something which plays back (our cosmo-ontological sphere of play-real embraces man as his total context as well as his over-and-against; man is a microcosm of a macrocosm seeking to transcend the world). Also, man's cultural or regional sphere of the play-real is part of his total internal and external (over-and-against) total environment.

Moltmann goes on to discuss the play of man as reflecting the play of God. In so doing, he touches upon what we have distinguished as the tertiary (sub-regional) sphere.

²⁵² Ibid., pp. 17-18.

He [man] cannot play with nothing in a void. He can only play in love. Still there are points of contact. Like the creation, man's games are an expression of freedom and not of caprice, for playing relates to the joy of the creator with his creation and the pleasure of the player with his game. Like creation, games combine sincerity and worth, suspense and relaxation. The player is wholly absorbed in his game and takes it seriously, yet at the same time he transcends himself and his game, for it is after all only a game. So he is realizing his freedom without losing it. He steps outside of himself without selling himself.²⁵³

We note that Moltmann has intimated a connection of the tertiary (sub-regional) sphere and the Divine Reality of the play-real and so has a position compatible with ours. However, he has articulated his insight with the usual unconscious blunder into confusion of spheres so that the sub-regional appears devaluated and of less significance than the secondary or cultural identities of the play and the real ("It is after all only a game.") What Moltmann has said of man is better said of God.

Moltmann is clear about the correspondence of the play of God and the play of man in imitation of God. Just as God, in Heraclitus' image, may be spoken of as a child playing with creation, so man must become a child in order to creatively play.²⁵⁴

²⁵³Ibid., p. 18.

²⁵⁴Ibid.

In this sense of man's play activities being in imitation of the play of God, man's being a child of God is one way of saying, in our terms, that man's paidia is a reflective imitation of the Creative Paidia which is God's essence.

Creation exists to give glory to God simply by being itself. Likewise, man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. The meaning of creation and of man in creation is not to be explained in purposive language, but rather simply in the "demonstrative value of being".²⁵⁵

Here is where we see that the purposeless activity asserting the demonstrative value of being is tantamount to saying that playfulness is seriousness enough, without need for a referent outside a play episode for its justification as "serious". Reality is playful because God is playful and the play attitude asserts this reality-play coextensive. Moltmann speaks of this play-real point as historically placed in the eschaton - the realm of true freedom where the risen Lord can be called the Lord of the Dance.²⁵⁶

The Lord of the Dance theme occurs in Moltmann in reference to the risen Christ who, as Hippolytus had

²⁵⁵Ibid., Moltmann is quoting Buytendijk.

²⁵⁶Ibid., p. 19.

said, could be described as the one who is the "lead dancer in the mystical round" and the church as his "bride who dances along". Together they open up the eschatology of freedom.²⁵⁷

The final purpose of history is then no purpose at all. It is the liberation of life which the law had made subject to purposes and achievements, to the all-quickenning joy of God. [...] So at the 'end of history' there awaits us again what has determined its beginnings and accompanied it along the way: Pleasure in the play which unites the free God with liberated men.²⁵⁸

In the meantime, "'The divine life and the divine knowing may well also be understood as a play of love with itself. But this idea deteriorates to mere homily if the seriousness, pain, patience, and work of the negative is missing herein' (Hegel)".²⁵⁹ Moltmann quarrels with Hugo Rahner's inclusion of the cross of Christ in the play of God.²⁶⁰

Moltmann is adamant about the fact that, for him, "the cross of Christ remains an offense". He warns us not to become enthusiasts of play, not to turn everything into play, (else "it becomes impossible to distinguish between

²⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 35.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 36-37.

²⁵⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, "Are There No Rules of the Game?" (Moltmann's rejoinder to the play theologians' responses to his essay), in Theology of Play, op. cit., p. 112.

²⁶⁰ Jürgen Moltmann, "The First Liberated Men in Creation", op. cit., pp. 28-29.

good play and bad play") and not to turn play into an ideology.²⁶¹

In our view, the cross of Christ, indeed, remains an offence - to all those who cannot see that even in it God's loving playfulness is operative. We criticize Moltmann's work for the same reason we criticized that of others - for failing to make a few simple but necessary distinctions. In the first place, as Moltmann himself makes clear, he does not see "seriousness" as "opposed" to meaningful play. Even God's own life is such a coextensive of play and serious reality. To be consistent, then, all God's activity is play-seriousness, meaningful, but nonetheless, playful too.

An insight into the need for such a coextensiveness of the reality of suffering and the play of God is given by David E. Jenkins in his introduction to Moltmann's essay.²⁶² Jenkins feels that the need in Western theology to escape from the dualism which would separate the "interpenetration" of the divine and the worldly is one of the most important.

²⁶¹Jürgen Moltmann, "Are There No Rules of the Game?", op. cit., p. 112. This position is supported by others: for example, Reinhold Niebuhr in his "Humour and Faith" in M. Conrad Hyers, op. cit., p. 139.

²⁶²David E. Jenkins, "The Liberation of 'God'", in Jürgen Moltmann, Theology and Joy, London, SCM Press Ltd., 1973, pp. 1-25.

needs of theology today. He criticizes Moltmann for keeping the cross out of the game.²⁶³

He tells us that closer attention to Eastern Orthodoxy's tradition and experience would show us the interpenetration of God's play and the cross.²⁶⁴

On the question of Christ's crucifixion being "in the game", David Jenkins says:

I believe that the rediscovery and reapplication of insights about glory, joy and play will prove authentic and effective only as we struggle to discover what it now means for us that the glory of God, which is the destiny of man, was embodied in the crucified man, Jesus, who, in himself, is God. But to explore this I think that we shall have to dissent from Moltmann's recommendation that "we should literally and sincerely leave the cross out of the game". This remark, although understandable in its context, seems to me to indicate that the pathologies, or at least the distorting limitations, of Western Theology which were to be overcome by the so-called "Augustinian reversal", are still in danger of exerting their influence.²⁶⁵

Leaving Jenkins' insights aside, we may say that one of the basic obstacles to an understanding of play is the idea that play must always avoid pain. It is true that play, by its very nature, is opposed to work, anxiety,

²⁶³ Ibid., pp. 21-22.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 21.

internal conflict, but it may embrace these sufferings rather than flee them, in order to transform their meaning into a higher synthesis - of freedom, peace, joy, and so forth. Even the agony and death of Christ may be viewed playfully - for two reasons:

In the first place, the act of will of the Father that his Son, Jesus, should have this form of passover, is consistently playful - for all of God's acts are playful.

If we grant that God's providential plans for the world have allowed for the fullness of the way things are, i.e. in all their imperfections, sin and suffering, we must likewise grant that somehow God's playfulness is not thwarted by the misery which confronts man. Even apart from the vast difference of perspectives and valuations between the divine and the human spheres, we must grant that God's playfulness embraces every aspect of the real world (including all that we call evil). It is not just that His providence embraces evil but it actually utilizes it for the good He has in mind in the end. Now central to His providential plans for the world, the Christian holds, is His salvation from evil in Jesus - in the full Jesus event, which is a whole and unified salvific act of God (from Incarnation, suffering, death through to resurrection and ascension to the Father). Consequently, in the Christian perspective, it is integrally

part of God's providence that Jesus' suffering and death are an essential part of the salvation of the world. No part of the suffering and death of Jesus ought to be seen in isolation from the resurrection and ascension, the completion of His passover to the Father.

The point we are making is that while we may not provide an answer to the problem of evil as such, we can theologically see it as swallowed up into the mystery of God apart from Whom, according to play theology, play cannot be seen. Thus, for the Christian even in the excruciating agony of the cross, the victory of resurrection is to be seen always, as it were, on the horizon, in the same Gestalt.

In the second place, the Christian may say that even within the consciousness of Jesus, the act of conforming himself to the will of his Father, was done for the sake of the Father; the purpose of the act of Jesus' surrender may not even have been known; let alone paramount in his consciousness as he bowed to the Father's guidance. In this sense, Jesus' agony and death were done without ulterior motive - for their own sakes, as it were, in loving surrender to the purposes which only the Father knew. Jesus' sufferings were no less; they did not disappear; there may even have been more suffering insofar as he was committing himself in trust to an unknown. The significance

of this agonizing surrender was increased by the trusting surrender.

From the point of view of Jesus, therefore, the Christian may go on to say, the openness, the trust, in fact all of the elements of play which we outlined in Part One in our thesis were present and Jesus was in this profound sense of the term playing with His Father and thus living the most serious of wonderful adventures in His presence. We may assert, then, that any moments of doubt, of hesitancy, of fear, and so forth were subsumed under Jesus' playful attitude to His destiny.²⁶⁶

Consequently, in the Christian view, we may say that Jesus was playing with the Father and the Father with Jesus - even in this most excruciating suffering. There is no incompatibility of play and seriousness - or agony - for play and reality are one in their own proper spheres of meaning, as we have repeatedly seen. Thus, we must assert that the full meaning of Jesus' cross is to be seen in the context of the imminent resurrection, the sign of triumph of the dynamic of play over death, including meaningless sufferings leading to death.

²⁶⁶This point will be much clearer when understood in the light of the Chapter dealing with the tertiary sub-regional sphere where trusting (fiduciary) faith is seen as play. Confer Chapter X Infra.

In this sense the playful manner of Jesus' whole life - including the manner of his approach to his own sufferings and death - become the exemplar, the sign of how all Christians should transform the significance of suffering and death. His resurrection is the Christian faith-"proof" of the validity of playing with the mysteries of suffering and death in human experience, and thus transforming them, in faith, in the light of trust in Providence and the promise of a share in Jesus' resurrection-triumph of play.

We conclude that Moltmann's position on the suffering and death of Jesus is inconsistent with what he posits about the activity of God in the world. Moreover, he has described play in a contradictory manner, attributing universal playfulness to God and the creation, yet making an exception in terms of the incompleteness, imperfection and sin of this present time of suffering and death, in which Jesus shared.

All in all, however, Moltmann is clearly in support of the idea that God plays and that playfulness is the mode of God's activity ad extra since His very nature is playful. Moltmann thus supports our position that the most fundamental aspect of reality is playful, though as theologian, he gives it a theological interpretation.

C. Harvey Cox

Probably the most famous of the theologians of play is Harvey Cox who surprisingly does not say too much in the way of specifics about Deus ludens in his most famous play work, The Feast of Fools.²⁶⁷ Cox spends his time speaking of festivity and fantasy as essential ingredients of authentic human life and as aspects of an authentic and whole Christian way of life. In so doing, his book says something about the notion of God indirectly - as the divine player whose own fantasy and festivity have produced man and the world. Only by implication, arguing from the nature of the creative man, can we see Cox's work as holding to a view of Deus ludens.

The closest Cox gets to the notion of Deus ludens is in saying that God created "so to speak, just for the hell of it." In the same passage, Cox cites Hugo Rahner as one who would agree that "the eternal logos, later to be incarnated in the Son was there within the Father at creation to celebrate it and to give the Father joy in the creation."²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ Harvey Cox, The Feast of Fools: A Theological Essay on Festivity and Fantasy, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1969.

²⁶⁸ ibid., p. 151.

For Cox it appears that Christ is definitely a play figure in the sense of the attitude of Jesus vis-a-vis the attitude of his contemporaries especially in the official Jewish religio-political circles. In this Jesus was a clown. Jesus was apparently irreverent, disrespectful of the laws of Moses, consorting with sinners and broke most of the Sabbath laws. He was also politically dangerous in the fact that he appeared to be too much like so many other radicals who mustered a large following and made the Romans and Jewish officials nervous. Insofar as he was so unorthodox, considered so much of a fool, even his death seemed foolish and meaningless. Like other clown figures, Jesus was mocked and scorned for what he was and yet revealed a reality beyond appearances.

The Clown is constantly defeated tricked, humiliated, and tramped upon. He is infinitely vulnerable but never finally defeated.²⁶⁹

Christ's style of life exemplified clown symbolism.

Like the jester, Christ defies custom and scorns crowned heads. Like a wandering troubador he has no place to lay his head. Like the clown in the circus parade, he satirizes existing authority by riding into town replete with regal pageantry when he has no earthly power. Like a minstrel he frequents dinners and parties. At the end he is costumed by his enemies in a mocking caricature of royal paraphernalia. He is crucified amidst sniggers and taunts with a sign over his head that lampoons his laughable claim.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 142.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 140-141.

While Christ may be pictured as clown and jester, the divine dimension of his Person is not formally introduced by Cox. Thus Cox omits any organized statements on God as Clown or Jester - or Deus ludens. Even in his later book which (among other things) touches upon the significance of play, The Seduction of the Spirit, Cox does not treat the question of God head on, though he does return to Christ the Clown in a brief poem at the conclusion of the book. It is obvious that Cox sees clown symbolism in Christ as important but he never gets²⁷¹ around to showing why it is appropriate that Jesus, the Son of the Father, one in substance with the Father, should exemplify (reveal) the Father's manner of being by such clown symbolism.

Cox fails to deal with the metaphysical implications of Christ's or man's playfulness directly. The "divine" significance of Christ the Harlequin is not examined. Thus, in our view, he fails to account for the play attitude and dynamic of human existence - or, in other words, why God should have produced a playful creature or why He should have made a Clown of His Son. We can conclude from his work only scant and informal support for our hypothesis

²⁷¹Harvey Cox, The Seduction of the Spirit: The Use and Misuse of People's Religion, New York, Simon and Shuster, 1973, p. 330.

that Ultimate Reality is a conjunction of the play-real, though such a proposition is eminently compatible with his theological views.

D. David L. Miller

No one has written more and from as many different points of view on the theology of play than David Miller. His book Gods and Games is virtually a handbook on the current interest in play in many disciplines.²⁷² For two-thirds of his book he offers a catalogue of the pervasiveness and persistence of game-and play-ideas in our time, the origin and history of the recent idea-revolution, the personal experience of games and play in the human psyche, the meaning of play-mythology in general, and the application of the significance of play to ideas about traditional religious meaning. Approximately a third of the book is his attempt at a theology about play as well as a theology made up of play and playfulness. The book, he hopes, is the beginning of a new quest. "It is a quest, not for a serious theology about play but rather for a playful theology about seriousness - in fact, about Ultimate Seriousness, which is Joy."²⁷³

²⁷²David L. Miller, Gods and Games: Towards a Theology of Play, New York, The World Publishing Company, 1969 op. cit.

²⁷³Ibid., p. 5.

It is not clear whether "Ultimate Seriousness" (even though it is given capital letters), is a reference to God - or to the ultimate degree of human concern as human. Miller is clear, however, in making the point that the human side of play is what he calls the "root metaphor" of a new mythology for man's understanding of the realities in which he lives.²⁷⁴ In fact, Miller's insistence upon play as "metaphor" for meaning on the human side of facts of experience keeps his view very much short of the clear identification of reality and play which our metaphysics posits. "Metaphor", we know, is a play-form itself and it is for Miller only a means for understanding "reality" which may very well be non play-like in itself. For all the attention which Miller draws to play, he never equates it with ontological reality. Miller's concern is with the human side of theological work as reaction to the real. For him play is a way of looking at the real - i.e. "sub specie ludi"²⁷⁵ - but is not said of the real itself. Miller does not go so far as to bring Deus ludens to center stage. He does not make a systematic case for a belief or a "make-believe" in God as playful in Himself or in his creative acts ad extra. Miller quotes Alan Watts,

²⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 137-139.

²⁷⁵Ibid., p. 137.

Romano Guardini, Hugo Rahner, and others who believe in such a God but he himself makes no particular claim to believe in Him.

In his theological articles Miller continues to cite others but to make no case for Deus ludens.²⁷⁶ He even goes so far as to suggest that a theology of play may run the risk of mere faddism since the central subject of theology (theou logos) may be "in question".²⁷⁷

Miller states flatly that "the spirit of play is the play of the spirit."²⁷⁸ He says this in response to Paul Tillich's statement in the latter's Systematic Theology: "Play is one of the most characteristic expressions of the freedom of the spirit."²⁷⁹ Miller, this time, it may be noted, does not capitalize the first letter in "spirit". Play remains a human thing.

Thus, we do not enlist David Miller in the ranks of Christian theologians who boldly speak of God as Player, nor of cosmic-ontological reality itself as identical to play.

²⁷⁶ See, for example, David L. Miller, "The Kingdom of Play: Some Old Theological Light from Recent Literature", Union Seminary Quarterly Review, XXV, 3 (Spring, 1970), pp. 343-360.

²⁷⁷ David L. Miller, "Theology and Play Studies: An Overview", op. cit., pp. 350-351.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 354 (Emphasis his).

²⁷⁹ Cited by Miller, idem.

E. Sam Keen

Sam Keen, another prominent writer on the religious significance of play, has made his own special contribution to play theology.

Keen's first book, Apology for Wonder, has positioned his appreciation of play on the existential experience of man and a cosmological emphasis.²⁸⁰ Ontological reason discerns a meaningful cosmos. For Keen the ideal human existence moves gracefully from Apollonian emphasis to Dionysian emphasis and back again according to the appropriate needs of a given time. This ideal human existence receives the title homo tempestivus, the timely man.

Gratitude is expressed by worship by the religious person who sees the world and his own existence as gift from a gracious God. For the non-religious person, "celebration consists of rejoicing in the presence of things, rather than going beyond them".²⁸¹

²⁸⁰Sam Keen, Apology for Wonder, New York, Harper and Row, 1969.

²⁸¹Ibid., p. 209. (Emphasis his.)

How important is it to know the name of the stranger and thank him for his gift? [...] Whether we continue to talk about God is not so important as whether we retain the sense of wonder which keeps us aware that ours is a holy place.²⁸²

While Keen retains an agnostic bent of mind with regard to the nature and reality of God he is courageous enough to say that traditional Christian faith regards God as the ultimate ground of possibility, the Ur-foundation of a metaphysical priority of possibility over necessity.

In the past the symbol "God" has been used to affirm the ontological priority of possibility over necessity, of novelty over repetition, and of grace over compulsion. If God exists, all things are possible and hope and wonder are appropriate attitudes and not tender-minded illusions. The religious impulse is founded upon the conviction that there is a perspective from which the apparent rule of necessity and death may be inserted into a broader context of freedom and ultimate possibility. Perhaps the most valuable contribution of existential theology has been to demonstrate that positing this perspective is not the same as assuming that any human being can occupy it, even in imagination (which has been the mistake of idealism and religious orthodoxies).²⁸³

This statement about God as the Source of Possibilities strikes us as so close to our own metaphysics that we are tempted to say that Keen was on the brink of an outright proclamation of our notion of paidia at the core of the cosmo-ontological sphere. Yet Keen does not go over the

²⁸²Ibid., p. 211.

²⁸³Ibid., p. 176.

brink. He holds back, still the cautious philosopher trying to weigh all sides. God's nature in Apology of Wonder, remains unknown and the reality of Deus ludens is not affirmed.

In To a Dancing God, Keen moves from this agnostic spirit to a more positive affirmation of the power of the God who acts mysteriously beyond the limits of language to capture Him.²⁸⁴

The dancing god to whom the title of this book refers is neither Apollo nor Dionysus. Indeed, he is nameless and, perhaps, must remain so. My (our?) only assurance is that he inhabits me (us?) as often in discipline as in ecstasy, as frequently in promises as in immediacy. As always, the sacred shatters all the categories we necessarily use to understand the sacred. So the dance continues. That is life. And for it I wish to offer these libations.²⁸⁵

Still, the God to whom these libations are made is known only obliquely through the agencies of the body, the world, and the sacred. God remains basically unknown ("An honest theology is necessarily agnostic"²⁸⁶). The ultimate context, the all-enveloping mystery, may be trusted, but it must remain anonymous. The spheres of body, world, sacred,

²⁸⁴Sam Keen, To a Dancing God, New York, Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1970.

²⁸⁵Ibid., p. 5.

²⁸⁶Ibid., p. 156.

and God thus constitute for Keen the four spheres of the real though for Keen they are not formally playful in the way we have explained them.²⁸⁷

The word "God" serves an indispensable function for the man who wishes to make a consistent affirmation of the trustworthiness of the mystery which surrounds his existence, but it is not a word to which he may give a content.²⁸⁸

While Keen gives us an affirmation that God is - and is beyond the limitation of our experience of the sacred - he refuses to speak of how He is. Keen feels that even a desired theology of the future (a "visceral theology", as he calls it) could deal only with the sacred, but not God himself. "If a visceral theology is inevitably agnostic in its views about God, it nevertheless may be highly knowledgeable about the sacred."²⁸⁹

One can, perhaps, discern in Keen a growth from agnosticism to humble and ignorant believer in the progression from Apology for Wonder to To a Dancing God. Keen's title for the second book speaks forcefully to the effect that his God is a playful one.

²⁸⁷We are hesitant about seeing too much of a concord in Keen's work and ours - even though four realities of play are posited in his work as well. A four-fold schema of reality is not an unknown logical construct. Confer our General Conclusions.

²⁸⁸Ibid.

²⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 156-157.

However, in a later work, Keen faces up to the greatest of human problems, the problem of evil, and he is plunged back into profound doubt about the existence of a God who is good - and who, therefore, may be called a Player.

In writing "godsong, a little pro-fun-ditty about g(o)od and (d)evil", Keen has perhaps been the first modern person, besides Corita Kent²⁹⁰ and to a lesser extent, David Miller, to embody a playful style in regard to deep theological themes. The poem moves from doubt to belief to dis-belief to faint hope in the possibility of belief in Deus ludens. At one point, he affirms an optimistic and positive regard for the ultimate context of the world.

This turvy world is a g(o)odly playground
(and evil a parenthesis).
[...]

And now I know why St. John (that dirty old man) said God was a four-letter word and Hegel (the shameless logician) thought the world was God's plaything. Can't you see what careless love can do?²⁹²

²⁹⁰ Corita Kent, Footnotes and Headlines: A Play and Pray Book", New York, Herder and Herder, 1967. Confer also Corita Kent, Harvey Cox, and Samuel E. Eisenstein, Sister Corita, Boston Pilgrim Press, 1968.

²⁹¹ Sam Keen, "godsong, a little pro-fun-ditty about g(o)od and (d)evil", in Jurgen Moltmann, Theology of Play, op. cit., pp. 87-98.

²⁹² Ibid., pp. 92-93.

This is one mood of confident faith, in a playing God. Keen translates this vision of things into the words of an imagined voice urging him to "be serious and responsible" and to refrain from the "frivolous, flip, and irreverent", to move from playful theology to a theology of play. The voice says:

Theology proper has to do with God's revelation of himself in Jesus Christ. And play becomes possible only when we understand that the creative God plays with his own possibilities and creates the world out of nothing. And we may play only when we know God's purpose. Jesus suffered that we may laugh again. (Come to Church and Play, J.C.'s Place. The only TRUE game in town.)²⁹³

While the voice rambles on there are reverberations running parallel to it in Keen's text - echoes of other conscious and unconscious inner voices within the poet - which remind him of his childhood belief and his upbringing in Christian faith - but also of his agnostic bent of mind.

From his experience of senseless evil in the world, Keen finds another mood replacing the optimistic and positive evaluation of God as Deus ludens. It is the mood of oppressive cruelty and slaughter, the experience of ugly and senseless death in our experience.

²⁹³Ibid., p. 94.

The world is a killing ground (life is a parenthesis in a deadly sentence) and mr. devil is boss [...] When the night vision blinds us no arguments, explanations, philosophies, theodicies can erase the blood from the concrete stage of history. Nothing abstract or theoretical can turn the world turvy.²⁹⁴

Keen is left with only a wistful hope that somehow the vision of the good will return - "in the ripeness of time") (Confer Paul's "fulness of time", the time of Christ's redemptive presence - the time of Christ's victory) - when perhaps

(after death) the play will begin
again
[...]
Maybe.²⁹⁵

We may summarize Keen's position on Deus ludens by saying that while he hopes that he may discover God as kindly Player in the world, the presence of evil overwhelms the optimism and so he is caught mid-way between his experience of evil and his desire for a God who really plays as other play theologians affirm He does. While he can affirm a belief in God beyond the world, Keen remains agnostic regarding the nature of such a God. The experience of evil gives Keen pause regarding the traditional Christian faith in an all-good and loving Father who may be described as playing with His children.

²⁹⁴Ibid., pp. 97-98.

²⁹⁵Ibid.

Keen, therefore, cannot be enlisted in support of our thesis regarding this question of a coextensiveness of "play" and "reality" in a distinctly Divine realm.

F. Robert E. Neale

Robert E. Neale has written an important thesis on the notion that from the psychological point of view full play and religion are identical.²⁹⁶ A popularized rendition of his thesis has been published under the title In Praise of Play.²⁹⁷ Since both works deal with the psychology of man primarily, there is little treatment in a theological vein of the nature of God's own life, nor indeed of his creation, except in the widest sense as including the playfulness of man. Little of a metaphysical realm is suggested.

However, in response to Jürgen Moltmann's "The First Liberated Men in Creation", Neale turns to the question of God's play and even challenges Moltmann on the idea that the crucifixion of Jesus was not God's play.²⁹⁸ Moltmann has

²⁹⁶ Robert E. Neale, Play and the Sacred, Toward a Theory of Religion as Play, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, 1964.

²⁹⁷ Robert E. Neale, In Praise of Play: Toward a Psychology of Religion, New York, Harper and Row, 1969.

²⁹⁸ Robert E. Neale, "The Crucifixion as Play", in Jürgen Moltmann, The Theology of Play, op. cit., pp. 76-86.

stated that the "dying agonies of Jesus do not fit the categories of song", that the cross should be left out of the loving game of God, that the sufferings and death of Christ have nothing to do with the category of God's playfulness. For Moltmann, death is too serious a thing to be part of true playfulness.

Neale criticizes Moltmann for being a "spoilsport", for defining play "superficially".²⁹⁹ While agreeing with Moltmann that not to take death seriously is to produce cheap play theories, Neale goes on to say that Moltmann himself is guilty of his own criticism and has consequently cheapened his own appraisal of the play of God. Neale calls Moltmann's theory an "intermission theory of God's play. God plays in the incarnation and resurrection, but not in the crucifixion. The latter is an intermission rather than a second act."³⁰⁰

Neale puts his critique rather forcefully in these words:

Such theories are really dealing with a perverted understanding of play as diversion - diversion from the work of overcoming suffering and death. But Moltmann's [...] time out for work with suffering and death and return to the play world of the resurrection is diverting at best. He implies that pain, suffering, death,

²⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 77.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

destruction and hell have nothing to do with play and play must include laughter and singing. This suggests that he understands play as a diversion which cannot cope with the life that God led in Christ and with the lives we all lead. If play is only a leisure-time activity, neither God nor man is interested. Fortunately, it is something more and does illumine the crucifixion.³⁰¹

Neale's task is then to outline a more positive estimation of play which would embrace the apparently negative and unproductive reality of experiences like suffering and death. He argues that the spirit of play is "adventure" which produces happenings involving chance, involve risk, and are striking or remarkable in nature. Every play episode is experienced as a surprised and wondrous occurrence, an unexpected thrill. In each play episode the value, as a challenge to engage in the activity for its own sake is accepted, without the naive promise of a successful outcome. Also, in each play episode a sense of an unusual and different experience, "not quite of this world" is part of the consciousness of the player.³⁰²

Neale tells us that the play experience carries us beyond our usual need for protection, precipitating us into spontaneity and trust in whatever is to happen, with no particular concern for success or failure - life or death.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Ibid., pp. 78-79.

Just living the adventure is sufficient. While common in childhood, such mature play adventures in life are rare in adults. The fully mature adventures of life encompass our total experience and are the holy experience which religion tries to articulate in the hyperbolic forms of myth and ritual.³⁰³

Neale suggests that such adventurous play happens to us because it first happened to God himself. He even suggests that God Himself may even be "surprised" at His own activity;³⁰⁴ God engages in what He does for its own sake or with no concern as to its being a means to an end called success - because "success and survival are not the ultimate issues."³⁰⁵ "God is not anxious about success and survival because he is a player rather than a worker."³⁰⁶

Neale offers the astounding (and even what he admits as "offensive") speculation that God took a risk about success and failure of his creative and redemptive activities vis-a-vis man. It is still possible that the divine adventure will not succeed just as other adventures have not succeeded, since the adventure is not concluded yet and

³⁰³Ibid., pp. 79-80.

³⁰⁴Ibid., p. 80.

³⁰⁵Ibid. p. 82.

³⁰⁶Ibid.

the outcome remains unknown - to God as well as to us.³⁰⁷

"The death of Christ in the crucifixion could become a final death and the tentative resurrection could be annulled."³⁰⁸

From the point of view which is that of the Divine Player, this riskiness in the adventure is part of the thrill of the game and there is no anxiety about the outcome. So too with the player, man; a true player knows that

an adventure is remarkable in that the participant has no anxiety [...]. If we have to work toward a goal, suffering can only be endured. But if we have reached our goal and are participating in an adventure, even our suffering becomes an occasion for wonder and delight. No pain is eliminated. But to delight in happenings is to put suffering in its proper place.³⁰⁹

Neale, echoing Moltmann, is uncomfortable with Hugo Rahner's mystical way of speaking of "the senseless destruction of the cross".³¹⁰ Neither Moltmann nor Neale like the word "veil", for the suffering of Christ seems in this translation to mean "illusory", un-real.³¹¹ But Christ's suffering and death were painfully real.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 82-83.

³¹⁰ Ibid., p. 84.

³¹¹ Confer Rahner's text, translated by Brian Battershaw and Edward Quinn, which gives "outer coverings" for "veils". These words - "veil", "outer coverings" - suggest that Rahner was talking in a context of mystical theology and grace of the in-depth awareness and appreciation of the total salvific event in Jesus, of which His suffering and death were a part. He was not at all denying the reality of Jesus' suffering and death.

Neale holds that what made the suffering of Jesus bearable was his anxiety-less psychological state of mind, his delight in doing the will of His Father, despite fear, anger, and grief. God in Christ was adventurously playing this game of the hidden delight which takes death seriously. "The enemy of play is not death but work," that is, the psychological mind-set which aims at victory over and flight from suffering and death rather than seeing them as part of the adventure.³¹²

Neale's psychological analysis of the suffering and death of Christ as playful adventure supports the idea of God as player and fits our estimation of the playful relation of Jesus to the Father. It thus supports our hypothesis that God is his own play-reality.

G. Response to the Theologians

We are now in a position to respond to the theologians in a general way in the light of our metaphysics interpreted in the light of faith.

We have seen that on the question of Deus ludens, the theologians of play are not a unified body. While H. Rahner, Jürgen Moltmann, and Robert Neale speak clearly about the Player-God, Harvey Cox seems not to be addressing himself to the question directly, David Miller remains

³¹²Robert Neale, "The Crucifixion as Play", op. cit., p. 85.

vague, and Sam Keen is caught in a state of limbo, not altogether against the possibility, but hoping, almost against hope, that in "the final days" God may be seen as a Player.

What can we conclude? We think the following: the theology of play, surprisingly, has not done very much on this question of Deus ludens. But half of the major figures give formal recognition to God as Player; the others have either not faced up to the question or are ambivalent. It seems, however, that there is sufficient ground for saying that Deus ludens is compatible with the whole question of a viable theology of play. We may go further and claim that unless the Christian theologian's God is seen as Player there is little room for a metaphysics of play - or, in theological terms, there is little if any room for man to be a player. Why should God have made the world play-full, and the human being the greatest of the players in the world if there is no playfulness in the nature of God Himself?

Let us look at the question of Deus ludens in the light of our metaphysics.

The Christian believes in a God "beyond", or distinct from, the realm of the cosmos - the God who created the cosmos itself - who exists as the First Reality Itself which freely wills the cosmos into existence and continuously

sustains it by his constant attention to it. The cosmos cannot exist a single moment without such divine advertance. For the Christian, then, there is a distinct Reality, the sphere of the Inner Life of God.³¹³ The question is now: Is God Playful in Himself? If so, Christians can say that God is Play, with just as much emphasis as they say God is Love.

It should be obvious, that when we claim that God might be Play we are not saying that play is God (such a view would be tantamount to the pantheistic notion of Tao). In just the same way a Christian must be on his guard not to say that love is God (for all but one instance of love [Perfect Love] are of the order of creation - imitations, manifestations, or reflections, and they point to another order: of the unique instance of Perfect Love which is God Himself).

To say that God is Play is to say that Ultimate Reality as Christians understand it, is Play Itself - or Playfulness (Paidia) Itself. In the Christian understanding of such Ultimate Reality such a Play-full God is Personal,

³¹³The question of whether God must be considered a fourth sphere of play-reality or simply the core Reality of the First is the theme of our Chapter VIII. For the time being, we will simply use the word "distinct" for the reality which is God Himself.

Loving, properly addressed as Father - and so on, down the list of divine attributes.

Such an equation between God and Ultimate-Play-"beyond"-the-Cosmos is immediately beyond the categories of human comprehension (those categories existing in the secondary cultural sphere) for the simple reason that if God is Ultimate Play He is Pure Paidia (the Infinite Ground of Playing Possibilities) and beyond definition (ludus) "by definition", as it were. This is to say that God is the Paidia "within" the Game of Games.

Why is God not immediately approachable through the structures of cultural games in the secondary sphere of play-reality? The secondary sphere of play-reality, being a product of human imagination in the world, is of little help in gaining an insight into the inner life of God, for it is only in the sphere where the structures and valuations of the secondary sphere (ludi) can be transcended that man can be liberated to concentrate on paidia or playfulness, the core meaning of the world's reality (as but one of many possible paidia-ludi) which is God's first act ad extra (that is, directed outside Himself). The paidia-ludus of man is closest to the paidia-ludus of the primary, cosmological play-reality as, in turn, revelatory of God's own Spirit. God Himself is Ultimate, Infinite and Pure

Paidia, distinct from the spheres of the world, culture, and man's imaginative concoctions, all these spheres being but finite ludi, of God's Infinite Paidia.

To push the analogy of human paidia and divine paidia to its limit and to take perfection as an intrinsic attribute of God, we can say that the spirit of wonder in God is aimed at the only worthy object of a perfect reality - Himself. God occupies Himself in self-wonder, marvelling as it were, at His own Reality. Also, we can say that God's self-wonder is admiration of the dynamic life within Himself unfolding new possibilities of His Uniqueness within Himself. Thus, we can say, in the halting limitations of our crippled human discourse, that God is Playfulness - Absolute (Pure Paidia) engaged in the two-fold activities of "self-wonder" and "self-adventure" which in Him are one and the same.

Part of the Playfulness of God is His free exploration of the possibilities of His own being; that is, He is dynamic. He realizes Himself continuously in playful modes and discloses Himself to Himself for His own happiness and enjoyment through these playful modes. These playful ways of self-realization in God are numberless convolutions of self-hood actualizing themselves in "imageness" within Him.

God may be understood as the Spirit of Playfulness playfully creating the world, animating it, and disclosing

Himself in it by making the world itself playful in all three spheres. Especially in the third sphere, God reveals Himself. He speaks of Himself in the play of man's nature and man's playful creations. God's creativity creates man's creativity: God's play plays man's playfulness into play. Divine Paidia creates man as a particular paidia-ludus with the peculiar power of his own "creativity".

We may conclude our response to the play theologians by affirming that Deus ludens is the proper core of a theology of play. Our hypothesis of a three-sphered co-extensiveness of play and reality which we outlined in Part One may be theologically grounded upon a distinct centre of the play-real, God, as ludi to Paidia. In this Chapter, we have given but the gist of our understanding of the God-world relationship in terms of our metaphysics. The God-world question, however, is an enormously complex one, perhaps the main problem of any philosophy of religion, and, in itself, is outside the scope of the present work. Hence, our touching upon it must remain just that - a tangential point of contact. Still, in order to situate our theological interpretation of our metaphysics, we will have occasion to return to this playful mode of the God-world connection once we have critically reviewed the thought of the play theologians on the nature of the world.

For our full understanding of the God-world question should be treated only after we have said something theologically about the world's constitution. As we will see, our metaphysics steers away from the extremes of the classical extrinsicist-intrinsicist positions in its discussion of God as a possible Fourth Sphere of Play-Reality, and the connection of God, the World, and the Game of Games.³¹⁴

³¹⁴Confer Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER VII

GOD'S PLAYFUL CREATION: THE WORLD

Our interest now is to discern, if we can, anything in the Christian understanding of how and what the world is in itself. In particular, we will be looking at the theology of play to see if there is anything like a Christian understanding of the world as a sphere of the play-real.

It is clear that, from the point of view of God, creation is His activity; and we might expect that in this sense "creation is God's play, a play of his groundless and inscrutable wisdom [...] the realm in which God displays his glory", as Moltmann says.³¹⁵ But here we are asking a different question: Does the created universe, played into existence by a playing God, itself play out its manner of being in existence? Is it a Weltspiel?

A fundamental datum of the Christian faith is that God is Creator and that everything He creates depends upon His good pleasure, His power and all pervasive presence to keep itself in being. So all pervasive is His presence in His creation that creation takes on a certain imageness of Him. All of God's creatures are images of Him in the

³¹⁵Jürgen Moltman, "The First Liberated Men in History", op. cit., p. 17.

same way, and to the same limited extent, as a work of art is an image of its maker, and as such they reflect something of His nature. Yet the whole of creation is distinct from God Himself. Its nature nonetheless will be somewhat analogous to God's.

Before examining what the play theologians say about the play of reality in a worldly, cosmo-ontological sense, we might argue along these lines that since the Creator is playful so too must his created world be playful. It follows from this that what is created has no intrinsic purpose - or necessity. It just is. And it is precisely because it is (in such purposeless and non-necessary fashion) that its actuality makes a claim on man's wonder. Here we might recall the saying of Buytendijk about the "demonstrative value of being". Things, by their very existence, have already a justification. There is no need to refer to something else to make them powerful and real in their own right. The Christian may hold that the whole of God's creation exhibits this demonstrative value of being, in itself, for itself. It is, therefore, not a means to an end. It is an end in itself. In theological terms it gives glory to God by just being itself.

We might also argue that the nature of the world - because it is made by a playful God - exists playfully in

every aspect of its reality. It is a play-reality conjunction as such - or, in other words, a paidia-ludus, a finite realm brought playfully into being by Infinite Paidia. The world's inner dynamic, therefore, is playful and its playfulness (its paidia) is its own and may not be identified with the playfulness (Paidia) of God. In simpler terms, Infinite Paidia (God) has created (played into finite imageness-being of Himself) a ludus called the world (having its own paidian character). The world is thus its own paidia-ludus.

But what do the major figures in play-theology say on this question? Let us hear from them, and then respond to them in the light of our philosophico-theological position.

A. Hugo Rahner

It is clear that for Hugo Rahner the notion of a playful cosmos is one he cherishes. In the first place, Rahner holds that man and his world are the playthings of Deus ludens, as we have seen. In the second place, Rahner views the creation of God is itself per se in play, playfully, as the following shows:

Rahner cites Heraclitus' classic reference to the world-in-time ("The Aeon is a child at play, playing draughts. The kingly rule is as a child's").³¹⁶

³¹⁶Hugo Rahner, op. cit., p. 14, quoting Heraclitus' Fragment 52D.

Rahner says:

One feels in these words an understanding of the never-ending growth and decline of the cosmos which is "like a drink composed of mixed ingredients that disintegrates into its constituent elements unless it is from time to time stirred up" - we feel the flux of all things.³¹⁷

Thus far, it is the world's play-reality which Rahner seems to be positing and supporting.

At this point Rahner immediately continues (as theologian) to interpret the world's play-reality as dependent upon the guiding hand of the playful Divine Logos.³¹⁸

So, we find, not a closed cosmic system inexorably obeying its own laws, but an order directed by the Logos after the manner of a graceful game, a Logos who is separate from the created world, not identical to it.³¹⁹

Rahner views the Game of Games as the "game of the Logos which he enacts upon the earth to the delight of the Father, his cosmic dance on the globe of the world, [...]"³²⁰

"Certainly the people of antiquity felt the dance to be a natural way of honouring the powers that rule the world, since through it they, as it were, put themselves in tune with them."³²¹

³¹⁷Ibid., quoting Heraclitus' Fragment 125, D.

³¹⁸Ibid., pp. 14-15.

³¹⁹Ibid., p. 15.

³²⁰Ibid., p. 24.

³²¹Ibid., p. 74.

The Christian, too must appreciate "the great dance that moves before the eyes of God."³²²

The proceeding of the cosmos from out the "one" of the divine, and its adornment, are a drama, a contrapuntal reconciliation of opposites: it is a battle of elements, a "planned relationship of notes." Man who, while here below, feels hemmed in by this veritable concertatio, must strain every sense to catch the rhythm of the whole.³²³

But it is in regard to the created being known as man that Rahner is clear about the natural order of reality being intrinsically playful. In fact, the second part of Rahner's book dealing with the play of man is derived from his appreciation of the Creator as Player, "for, since God is a Deus vere ludens, man too must be a creature that plays: a Homo ludens."³²⁴ Because man is a "living plaything" (Plotinus), Rahner tells us, he is prefigured in the Eternal Logos and partakes imitatively of "the quality of God's own creative power by his lightness of touch, by his regard for beauty, by his wisdom and by the sober seriousness of his endeavour."³²⁵ It is because the Divine Player

³²² Ibid., p. 77.

³²³ Ibid., pp. 67-68.

³²⁴ Ibid., p. 25.

³²⁵ Hugo Rahner, op. cit., p. 26.

is at work (at play) in the world that the world itself and especially that part of it which is man's life can be understood as intrinsically playful. "Whoever has, even for a moment, caught sight of this vast cosmic game will thenceforward at all times know that the little life of man and all the seriousness thereof is only a vanishing figure in this dance."³²⁶

There is an inner playful harmony at the heart of the cosmos. This is basically the cosmic theology of Maximus Confessor of which Hans Urs von Balthasar has concluded: "Once this exalted viewpoint has been attained, all the dissonances of this world are, for Maximus as for any other, resolved in a final harmony."³²⁷

Rahner does not hesitate to call the cosmos a "free-soaring motion which God as creative principle has imparted to the cosmos."³²⁸

In this way a cosmic game is played before God, extending from the round of the stars and atoms to the gravely beautiful play of the spirit of man, and to that blessed dance into which are joined the spirits returning homeward to God.³²⁹

³²⁶ Ibid., p. 26, quoting Hans Urs von Balthasar, Kosmische Liturgie, Maximus der Bekenner, Höhe und Krise des griechischen Weltbildes, Freiburg, 1941, pp. 7-8.

³²⁷ Hans Urs von Balthasar, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

³²⁸ Ibid., p. 67.

³²⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

We may conclude that Hugo Rahner supports our hypothesis of a distinct sphere of play, distinct that is from God's own nature, namely the creation. The world itself, Rahner tells us, is a play-sphere; in it the notion of playfulness is coextensive with the notion of reality.

B. Jürgen Moltmann

Moltmann enlists the help of Buytendijk and Portmann to help make a clear picture of a playful world meant to be enjoyed.

Both have shown that even animal behavior can be playful. "To put it simply, the birds are singing much more than Darwin permits", says Buytendijk. In specific types of colourful splendor and hypertelic forms in the world of living things, he contends with Portmann that nature's purpose-free abundance leads the biologist to the concept of self-representation. Nature presents not only a picture of structures serving the preservation of individuals and species, but it also displays its riches, and that is called freedom.³³⁰

Moltmann believes that the "world" plays. In fact, man always finds that as he plays the world plays back to him.

The creative playing of man is always a playing with something which, in turn, plays with the player. Man plays with the waves of the ocean and they play with him. He plays with colors, sounds and words and

³³⁰ Jürgen Moltmann, *op. cit.*, p. 20, referring to F.J.J. Buytendijk, "Der Spieler", Das Menschliche, Stuttgart, 1958, pp. 210 f.

also becomes their playmate. He speaks and resounds, is active and passive, giving and receiving at once. Playing he is neither master nor servant. This is true not only for games in life but also for the game of life. "The further we progress in the analysis of existence," writes Buytendijk, "the clearer it becomes...that man has also the possibility of being the one who is sheltered by the game."³¹

At this place we interrupt Moltmann's quotation from Buytendijk to make a crucial point. For in the very next sentence of Buytendijk's words there arises a typical but needless ambiguity with regard to the ontological ground of the game which plays with man. It will be remembered that we have clearly distinguished, as we must, between the ontology of the cosmo-ontological world within the "Game of Games" and the Reality Christians call God. Many writers on Religion and theology confuse these two areas so that in their expositions of the nature of the sacred, for example, it is naively assumed that religious sentiment along with the ontological weight of the reality of the world, are conjoined with the Christian meaning of God.

Even apart from the present work on the distinction of spheres of reality, it should be apparent that man's religious orientation may be ordered to the basic and "sacred" reality of the world-itself in a purely natural way.

³¹Ibid., p. 24.

In this sense religion and the sacred may be meaningfully grounded in notions like a "world-soul", or other pantheistic orientations of religion. None of this immediately necessitates a transcendent God beyond pantheism in the Christian sense. This is to argue that religion is oriented to the ludus of Paidia, not Pure Paidia itself.

We may now return to Moltmann's unqualified use of Buytendijk's idea of the ontology of the game which plays with man.

...this leads to a mysterious transformation. Man becomes aware that the encompassing, loving ground of his existence is playing a wondrous game with him. It is - as the poet Charles Péguy has shown us - the game of Qui perd gagne, the loser wins.³³²

Now it is obvious that from the context of Moltmann's quotation from Buytendijk that the reader is supposed to think that this "encompassing, loving ground of his existence" is the Christian God Himself operating in the world. In other words, the world's manner of playfulness is really God's playfulness, not the world's itself; the world is a toy - or instrument - in the hands of a playing God who controls the game from moment to moment.

The context of Moltmann's use of Buytendijk is clear. It is the context of a Christian interpretation of the

³³² Ibid., quoting from Buytendijk, op. cit., p. 229.

reality of the world as under the direct and provident hand of God. Moltmann says:

Charles Péguy means [...] the game of grace in which the loser wins and the lost are saved, the poor are filled and the rich are left empty handed; the game of eschatological surprises in which the "first shall be the last and the last first." To comprehend this game of all-reversing grace may well require that we have to give up the last vestige of pride in our own achievements and free ourselves of selfishness and self-pity so that we may join in an affirmation of grace, full of wonder.³³³

It is because Moltmann seems at first to be talking of the world's game (a play-reality sphere), but then also seems to be talking of God's immediate hand claiming the game as only his own (not the world's) that we feel there is ambiguity of the kind we have just indicated between spheres of reality. Moltmann, thus, is subject to the same criticism, in terms of our many sphered hypothesis, that we levelled against philosophers in Part One: play-reality is a many sphered business and the various spheres of the play real ought to be clearly seen as connected - yet distinct, nonetheless.

Throughout the remainder of his lengthy essay, Moltmann remains committed to the "new creation" in Christ and scarcely mentions the world's own inner dynamic except as in need of redeeming grace.

³³³ Ibid.

We may conclude, therefore, that Moltmann's position on the play of the world is ambiguous and we are left with no clear picture as to whether the world itself has its own intrinsic playfulness (paidia) - or whether the world is but an inert toy, a kind of ludus but without paidian elements (According to our theory this is an absurdity.), in which case the playfulness (paidia) of the world is illusory for it is not "of the world" at all, but only of God (Divine Paidia). If Moltmann holds to the first position he is in support of our hypothesis. If not, he holds to a position against our metaphysics.

C. Harvey Cox

Harvey Cox's work is basically sociological: that is, his principal interest is in the world of culture.³³⁴ For that reason, he simply does not deal with the notion of play in the "facts" of the cosmo-ontological sphere. For him Nature in this sense is not an area of concern. In fact, he says that for modern urban man (Cox's sphere of interest) the quest for a place in the cosmos is not in the sense of "primitive peoples" but in human created meanings or realities within the "modern polis". The "cosmos" for modern man

³³⁴Confer his The Feast of Fools: A Theological Essay on Festivity and Fantasy, op. cit.

is no longer in the first instance, nature. It is a society and a network of artifacts, both created by previous man. It is an asphalt jungle whose thunder comes from splintered sound barriers and whose plagues are caused by the poisons spewed forth by man's own inventions.³³⁵

Cox is firm on this point of modern focus and need in theology. It is not "Nature" or the cosmo-ontological sphere of reality because,

'Nature' is not a crucial factor as such in biblical religion. History, not nature, is the place where a drama of choice and destiny, rebellion and reconciliation is played out. [...] our present crisis is not primarily one of our relations to "nature". It has to do with whether we can begin to control the runaway growth of technology, redirect the use of energy to compassionate purposes, re-order our institutions to a more human scale and design habitations that will not strangle or suffocate their inhabitants. [...] Urban man's question about his place in reality includes nature, but it focuses specifically on his place in social reality [...].³³⁶

Though Cox is careful to append words like "in the first instance", "not primarily", and "includes nature", his emphasis is definitely not cosmo-ontological (a fact which put him into a theology of the secondary (regional) and tertiary (sub-regional) spheres of play. This we feel is a weakness, for it is our prejudice that such cosmo-ontological foundations of any theology should be made explicit. As such, a theology of culture and man alone must always be lacking.

³³⁵ Harvey Cox, The Seduction of the Spirit: The Use and Misuse of People's Religion, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

³³⁶ Ibid., pp. 61-62.

Cox does not ground his speculations in the theological significance of festivity and fantasy in any ontology. He does not relate them to being - to truth, to beauty, to goodness, to reality itself. The transcendental aspects are missing. Cox's theology of play, therefore, is not addressed to the play of the world as such and we cannot enlist him for or against our metaphysical view.

D. David Miller

As we saw with the question of Deus ludens, David Miller is likewise elusive about his committal to a theory of the world-as-play.

While he is quite willing to offer a catalogue of theories of others - including, for example, lengthy expositions of Eastern mind-sets regarding the nature of the world³³⁷ - he does not go so far as to say he philosophically espouses any one of them - or theologically accepts them. He will admit with some considerable enthusiasm only that he sees "play" as an important notion for an understanding of modern man's world and a useful metaphor (However salutary, it remains metaphor only!) for comprehension of various kinds of "realities".³³⁸

³³⁷For example, confer his Gods and Games, op. cit., pp. 99-103; also pp. 74-78.

³³⁸Ibid., pp. 143-145.

Miller comes close, though! He even writes an article which puts Heraclitus' "aion" in juxtaposition with Christ's "kingdom" and suggests that:

The world has the character of play, which is to say "everything flows"; or again, substantial reality is invisible. "The hidden harmony is better than the obvious". Primary reality as play is dynamic. The apparent stasis of things is an illusion. The world that is played into being and whose being is play is based in transitoriness. The name of the transitory is Aion, which means "primary temporality," and which implies that transitoriness is primary.³³⁹

But this is as far as Miller goes. He does not espouse the position he speculates upon. He offers some information about a playful ontology and theology - but, apparently, as information only. We have to guess that Miller's hesitancy about commitment to the vision of cosmo-ontological play is because that, while he remains fascinated by the significance of play as a pivotal metaphor for our age's understanding of various kinds of "realities", he cannot get beyond the "use" of play as a metaphor for such understanding. Miller is a theologian of the regional sphere of the play-real and does not escape to the tertiary sphere to do his own playing, at least with regard to the cosmo-ontological question of the play of the world.

³³⁹ David L. Miller, "The Kingdom of Play: Some Old Theological Light from Recent Literature", op. cit., p. 357.

E. Sam Keen

In his two most famous books, Sam Keen says very little about the cosmos or the natural, ontological foundation of the world in a manner which would suggest a coincidence of play and reality there. There are hints here and there in To a Dancing God that he is close to such a position. For example, he shows some sympathy for the Greek mind as well as the primitive mind interpreting human existence in terms of the seasonal rhythm of nature.³⁴⁰ Keen sees a common structure in the human soul, the cosmos, and the drama. Life is a drama in four acts: Act One introduces Spring: innocence, vitality, and promise where potentiality looks forward to actuality. Act two brings Summer and Fall: maturation and disillusionment and tragedy. Act three shows Winter: death and despair. Act four announces Spring: resurrection and return, a surprised gift of rebirth.³⁴¹

In a similar vein, Keen outlines the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the drama of structural meaning for human existence taking place on the stage of history rather than in the eternal cycle of nature. In this drama each

³⁴⁰Sam Keen, To a Dancing God, op. cit., "A Short History of Story Telling", pp. 86-99.

³⁴¹Ibid., pp. 88-89.

event is unique but an integral part of the plot. The drama is summarized for us by Keen. Prelude: God creates a stage of history for the sake of his own entertainment. Act One: In the Garden, a non-tragic experience of finitude in innocence and harmony. Life is good and promising. Act Two: the Fall brings tragic rupture of harmony in man's environment (social, natural, ultimate) but a faint promise of a future return of harmony is present. Act Three: the coming of the kingdom of God. While Judaism still awaits a messiah, Christianity recognizes the Jesus-event as the beginning of new life.³⁴²

Keen comes closest to an ontology of play in putting story-telling at the heart of man and seeing in that story-telling faculty something of the nature of the ultimate.

Another article of faith hidden in the act of storytelling is the confidence that the scale of Being is such that a human being can grasp the meaning of the whole. Personality is not an epiphenomenon in an alien world of matter ruled by chance and number but is the key to the cosmos. Man is a microcosm; thus, in telling his stories, he may have confidence that his warm, concrete, dramatic images are not unrelated to the forces that make for the unity of the macrocosm.³⁴³

³⁴² Ibid., pp. 90-93.

³⁴³ Ibid., p. 97.

In this passage Keen asserts that something of storytelling - or of the nature of a story itself - is metaphysically related to ultimate reality of the cosmos. The cosmos is like a story: human meaning, and the search for it, is something like the dynamic meaning and activity of the cosmos (a microcosm of a macrocosm). Both are playful. What is more, ~~the~~ "personality" bespeaks a "Personality" behind the story-telling of the cosmos. Translated into our metaphysics man's paidia bespeaks its Progenitor, the Divine Paidia.

As we interpret Keen's reflections on story-telling in To a Dancing God we discern a play affirmation at the heart of the cosmos and a playful God behind the cosmos. These oblique allusions to play seem firmly a part of Keen's vision in this book though still somewhat anonymously present and not formally self-conscious. The title of the book, we must remember, should be a clue to his general point of view.

However, in his intriguing poem, "godsong", Keen is hoping against experience that "natural" evil will be seen to be part of a benign game. There is little surety about God being a player, let alone the notion that his creation has a playful dynamic. For playfulness, according to Keen, suggests benign and meaningful activity vis-a-vis

the human condition. Understood as such, "play" seems too happy a word for the naturally cruel and senseless slaughter which is part of life. Keen seems to have temporarily backed off from a firm assertion of a truly playful universe and a playful God behind it. Play may be there but it is uncertain whether it is benign or malignant, meaningful (good) or absurd (evil). Despite all of this - or, perhaps because of it - we reckon Keen to be in support of the idea that the world may be a certain play-reality. He remains doubtful as to whether or not the "game" of such a play-world really cares for man in any special way.

F. Robert Neale

Robert Neale's work Play and the Sacred (as well as his popularization of it in In Praise of Play) has as its object the psychology of man. It consequently deals not at all with the cosmo-ontological sphere of the play-real, except by possible implications, for if man is a player called to full play, and if full play is synonymous with religion (This is Neale's theory), then surely there is ground for some cosmo-ontological rootedness of such play-religion. Neale is not principally concerned with this transcendental dimension of play. The connection of play to cosmic activity, or to God Himself, is not his focus.

He is a theologian of the tertiary (sub-regional) and secondary (regional) spheres of the play-real, where play is of interest to him because it says something profound about human life and its fullness.

Yet, there are oblique hints that Neale may not be far from an appreciation of play-reality in the cosmo-ontological sphere. By his very vehement rejection of Moltmann's position on the question of the crucifixion as play, Neale affirms his belief in the playfulness of even death - for the Christian.

Yet, even in his essay on the crucifixion, Neale's playfulness-vision does not touch the intrinsic nature of matter and energy in the cosmo-ontological sphere. He never reaches the cosmo-ontological sphere. He treats of pain, suffering, destruction and death as realities - but he views them psychologically and argues that man can transform them into aspects of play. In so saying, Neale treats of human realities, not cosmo-ontological ones per se. He is dealing with what we have called the tertiary (sub-regional) sphere of reality.

Even in the psychological sub-regional sphere, Neale commits the same blunder as do other theorists of play - in purporting that play is somehow outside of ordinary reality, enclosed in its own different enclave, but

is nevertheless highly important and productive of life in that same sphere of ordinary reality. For example, even in the essay on crucifixion, the player "is not quite of this world". Yet the adventure of play is so important for the person in the world that he engages in a contest with "chance", he takes a "risk", and he does something of "remarkable purport".³⁴⁴ Play seems, in this way of understanding it, to be fundamentally illusory - yet basic to the health of the "ordinary" psyche living in ordinary (non-play) existence! "The player never loses consciousness of the fact that he is playing, always remaining aware of the differences between the world of play and the world of everyday."³⁴⁵ The player is both in this world and not. This would seem to argue that play, for Neale, does not belong to the ordinariness of life - to matter and energy in the cosmo-ontological sphere - (or, indeed, the culture-reality-play co-extensive). For the player knows when he plays that he is in a sphere different from ordinary reality, part of which is the cosmo-ontological sphere. Neale does not view the world itself as playful. In fact, the non-play world (the cosmo-ontological one) serves to be the vantage point for estimating the "illusion" of the "play-world" of human psychology.

³⁴⁴Ibid., p. 78.

³⁴⁵Ibid.

G. Summary

The remarkable outcome of our examination of the writings of our major play-theologians is that, on this very crucial question of the reality (or non-reality) of cosmo-ontological play, there has been little work done. Rahner and Moltmann argue very close to our position, a positive congruency of reality and play - but do not go quite so far as we. Miller remains caught in the web of metaphor and hesitant about freeing himself, if he feels the need at all. Neale and Cox do not address the question head on - though, perhaps, Neale comes close in his essay on the crucifixion as play. Keen in his desperate honesty, confronts the question of a truly playful cosmos without human concern, and agonizes about a hoped-for vision which might allow him to perceive an aesthetically human and meaningful cosmos truly playing.

H. Response to the Theologians

God Himself transcends the whole sphere of His creation yet reveals Himself in it. Thus, the cosmo-ontological sphere of play is God's act of self-discourse, acting "outside" Himself. The created sphere of reality

echoes something of its Creator; creation is real in an analogous way to God's reality. Both are real, playfully. Thus, creation is a distinct sphere of play-reality brought into being by the Divine sphere of Play-Reality.

A careful study of the play of potency and act, of possibility and actualization, of matter and energy (and their reciprocal conversion) - in brief, of paidia and ludus as these elements show themselves in the whole kaleidoscope of the cosmos - will enhance a feeling of wonder and rekindle a sense of adventure for the mystery of reality. Christian theology ought to be prepared to make the bold and firm assertion that the world plays - that reality and play are one in the cosmo-ontological sphere.

What is new here is not the basic vision of a world which plays (others have said that!) but the brave proclamation that play and seriousness are one and that they are united in cosmo-ontological roots of a coextensiveness of play and reality in the nature of the world. God has created the world not just as his toy - and not as something which (for the sake of interest or insight) may be viewed sub specie ludi - but as a dynamic and self-validating sphere of reality whose fundamental structure and dynamic is playful. Let us be even more precise: the cosmo-ontological sphere does not engage in play activity: it is play.

The Christian should see this bold equation as a consequence of his belief in a playful God who creates playfully a world whose intrinsic and essential nature is an image of Himself.

But, precisely insofar as the cosmo-ontological sphere stems in toto from God's playful imagination, the very manner of actualization of it is also playful. The playfulness of God's imagining and willing is such that He engenders the cosmo-ontological sphere ex nihilo (i.e. in imagination) and does so playfully. There is no "mental" or "extra-mental" actualization of God's creation without its very mode of actualization partaking in the very nature of God's manner of being. Hence, the world exists playfully - not just as an "imagined" sphere in God's mind - but also as an entitative reality "outside" of Him, distinct from Him, and in no way to be identified with His very essence.³⁴⁶

The world's reality is play: both paidia and ludus. This is so because, this present world is one ludus of Infinite Paidia (God) and the interaction between God and our world is the present Game of Games. We may understand the world as a finite ludus-paidia of Infinite Paidia.

³⁴⁶We will discuss in detail the manner of the world's relationship to God in Chapter VIII.

The whole cosmos may be described as in process toward God. God's act of creation is now in process as the primal act of making the world (ex nihilo) - ex possibilitates - as one of many possible universes and moving toward Him. This is so because the ludus of the Game of Games intensifies itself in its own paidian confabulations as God's creative act continues to "imagine" possibilities of more intense "likenesses" of Himself.

In this created sphere of the play-real, chance, adventure, coincidences, non-essential elements, circumstantial and accidental occurrences, are all part of the fabric of playfulness and are thus in their own way, necessary and essential to the Game of Games. Nothing is outside the Game. Nothing is not "in play" in the Game. For this reason, the very dynamic process of the universe may be explained as the paidia-ludus transaction, as the paidian element of the world's reality struggles to slough off its present ludus in its search for new possibilities. The whole "process" is play.

I. The Problem of Evil

As we stated in Part One, the problem of evil may be considered as present in all spheres of finite reality, - by definition, ludi. It is the very "limiting" nature of

a ludus by definition, the quasi-rigid form of a finite image of Divine Paidia, (when given theological interpretation) which accounts for the fact that all finite instances of paidia are (presently) imperfectly expressed, and which also accounts for the presence of chaos, destruction, pain, and so on, within the world. For the finite paidia-ludus which is the world itself is a dynamically active reality, to be characterized by the very friction of its two poles (paidia-ludus). The world has its own paidia but this paidia is ordered to suitable ludus, i.e. ideal ludus, i.e. a game-structure which will ideally express playfulness. This, however, is always on the horizon, since, again by definition, paidia is never perfectly structured or expressed. In fact, to be exact, the world's paidia, even as an imaged paidia of Divine Paidia, is by definition "imaged", "structured", "de-limited", "de-fined", that is, always ludus. This is why we prefer to call the world a paidia-ludus (meaning finite paidia).

The presence of evil as far as human beings is concerned is but part of the tension between finite paidia and its ludic finitude. The basic tension is a constant, and even in the ideal, cannot be eliminated - for the world is always but a ludus. Consequently, it is only in a relative sense that the basic dynamic of the play of the

world (paidia playing out its search for more possibilities - by definition, a search for ludi) may be made humanly satisfactory. This would mean the state of paidia of the world having humanly satisfied itself in ideal human ludus (what, perhaps, in Christian faith, may be equated to "the kingdom of God").

The Christian may understand our metaphysics, then, not as resolving the problem of evil, but as integrating it with the fundamental playfulness of the world - as world. Despite the experience of evil, therefore, the Christian may recognize the playfulness-formality of the world so that for him, the world is a play-reality.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁷For some other philosophico-religious support for the intrinsic playfulness of the world, see, for example, Joseph C. McLelland op. cit., p. 75; M. Conrad Hyers, "The Dialectic of the Sacred and the Comic", in M. Conrad Hyers, op. cit., pp. 214-215, where "chaos is seen positively as the womb of freedom, spontaneity, and immediacy" and "of infinite potentiality and creative possibility"; Raymond Nogar has argued that dis-order or evanescent, free, contingent, wastefulness is the reality of the world beyond so-called "order" in his Lord of the Absurd, New York, Herder and Herder, 1972.

CHAPTER VIII

GOD, THE WORLD, AND THE GAME OF GAMES

Introduction

We have seen in the last two Chapters a review of the contemporary play theology with regard to "God" and "the world" and we have briefly responded to the theologians with regard to each theme. Now it is time to treat the central question of all in some detail: How are we to understand the relationship of God and the world vis-a-vis our three-fold hypothesis? More exactly, what is the connection of God to the world relative to our primary cosmological Game of Games? Though the gist of our answer has been shown intermittently throughout our work so far, the full explanation has been left to this present Chapter.

Briefly summarized, what we will be trying to explain is how God is a part of the Game of Games and we will be steering between an over-simple intrinsicist and a purely extrinsicist view of the God-world relationship. We will be wavering between the extremes of pantheism on the one hand, and the positing of the Divine Reality as a fourth sphere of reality (and of play, therefore), on the other.

In the treatment of this profound and complex question of the God-world connection according to our

metaphysics, it seems unavoidable that we will have to explain ourselves from within the context of the traditional intrinsicist-extrinsicist controversy and yet quarrel with this context at the same time. Our metaphysical categories of paidia and ludus really present a third, middle position between the traditional extremes. Thus we cannot explain what our understanding of the God-world relationship is if we ignore or simply take for granted an understanding of the extreme positions our metaphysics happens to avoid.

The intrinsicist-extrinsicist controversy itself is not the subject matter of our thesis and this enormously complex question is, therefore, not our field of inquiry here precisely. Consequently, our treatment of it is quite brief, and we touch upon it only to indicate the context of our own metaphysics. The critique of the extreme positions in the "problem of God" debate is offered to clarify our own play metaphysics. It also demonstrates the heuristic value of our metaphysics for casting fresh light upon the problem.

We want to avoid giving the impression that the Chapter aims at "solving" the problem of God - or even that the problem of God as such is its first area of concern. No, what we want to do is use the hypothetical appreciation of the play-reality equation from Part One for an understanding of the God-world relationship. This is our first

purpose. Only secondarily, as it happens; the so-called "problem of God" question is touched upon and becomes illustrated, in the contrast of our metaphysics with the usual way in which it is treated.

While theologians are aware of the distinction between God and the world, they nonetheless find themselves compelled to speak of God in terms more properly ad rem when used of the world.³⁴⁸ Taken to the most basic level, this problem of theological language or God-talk has traditionally spoken of God as analogous to the beingness disclosed by philosophy of the world.³⁴⁹ In fact, it often happens that "Being" and "God", or "Ground of Being" and "God", are identified without the idea of analogous understanding entering the equation - for it is felt that, though God and world are radically distinct, they are both sharers in Beingness - as if Beingness were some third common ground, or more accurately, as if the created world somehow participates in the Beingness of God without being identified with God pantheistically.

³⁴⁸ As we saw in Chapter V, theology is a cultural reality; very much part of the world.

³⁴⁹ It is quite clear that the terms used in any dogmatic formula bear a merely analogical meaning. Confer Denzinger-Schönmetzer, Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum, et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum, Fribourg, Herder, 1967, (hereafter noted simply as DS). See especially 3283, 3543, 3887. The "beingness" of the world may be understood as its actualization as a ludus (a unified, structure in finite reflection of Infinite unstructured Playfulness, Paidia).

The two dangers of analogical use are to be noted:

If the Univocal element in being is over-emphasized, the logical consequence is an ultimate community of infinite and finite being, of human and divine knowledge. On the other hand, if the equivalent element is exaggerated, being falls asunder into ultimate diversity and radical separation.³⁵⁰

The Intrinsicist View of the God-World Relationship

According to the intrinsicist school, in the theological treatment of the God-world question, it is assumed that there is a "community" between God and the world in the reality/notion of "being". It is also believed that one can logically avoid the two dangers of univocity and diversity in analogical use. The intrinsicist school emphasizes the "community" aspect of being and consequently the legitimacy of analogical predication of God from the vantage point of the world. Accordingly, there can be a purely natural preamble to faith.³⁵¹

³⁵⁰Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, "Analogy", op. cit., p. 18.

³⁵¹It is our position that such an avoidance is not logically possible: one has to be on one side or the other. The use of analogy, then, is not a "logical" use; it is figurative and metaphorical only, and after the fact of "knowledge" had in some other way. In regard to God it is always a clumsy way of speaking and always "improper".

The traditional key to viable God-talk has been the idea of the analogy of being, as we have stated. But this is now challenged. For example, Wolfhart Pannenberg³⁵² has stated that the radical character of the divine transcendence as given in traditional theology makes the use of the analogy of being inappropriate to any merely human way of knowing God. Deductive theology based on the employment of the classical analogy of being is logically faulty because if analogy is to be effective it must inevitably presuppose univocity at some level, and the middle terms of classical analogical formulae are ultimately equivocal; the syllogisms in which they are employed exhibit the logical fallacy of four terms (quaternio terminorum).³⁵³ Pannenberg argues that the only analogy that can be exhibited in Christian theological language is between theological and non-theological usages of terms. He uses Edmund Schlink's distinction between fact-asserting or metaphysically descriptive language and "doxological" language. Faith and adoration make theological language special, requiring our stammering meaning-intentions to be offered up to God himself who is already "known", and "known" as demanding adoration.

³⁵²Wolfhart Pannenberg, Basic Questions in Theology, trans. George H. Kehm, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1970. Confer the essay "Analogy and Doxology".

³⁵³Ibid., p. 203, n. 49; p. 218.

The analogy of being is a "usage" after the fact of faith-"knowledge", and does not itself establish the reality of God as known.

John Courtney Murray has explained that the mediaeval problem of God and creation has led to alternatives that appear contrary. "You may decide to say that God alone is, or that the world alone is. From both of these decisions, the consequence is atheism."³⁵⁴

Murray also states that the two philosophical atheistic positions which exist are:

a pantheist monism and a materialist monism. More simply, there is only one such philosophy, a monistic philosophy. [...] Behind monism lies the decision to transform the medieval problem of synthesis, God-and-creature, into the modern problem of choice, God-or-creature. [...] The final decision was to posit a dichotomy, God or the world, where the tradition had posed a synthesis, God and the world.³⁵⁵

We would argue that the traditional intuition of faith was correct, that God and the world do not make for an ultimate choice of one over the other but that the formulae, method, and philosophical concepts used to convey the insight of faith have inevitably and logically led to atheism. The language of theology has undercut its own faith.

³⁵⁴ John Courtney Murray, The Problem of God, New Haven Yale University Press, 1964, p. 92.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 95-97.

In terms of our own metaphysics, traditional theology has failed to note the distinction between "being" (ludus) and "God" (Paidia). It has failed to recognize that theological statements are ludi (in the secondary regional-cultural sphere) attempting to speak coherently of ludus (in the primary sphere, i.e. the ludus of the world's beingness) which is always, by definition, a finite and, therefore, inadequate way to speak of God's nature (Pure Paidia.- beyond all ludi).³⁵⁶ By confusing the beingness of the world (as a ludus) with the Reality which is God (Pure Paidia) traditional philosophy and theology have "caused" the "Death of God". For example, Paul Tillich has stated that being is the common element of God and world - such that, as he says, being as a concept "is a word, covering the entirely different realms of the finite and the infinite."³⁵⁷

To our mind, however, a discerning atheist might reasonably see God as a redundant second Transcendent centre

³⁵⁶M. Penido calls theological statements "improper", giving the style of imagery in revelation an epistemological status of "metaphorical analogy" or "analogy of improper proportionality" (Confer, Yves Congar, A History of Theology, trans. Hunter Guthrie, Garden City, Doubleday and Company, 1968, p. 250). The notions of "imagery" and "metaphor" seem to us to suggest the point we have just made. - namely, that play is the only adequate way to speak of the God-world connection.

³⁵⁷Paul Tillich, "The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion", in Robert C. Kimball, ed., Theology of Culture, New York, Oxford University Press, 1959, p. 19.

of reality. Thus, for example, an atheist looking at the theology of Paul Tillich, would agree with Walter Kaufmann that:

No atheist would deny the affirmation that "God is being-itself"; he would only say that in that case we might as well dispense with all reference to God and - like Heidegger, for example, to whom Tillich is exceedingly close - speak of "being".³⁵⁸

The Extrinsicist View of the God-World Relationship

The extrinsicist school generally disdains the efficacy of a merely rational argument for the existence of the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob - and Jesus. Whatever "god" is revealed by philosophical reasoning is not the remarkably "other" God who initiates the contract between God and man and Who judges and re-fashions the whole created order. The true God is known only by a surprised human being, bowled over by His challenge as radically other than the god of the philosophers. He is known by grace in faith only.³⁵⁹

The extrinsicist school would thus repudiate with abhorrence the extreme intrinsicist position we have described. It would also reject our play-philosophy as adequate to disclose God.

³⁵⁸Walter Kaufmann, Critique of Religion and Philosophy, New York, Doubleday and Company, 1961, p. 179.

³⁵⁹The extreme advocate of this view is Karl Barth.

Thus, Christian theologians of a Barthian bent of mind may find in the presentation of our three-sphered universe the need to posit God as radically other than any of them - for all of them are "of the orders of the world". God, therefore, may be viewed as a fourth sphere of reality and we might speculate, therefore, that this fourth sphere of Reality, God, may Himself be legitimately described as playful. In this way, theoretically, a play-real identity can be said of God who is radically distinct from the world He created. God, therefore, while being Lord of His creation and immanently present to it in power and attention, giving it actuality from moment to moment, must not be identified with any merely "natural" aspect of or "within" the Game of Games which is a created reality. According to this view, to make a reductionistic unity of God and the heart of Game of Games in any way would be pantheistic.

Now pantheism is a theory that "God" is a comprehensive term for the world. The world is a development of God's own being, his (ontic or logical) self-expression and manifestation. "God" is the world "either because the world is called a divine emanation, body, development, appearance, or modalities of God or forms of his manifestation; or because God and the world are identified without

qualification".³⁶⁰ Pantheism is not simply an imprecise description of the orientation of all finite being to God and God's imminence in all creation. It ultimately identifies God and the world.

In the simplest of its forms, pantheism "is equivalent to atheism, denying any distinction between God and the world, affirming that the world and the world-principle are identical. The world is the Absolute and adequately explains itself". This extreme form of pantheism is called monism and "usually takes the form of materialism and absolute evolutionism, since it regards spirit, matter, and life as a single reality".³⁶¹

In order to avoid pantheism on the one hand and to safeguard the sovereign otherness of God on the other, some theologians may posit the need of grace to bridge the gap between a knowledge of Being-in-the-world and Being-outside-the-world (God). There can be no merely natural, rational, intuitionál, or humanly religious access to the totally "other" God without grace.³⁶² The "natural light" of reason

³⁶⁰Karl R  hner and Herbert Vorgrimler, op. cit., "Pantheism", p. 334.

³⁶¹Ibid., "Monism", p. 292.

³⁶²For the sake of the argument the likelihood of an actual human existence, whether collective or individual, which would be without the active presence of grace is left aside. Confer DS. 3380, also DS. 800, 3001.

cannot with certainty know God - even by reference to the created world (for the world and the one referring to it [man] remain of the same world order, despite man's power of abstraction and his limited powers of mental transcendence). Agnosticism is thus the proper attitude in metaphysics which entertains the possibility of anything beyond some intuition or knowledge of the cosmos itself. From the created world one can know only the created world's depths - as ludus, as we would say, but not anything beyond (i.e. not Paidia). Such a position seems to make sense, despite the so-called testimony of Scripture (Wis. 13: 1-9; Rom. 1: 18-21) and the tradition in the Church (notably in the Catholic Church's First Vatican Council - against Fideism and Traditionalism).³⁶³

Summary

From both the extreme intrinsicist and extrinsicist views, we have argued that natural reason and natural intuition or feeling can disclose a natural reality only, however transcending might be the nature of man. For, however much man's nature is not limited to particular spheres of existence, it remains in the natural order (a finite ludus) and incapable of reaching to the supernatural

³⁶³For the Catholic teaching, see DS. 3026; also 3004, 3380, 3875, 3890.

order (Pure Paidia) on its own (without grace).

This is to argue that the so-called "God" disclosed through human philosophy and religion is but the being of the cosmos, the heart of the world, an entirely created reality (a ludus) and, therefore, no "God" at all - for such a "God" is completely of the natural order.

It is argued that it is possible, from a purely intellectual point of view, to refrain from such an identification of God and "Absolute Being" by assuming that "Absolute" Being is still "of nature" (a ludus). It is possible to attribute to this "Absolute" Being all the usual metaphysical character which is customarily given to God and still say that it is predicated - not of God Himself - but of what He has done (the creation as ludus). Thus, "absolute being", as disclosed through philosophy and religion, is the ground of the world, its basic foundation, and undergirding first principle, making the world to be a world. Still, it is merely the act of God ad extra (as finite ludus) and not God Himself (Infinite Paidia). Religion and philosophy, therefore, are oriented to a recognition of this "sacred" ground of being of the world qua ludus of Infinite Paidia. Natural religion and natural theology are, in this view, identical and aimed at the core reality of the world, qua world. To reverence this

sacred core of the world as "God", as pantheism. To recognize it (in faith) as from God, is to give indirect worship to God who is its Creator. This is to say that natural religion will lead to pantheism - and "natural theology" is a misnomer for natural religion. Religion is not disparaged but seen as the human way of recognizing the depths of the created order. Interpreted, the created order may be seen as the first word of self-disclosure of God (His first act of potential revelation), a ludus of His Paidia.

This position would make the point of contact between God and the world where the power and the presence of the Creator-Sustainer God consciously and deliberately chooses to make the Game of Games exist and function as a reality simpliciter (as ludus). While the cosmo-ontological "world" has its own proper reality it nevertheless remains in toto completely contingent upon the active advertance of the God beyond it³⁶⁴ (Pure Paidia).

It is our view that the extreme intrinsicist school is only partially valid (that is, the intuition is correct, but its language categories lead logically to a pantheistic identity of God and the world). The extrinsicist view is likewise only partially valid - for its intuition need not necessarily require a consideration of God as so

³⁶⁴ DS. 75, 800, 300P.

totally "beyond" that man must repudiate the world in order to live with God (In our own terminology, it is not necessary to posit God as a fourth sphere of the real).

It is our position that there is a middle position between the both extremes, but that it cannot be established by the use of "the analogy of being" (including the usual cosmological and ontological arguments). Even if we were to grant that the traditional use of analogy has value it is our position that it would lead us not to God but to the world only. It would lead to ludus not Paidia.

God, the World, and the Game of Games

Now, as we have said, it is possible to consider "being" as something concrete - a ludus of Paidia. In the cosmo-ontological sphere "being" simpliciter is the foundation-level of particulars of the world, that is, within the order of the world. The world itself, then, is a ludus, one of many possible ones, originating in an Absolute Domain of Possibles which we would like to identify as God.

The Paidia of the Game of Games is God and is Infinite; but our universe (our world) is a particular ludus stemming from the domain of Paidia and actualized in a finite way. This finite ludus of the Infinite Paidia

remains radically distinct from Infinite Paidia since it is de-fine-d, delimited, actualized in only one way, rather than being totally unspecified and, therefore, unlimited. It is concretized, and by being so concretized it is made finite. The world as a ludus of Infinite Paidia is not to be identified with the non-specified or non-delineated sphere of sheer possibilities (God). God and the world are nonetheless intimately linked so that the world is wholly dependent on God as the Source and its Sustainer for the world exists "out of" God. What is more, the world exists as a finite reflection of its "source" - for ludus is delimited paidia, by definition. The world is thus a finite image of God's Infinitude. Both are playful.

Now, it is part of our hypothesis that any ludus may be mistaken for its originator-source which is paidia. This is so because ludus is paidia in the finite (i.e. play with rules or limits, a game). It is because the world is an image of God, therefore, that the world's beingness may be mistakenly taken to be the Absolute, whereas only God who is the source of the world is Absolute. The "God of the philosophers" (and some theologians) may in fact be only the finite image of God. In this sense, "being" is the ludus of our world. God, then, is (relative to "being") Non-Being - or Infinite Mystery.

Because the very manner of the world's coming to be happens in the domain of possibles (or unstructured and unlimited playfulness), the world may be said to exist "in" God (in the pan-en-theistic sense). The world appears as an "image" of God since it is playfully concocted in God's image-ination. Thus, the world exists qua image - in imageness - that is, playfully, in its very manner of being what it is, essentially. The world exists playfully since it originates "in" a playful God who imagines it into being, that, as "being" (ludus), and thus becomes the occasion for being regarded as "Absolute" by philosophers who equate "being" (ludus), disclosed as the transcendent horizon and foundation of the world, with "God" (Paidia). Thus, the God of philosophers is not quite God in Se but God's image "in" God. This distinction between God Himself and God-in-image (in the world) is discerned only by faith or a free choice of vision of ultimacy.

A philosopher may arrive at an appreciation of Being Simpliciter (ludus) but he need not call this the God (Paidia) in which Christians believe. He may, erroneously equate this Being Simpliciter (ludus) with the popular and traditional term "God" and thus see the term "God" as superfluous or at least synonymous with Being Simpliciter. In this respect, what we may call the inner-cosmic (worldly)

"Transcendent" or "Absolute" may be understood as equivalent to Being Simpliciter (loosely in the manner of Odon Rigaud, Duns Scotis, William of Occam, Spinoza, Heidegger, et alii).³⁶⁵

Panentheism

As we have intimated already, our play metaphysics - especially as it sees the world as "imaging" God - may be explained in terms of the doctrine of panentheism. We would like now to turn our attention to panentheism to show that what it attempts to do (avoid the extremes of pantheistic monism and theistic dualism) is facilitated by our metaphysics. In fact, it is our contention that it is the idea of panentheism which demonstrates how the playfulness of the world does originate in the Player-God precisely as "in" God and playfully so. It is our further contention that our play metaphysics accounts for the "reasonableness" of panentheism.

John A.T. Robinson has succinctly put the traditional problem this way:

³⁶⁵ According to Yves Congar, Odon Rigaud in about 1245 had already suggested that perhaps the object (subjectum) of metaphysics was not God but being. Cf. Yves Congar, op. cit., pp. 128-129.

Somehow we must find a projection which enables us to represent the divine initiative as in the processes of nature rather than as acting on them from without, as exercised through the events of secular history rather than in some sacred superhistory.³⁶⁶

[...]

But can we get beyond this dilemma, this false either-or, of having to be atheists or theists in the old sense?³⁶⁷

[...]

It is the quest for a third alternative between these two [pantheistic monism or theistic dualism] which I believe is being pressed upon us so creatively from such different angles today, secular as well as religious.³⁶⁸

Is there no middle ground between pantheism on the one hand and the positing of a fourth sphere of divine reality on the other? Robinson and others feel that there may be some hint of a resolution of this problem by use of the notion of "panentheism". For an understanding of the term, it would be well for us to quote the entire article on panentheism in Rahner and Vorgrimler's dictionary:

³⁶⁶ John A.T. Robinson, Exploration into God, London, S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1967, p. 105.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 137.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 85.

This form of pantheism does not simply identify the world with God in monistic fashion (God, the "All") but sees the "All" of the world "within" God as an interior modification and manifestation of God, although God is not absorbed into the world. This doctrine of the "immanence" of the world in God is false and heretical only if it denies creation and the distinction of the world from God (and not only of God from the world) (D1782); otherwise it is a demand that ontology undertake thinking out much more profoundly and much more accurately the relation which exists between absolute and finite being (that is, the reciprocal conditioning of unity and difference as they grow in the same proportion).³⁶⁹

The doctrine of panentheism may be defined as:

the belief that the Being of God includes and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part of it exists in him but (as against pantheism) that his Being is more than, and is not exhausted by, the universe.³⁷⁰

Panentheism as a term was coined by K.C.F. Krause (1781-1832) in the elaboration of his own philosophico-religious system. It was used by Baron F. von Hügel,³⁷¹ by C. Hartshorne,³⁷² Alan Watts,³⁷³ and Nicholas Berdyaev.³⁷⁴

³⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 333-334. (Emphasis ours.)

³⁷⁰ The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, ed. by F.L. Cross, Oxford University Press, 1957.

³⁷¹ Baron F. von Hügel, Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion, New York, Dent. (1921-1926) I, 162f; II, 39.

³⁷² C. Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1964, pp. 88-90; and Philosophers Speak of God, University of Chicago Press, 1953, (Introduction and Epilogue).

³⁷³ Alan Watts, Behold the Spirit, New York, Pantheon Books, 1947, pp. 121-154.

³⁷⁴ Nicholas Berdyaev, Freedom of the Spirit, Bles, 1935, esp. p. 242; and Spirit and Reality, Bles, 1939, pp. 132-137.

Piere Teilhard de Chardin speaks of "that which is ⁱⁿ everything is above everything". The whole process universe may be seen as a response to the Beyond in its midst, to God who is not identified as the process itself but who operates within it drawing it to Himself. At no time does the process get to be identified with God yet there is a mutual co-inherence between God and the universe. In panentheism there is a fresh way of considering the Godhead as timeless but not outside of time,³⁷⁵ for everything is "in" God and God is "in" everything.

In panentheism God is "all in all". The character of panentheism aptly expresses Paul's saying in I COR. 15: 28. As Bishop Robinson says, panentheism must be clearly distinguished from all forms of gnosticism which would have it that in order to reach God "above" the Demiurge who created this world one had to pass "through and out the other side of all the spheres of material existence."³⁷⁶ As we see it, there is an ambiguity of transcendence involved. God transcends the Being-ness of the world which in turn may be considered absolute from a rational point of view at least in its fundamental dimension (as distinctly real).

³⁷⁵ Confer Nelson Pike, God and Timelessness, New York, Schocken Books, 1970.

³⁷⁶ John A.T. Robinson, op. cit., p. 143.

Thus, the world's reality is not God's reality and vice-versa. Still, the Being-ness of the world may be understood as analogous to God's "Being" (when seen and posited in faith). Any natural human faculty or activity may reach only the "absolute" cosmo-ontological Beingness of the world. It is a matter of interpretation (in faith) whether such "Absolute" Beingness of the world is to be called God or simply a sign of God. We are inclined to the "sign" value (play value, specifically ludus "of" Paidia) of such "Absolute" Beingness of the world, leaving it completely open as to whether this is the only viable Christian view of things.

The ambiguity of transcendence makes some sense particularly in the context of a metaphysics of play. It comes about when God creates an image (a play entity) of Himself which is not exactly Himself. The image carries with it the "character" of transcendence which is eminently in God Himself but now reflected in a distinct and finite sphere called the world (a ludus of Infinite Paidia). It is, therefore, because God playfully "images" the world into being that the world deceives philosophers into thinking that the imaged transcendence is not an image at all but the Last Reality, and so they posit the Absolute as the beingness of the world. In this sense we can appreciate why eminent ~~/~~ philosophers with the best of good will, and sensibility to things

theological, remain atheistic or at least agnostic regarding the claim of those who believe in a God beyond the being-becoming of the universe-multiverse. It is also understandable why theologians following upon the line of thinking of such philosophers and identifying over-simply the whole question of analogy of being so that it is proper and not "improper" (Penido) also fall into the position of speaking of Being and God redundantly. It is our feeling that the played-into-being image of God's transcendence which is the heart of God's creative play in the order of the world "causes" God to be at once extrinsic and intrinsic to the world. It is because of the mirror image of God's transcendence which is located in the world that it can be mistaken for God Himself as philosophers and theologians often do. But there is only one real Absolute which is not "in" the world as "of" it per se, but only within the world because the world is playfully "in" God.

As such, then, we would posit an ambiguous imageness of transcendence (Being; then God), and see our understanding of the relationship of God to the world in the (non-heretical and non-false) panentheistic sense. The world comes entirely from God but has its own reality nonetheless by the power of God's creative act. The world derives from God (this is what is meant by the phrase "ex nihilo"), yet is

not to be simply identified as an emanation of His essence. The world is not God, nor has God become the world. The world is God's idea, not God Himself, yet wholly dependent upon Him, and God is never simply identified with His idea of the world. The world "happens" within God but is not God. God (Infinite Paidia) and the world (finite ludus) remain distinct.

This panentheistic view is profoundly intrinsicist regarding the world, yet it preserves the otherness (a somewhat extrinsicist-view) of God as well. It would allow the reality of the world to remain itself (distinct and integral) and not merely to be an instrument (a toy) in the hands of God. The world would have its own being (and playfulness) and even its own "apparent absoluteness" of being (paidia-ludus) (the question of its necessity in the absolute remaining open as far as unaided reason can detect). Natural theology and religion would be speaking to a reality "within" God, as it were, and so very close to being a clear image of Him (it is His idea, His image, and an image is a playful thing!) but would not be speaking to His proper Reality Simpliciter, which as Pure Paidia must always remain a mystery.

Our position holds that the Being Simpliciter of the world is not God in Se but nonetheless is legitimately considered, in faith, as revelatory of God precisely because

it is "in" Him as a free created image reflecting back upon God as its Creator.³⁷⁷ For the Christian philosopher-theologian, God remains the only Absolute, but the world may appear to be absolute (i.e. to really (sic) image (sic) the Absolute), because it is a ludus of Paidia.

Thus the marriage of philosophy and theology here is occasioned, facilitated and understood by a playfulness awareness (the image-making, world-making, of the real world by God). The world's reality is precisely a reality playfully constituted by God and existing by His free continuance of the play of creation to be a play-reality. The world is playfully real (a play-real conjunction) because it exists "in" play modality "in" God. The final explanation of why the Game of Games (the God-world relationship) is the present essay's "primary cosmo-ontological play-reality" is to be thus understood.

Our position thus confirms not just that the world plays out its very being (a play-reality conjunction), but also it confirms God as Play-Reality (at least insofar as he creates the world freely "in" Himself, the world becoming an image of Him). This position also shows that God in Se is a player because it shows Him as essentially capable of such play.

³⁷⁷ This is the justification of the use of the "analogy of being" in theological discourse, as we have said.

Moreover, in regard to the world, this position explains why the world is also a conjunction of paidia-ludus (as it were, on its own, in its own proper reality) just as God's Paidia is also His own. This conjunction of paidia-ludus must be in the very Being Simpliciter of the world precisely so that it can be a real (sic) image of God's Paidia. Even insofar as the reality of the world may rightly be regarded as its own kind of reality, a reality which is not simply an emanation of God's, in just so far it appropriately images the Creator who has His own proper Identity and Reality (which is not to be confused with the world's).

The world's cosmo-ontological sphere of play-reality is, therefore, but one of many such play-realities and only a single unnecessary instance of God's imagining activity. The ultimate reason why the world's cosmo-ontological foundation may be rightly seen as play-ful is precisely because God makes it in a playful style of creativity (that is, as an aesthetically actualized image, a playful thing, a toy, something conjured up out of His creative "imagination"). Because it originates from God's playfulness playfully, it is actualized precisely as a playful whole. It has its own proper reality as a play-reality and no other. Thus, the world is a play-reality originating "in" (sic) a Play-God in a play activity (image making).

The notion of "image", therefore, is not accidentally associated in the God-world connection. Rather, it is essentially what accounts for the connection in the first place and makes it play-ful intrinsically. The playful "imageness" of the world originating in Divine Playful "image-ination" accounts likewise for the ambiguity of transcendence ("ludus-image" being ~~confused~~ with Paidia) and is essentially consistent with a play theology's appreciation of the God-world question. Likewise, the "imageness" (play quality) of the world explains precisely how the world can be in God and yet not identical with His Essence. Hence, our play theology lends "reasonableness" to the doctrine of panentheism:

It is of course taken for granted that, for the Christian, the present salvific economy in the free will of God (His playful good pleasure) has constituted the present Game of Games (His relationship to "the world") in a permanent manner so that, for example, the so-called "Kingdom of God" is established through a permanent affirmation of the reality of the world epitomized in the Incarnation of God in Jesus and the continuing Hypostatic Union.³⁷⁸ Though the world is not necessary in se (only God is so) it will

³⁷⁸DS 252-263, 301-302, 426, 436f, 516.

never be utterly dissolved but rather, on the contrary, will be more and more perfected by God's continued affirmation of it. For the Christian, heaven (God's life) and this world come together ultimately in the same kind of loving affirmation of the world which is revealed in Christ.³⁷⁹

Conclusion

While we have briefly studied panentheism and an ambiguity of transcendence to understand and harmonize the extrinsicist and intrinsicist views of God's relationship to the world, we have done so as only one theory of how "God", "the world", and "The Game of Games" may be integrated in a holistic way. We have suggested that neither a simple positing of a separated (extrinsicist) fourth sphere of play-reality nor a too simple equation (immanentism, intrinsicism) (a panentheistic identity) between "God", and "world" need be made. A middle ground of panentheism and an "imaged" (playful) transcendence seems to affirm both sides of the question while siding with neither to the exclusion of the other.

Permeating our theory of panentheism and ambiguous transcendence is our appreciation of play. We have expressed our intuition in terms of play and indeed, have argued that

³⁷⁹ Confer, for example, Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, op. cit., "Other World", p. 331, and "Heaven", p. 200.

it is play which adequately explains how the world can be "in" God yet not identified with Him. Because reality is intrinsically playful in God and in the world their mutual confluence can be affirmed without the positing of a fourth sphere of the play-real and without lapsing into pantheism.

In our view, both panentheism and the playful "imageness" of the world relative to God begin to make unified sense only in an appreciation of reality itself in all spheres as playfully real.

CHAPTER IX

THE THEOLOGICAL APPRECIATION OF THE PLAY-REALITY-CULTURE COEXTENSIVE

In Part One we described the second sphere of the play-real as a three-way coextensive: play-reality-culture. In playing his part in the general scheme of things which we have called the Game of Games, man produces his own version of the real and he does so in a play dynamic of his interaction with his environment in socially accepted conventions. The result is that what his "culture" decides is real is "real" and it is real "playfully" (It has come to be what it is in a play-mode of actualization in social dimension). The secondary sphere of the play-real, we explained, was the realm of "human" reality where the aspects of play, reality, and culture, are coextensive and inseparable. In practice, it is impossible to speak of the real in this sphere of meaning without coloring the very perception of it by culturally inherited and absorbed categories which are themselves generated in a play dynamic.

It will be recalled that the distinction we made between the cosmo-ontological sphere and this cultural (regional) sphere is the distinction between factual, naked, matter and energy and the realm of human meanings and

significances imposed upon them by the human manner of perceiving and reacting to the cosmo-ontologically real.

There are, at least, four ways in which the theologian of play may touch upon the play-reality-culture coextensive:

First, there could be a critical review, from the outside, as it were, evaluating the hypothesis of the coextensives itself. This would be a legitimate enterprise insofar as the theologian could divorce himself from the operant dynamic of the coextensive itself (assuming the hypothesis is true), thus allowing the special awareness concerning ultimacy of faith to shed light upon the whole problem (In fact, none of the play theologians has yet attempted to do this).

Second, there could be a detached theological study of cultural "reality" in general sub specie ludi. Play in this case would be accepted as a legitimate hermeneutical tool in conjunction with faith. Theoretically, "play" in this case, would not be equivalent in the cultural sphere to "reality" - but simply a useful instrument for critical analysis. (This, in fact, is what most theologians do.)

Third, two out of the three elements in the coextensive would be recognized as coextensive while a third would go unrecognized. (This, too, is what most theologians do.)

Fourth, there could be a fully conscious acceptance of the "truth" of the hypothesis operating (either overtly or anonymously) in the mode of approaching the theological enterprise itself, theology being an instance of such a coextensiveness of play-reality-culture. In this latter case, there would be an implied case of a four-fold coextensive; play-reality-culture-faith, and the examination would be a critical review of a mystery in the Marcelian sense.

In this connection it is particularly important that the peculiar cultural phenomenon known as the community of faith (the Church) could be examined as a cultural enclave within the greater cultural sphere of a civilization and as operating both for and against it. The Church could be viewed as having its own "cultural" world shaped by faith so that the four-fold coextensive (faith-reality-play-culture) would operate in it. A dialogue with the play-theologians on this narrower and more critical idea of Church as its own "culture" would be profitable.

For the most part, the theologians of play, however, treat of the Church in terms of faith but from the perspective we recognize as of the tertiary (sub-regional) sphere of reality - and do not give the kind of sociologico-theological approach to the Church which is fully conscious of our secondary (cultural-regional) sphere of the play-real.³⁸⁰

³⁸⁰The appreciation of what "faith" is, according to the play theologians, appreciated sub specie ludi, as it were, is, therefore, to appear in our next Chapter, devoted to the sub-regional sphere, where we feel faith originates.

In fact, most of the theologians say very little which approximates our understanding of the three-way coextensive of cultural in general. It is no surprise, then, that the idea of a four-way coextensive in regard to the Church is virtually unknown to them.³⁸¹

Furthermore, it would seem clear that even if such a sociológico-theological study of the Church were undertaken it would easily establish that the Church is its own sui generis culture, and it also would be easily established that its version of "the real" derives culturally. The problem would be in regard to the union of its culture to faith (even if one would distinguish, as one would have to, the ideal Church of faith and the sociologically observable version of it - for always the sociological Church is not what it is in essence and certainly most often the sociological Church is not what it ought to be). The problem of faith, however, is the key to an understanding of the Church as play. Thus, it is through "faith" as play that the third (or fourth) coextensive for the Church would be established.³⁸²

Outside of the perspective of faith itself, it seems that the Church, when seen as a sub-region of the cultural

³⁸¹Even Hugo Rahner, whose vision of the significance of play seems the most comprehensive, does not make this formal recognition. Confer his Chapter on the Church as the community of play in his Man at Play, op. cit., pp. 46-64.

³⁸²As we have said, this too will appear in the next Chapter.

sphere of reality at large (the Church is its own "world" which outside observers recognize as distinct from the larger "world" outside it), might be appreciated as an instance of our three-way coextensive. Thus, in this limited sense, as species to genus, the Church is a "culture" which identified its "reality" with its faith-view which, in turn, as species to genus in culture at large, may be seen as a form of "play".

For the present Chapter we confine ourselves to the general theorem of the three-way coextensive in dialogue with the present theology of play. Consequently, in dealing with the theologians' work regarding the secondary (regional-cultural) sphere, we will focus upon whether a three-fold coextensive is made (reality-play-culture) or whether only two of the three coextensives are recognized: reality-play; or reality-culture; or play-culture.

A. Hugo Rahner

The idea of "culture" at large, in the anthropologist's sense, considered as "play", may be said to be part of Hugo Rahner's thought. However, the coextensiveness of "culture" and "play" as such is never made in his work. As far as Rahner will go is to imply that culture may be seen as the outgrowth of man's way of being in the world in

transaction to an essentially playful cosmos. And even this is to read between the lines of Rahner's work. He is simply not addressing himself to the question of culture as such - but rather to the inherent nature of man and man's style of life in the playful cosmos. Thus, it is only obliquely and indirectly - but nevertheless logically - that we may extend Rahner's appreciation of culture to say that he understands it as coextensive with the playfulness of man's spirit. For Rahner, "play" and "culture" are then, only implicitly compatible with our view of coextensiveness.

As to the third term in the coextensive - namely, "reality" - a problem arises in his work. Rahner is vague and ambiguous. On the one hand, as we have seen previously in Chapter VI and Chapter VII, it is reasonable to draw the conclusion that Rahner sees what we have called the primary cosmo-ontological sphere of reality (God and the world) as coextensively playful. In addition, as we might surmise even from the title of his book, Man at Play, Rahner believes that man is natively and basically a playful animal and that the precisely human dimension of man is his character as a noble player in the world. Thus, it would seem logical for us to say of his thought that he holds that human nature is basically playful and that human reality is a playful reality.

The problem, however, is with regard to what we have called the secondary (regional, cultural) sphere of the play-real. Here Rahner treats "reality" as if it were outside of or more basic than "culture" or "play". Rahner treats "reality" as if it were not playful. This is so even though he holds that the basic reality of the world itself, that which Rahner seems to see as more basic than culture, is playful. This is the ambivalence of Rahner's use of "play" and "reality" which shows itself most clearly in this secondary (regional-cultural) sphere. By implication of his work we may say that he seems to hold to both sides of the question without recognizing the contradiction, most probably because he never addressed the question of culture as such. In brief, by default, as it were, and by implication, he is guilty of the false assumptions which Jacques Ehrmann has taught us to notice - that reality can be seen separately from play and culture in the regional sphere. Despite passages in his work which seem to carry an appreciation to the contrary, in other spheres of reality, his basic self-contradictory position compels us to say that he does not see "reality" and "play" and "culture" as coextensive in the secondary (regional-cultural) sphere.

Also, though Rahner devotes a Chapter of his book to the Church as a community of play, he fails to see our

suggestion of a four-way coextensive of play-reality-culture-faith within the Church.³⁸³

B. Jürgen Moltmann

Jürgen Moltmann also does not deal with the theology of play in such a way as to confront our hypothetical coextensives of reality-play-culture as such. Where he does treat the subject of culture it is mostly in connection with an ideal view of "purpose-free sociability". Even regarding this ideal, "Christian congregations really don't know what to do with this area."³⁸⁴ Moltmann speaks favourably of Schleiermacher's Theory of Social Behaviour (1802) which painted an idealistic cultured society in which people display the free play of the human spirit in conversation, arts, imagination, and sociability.³⁸⁵ This ideal is realized in small pockets here and there, Moltmann tells us, in some Church communities.³⁸⁶

This notion of culture is not the anthropological one which is identified with the total society's world view

³⁸³Hugo Rahner, op. cit., pp. 46-64.

³⁸⁴Jürgen Moltmann, "The First Liberated Men in Creation", op. cit., p. 68.

³⁸⁵Ibid.

³⁸⁶Ibid., p. 70.

or way of life. Consequently, Moltmann is not speaking of culture in the sense where it would apply to our three way coextensive, (the regional-cultural) sphere and we find little evidence to imply that anything like it exists in his theology of play. (Likewise we find no evidence of a four-way coextensive: faith-reality-culture-play, within the Church.)

C. Harvey Cox

Harvey Cox tells us that the theology of culture

seeks [...] to uncover the often obscure or hidden spiritual import of man's many-splendored cultural creations. Its object of inquiry is the worlds of meaning that are assembled and polished by the inventive human spirit. Anthropologists define "culture" as the symbols and stories that pattern human behaviour, as well as the artifacts, rites and gestures that bring the values of a society to expression.³⁸⁷

This understanding of culture is tantamount to a Weltanschauung and would seem to argue for a congruency of human meaning and human reality. But it is not our three-way coextensive of play-reality-culture in the simple way we postulate it.

Only a hint of anything like our three way coextensive in the second sphere of the play-real appears in Harvey Cox's The Feast of Fools - and this only at the very end of his book. There Cox speaks of the ideal interpretation of

³⁸⁷ Harvey Cox, The Seduction of the Spirit, op. cit., p. 263.

theological and cultural influences. Cox says that in contrast to Paul Tillich's "method of correlation" between faith and culture, the relationship of faith to culture and vice-versa is, in his view, much more complex. Rather than a matter of culture posing questions to which "symbols of faith" provide answers, the interconnection of culture and faith is more confluent.

Faith does not always answer the questions posed by human existence; it sometimes raises questions of its own. And the cultures into which human existence organizes itself sometimes give answers, however provisional and partial, to the questions raised by faith. The faith-culture interaction is further complicated by the fact that faith, as Tillich said, must always express itself through cultural forms and all culture is to some extent the vehicle of some element of faith.

This means that the theologian of culture cannot shift back and forth from his role as cultural analyst to his role as theological exegete as smoothly as Tillich could, or thought he could. The theologian of culture makes use of a variety of techniques - historical, social scientific, phenomenological - but his reading of a situation is informed at all times by his knowledge of theology.³⁸⁸ He writes quite self-consciously from a particular perspective and makes no false claims to sheer objectivity.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁸ We may add - and by his knowledge of anything else as well.

³⁸⁹ Harvey Cox, The Feast of Fools, op. cit., pp. 176-177.

Cox goes on to say that the very givenness of the theological perspective colours everything (from selection of topic, choice of sources, arrangement of material, decisions about emphasis and style). Though Cox does not add the corollary, it seems obvious from the context that he means that the cultural perspective colours the same areas in an equally powerful way. Though, as Cox points out, the theologian must be conscious (insofar as he can) of his starting point and must try "not to let his theology distort the picture", he must also recognize "that no one writes without premises or a point of view".³⁹⁰ Cox would seem here to show an appreciation that culture and reality get woven together by the human mind so closely that it is virtually impossible to sort them out exactly. We might legitimately surmise that Cox recognizes that it is the play of the human imagination and intellect, along with unconscious and emotional forces and will, which confabulate this convergence of culture and reality. Cox calls attention to this "constant given" in any attempt to analyse the "human" world. "How to be aware of one's premises without being paralyzed by them remains one of the most persistent and fascinating problems with which any writer, theological or otherwise, must learn to contend."³⁹¹

³⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 177.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

We may conclude that, however much this matter of subjectivity and objectivity is present in Cox's awareness, he has not given explicit statements of conscious support of our three-way coextensive of play-reality-culture. His support remains oblique.

According to Cox, "all societies need both stories and signals". Religion is most alive when it permits certain "autonomous activities people engage in without anyone else's planning these activities" as well as "inclusive consensus on value and vision that makes civilizations possible."³⁹² This last phrase would seem to express a view that the "reality" of a civilization is its agreed-upon fiction (convention) of value and vision - in other words, its fundamental play in our regional (cultural) sense of the term. This play-realm becomes so conventional that it is tantamount to the unchanging status quo of cultural reality and loses sight of its conscious beginnings in play (in the tertiary sphere).

The "autonomous activities" which are distinguished by Cox from the "inclusive consensus" are what we would call the tertiary (sub-regional) sphere of play-reality) in contrast with this cultural reality which is also play.

³⁹² Harvey Cox, The Seduction of the Spirit, op. cit., pp. 11, 17.

Cox nowhere makes the three-way coextensive connection in so many words, but it seems clear that his vision of the meaning of culture would support the appreciation we have given to the play-reality we have called cultural or regional. (By implication, we may say that Cox would also recognize the play-reality-culture-faith equation within the Church.)

D. David Miller

In the bulk of his book Gods and Games, David Miller's constant view of play is that it "functions" as a root metaphor for human realities. Miller's prejudice seems to have been from the outset to refuse to accept reality itself as play-ful, as we have seen. He argues about the universality and all-pervasiveness of a play mode of apprehension of the real - but always the real, in itself, is non-play. In fact, Miller criticizes Caillois for taking games and play too literally in interpreting Huizinga's study. Huizinga, Miller feels, never wanted to consider play as literally what culture is.³⁹³

Yet within the sphere of culture itself the metaphor-value of play makes its own coextensiveness of "what is real"

³⁹³David Miller, Gods and Games, op. cit., pp. 23-26.

and "play". In fact, we may say that that is Miller's main thesis. His Gods and Games tries to make the case that virtually everything in culture - especially today - may gain enormously by being recognized sub specie ludi - as a play-reality. Still, the absoluteness of our coextensive is missing in Miller's work. He fails to recognize that "metaphor-value" or "metaphor-apprehension" of the real is "play-value" or "play-apprehension" generated by cultural "reality" and that consequently his own position undermines his attempted distinction between "play" and "reality" in the cultural sphere. He always is prepared to see, and to assume that all others can likewise see, that naked reality and play-reality in culture can be distinguished even within the sphere of culture - for play-realities are but metaphors of meaning superimposed upon the real. For this reason, Miller cannot be listed in support of our three-way coextensive of play-reality-culture in the bulk of his book.

Still, that is not entirely the case of Miller's view of play; for at the end of his book he seems to escape from this perspective of academic distance from the subject of play - in his "Epilogue", suitably sub-titled "Beyond the Rules of the Religious Game toward a Theology of Play, by Play, and for Play".³⁹⁴ Here he surrenders himself to the spirit of play and seems to become fully conscious

³⁹⁴David Miller, op. cit., pp. 170-176.

of the three-way coextensive - about which he fittingly speaks in play-ful aphorisms..

It is in this "Epilogue" that Miller's takes up an attitude and an appreciation of play which seems to bridge the distance he puts between the scholar and play which is imposed by the term "metaphor". Better still perhaps, he enters the playfulness of reality and regards "metaphor" as simply an academic "play on realities". Some of the best playful theology arises here. He begins by assuming that his own wisdom is not so wise.³⁹⁵

Miller then launches into a brilliant entanglement in the game of meanings in culture; which we must quote at length:

What's the name of the game? That's it. The name of the game is: What's the name of the game? It is the game we all play. And often we play it quite seriously, desperately in fact, trying to identify the other person's game. In fact we play so seriously that we forget to play. That is, we forget that we are hard at play calling our play not-playing.

Of all the dances men dance in this crazy choreography of life the most insane and at the same time the cleverest one is the dance men dance when they claim to be not-dancing.

Just as there is no such thing as not-dancing (the man who thinks and feels he is not dancing is simply doing an intricate piece of side-stepping), so also the dancer who says that another person is not dancing is himself

³⁹⁵Ibid., p. 172.

doing a strange dance. He is dancing the not-dance, because he, at that moment, does not have dancing eyes to see the not-dance of another as itself an intricate dance.³⁹⁶

And again, Miller says, "Sometimes we play so well that we simply forget we are playing. We think our play is reality. It is."

Here Miller affirms, in effect, the coextensiveness of "play" and "reality" and he does so in the context of an appreciation of the heart (essence) of cultural realities. Hence, he affirms our three-way coextensive: play-reality-culture.

To confirm our impression of this mystery, Miller presents another aphorism:

Life is a game. If I had written, "Life is like a game", you would have asked, "Like which game?" Actually it is like the game of life. That's why I wrote, "Life is a game".³⁹⁷

And once again,

It's not that we should stop working and start playing, but that we should work as if at play, because that is what we are doing anyway: playing at work.

Sometimes, however, it is necessary to stop working for a while and start playing, so that we may stop working at work, and play; so that we may go back to playing at work, which we were doing in the first place. But we forgot.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 173.,

³⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 174-175.

In contra-distinction, it seems, from what he says of the "metaphorical" value of play elsewhere, Miller comes out clearly asserting that all human values (meanings) are metaphorical - that is "metaphor" is "play" and all human meanings (realities) are playfully so.

It is for this reason that we feel Miller clearly breaks into a new level of consciousness in his "Epilogue" and this virtually undermines the "merely metaphorical" attribution given to play in the early part of his book. He ends up in support of our three-fold coextensive in the cultural sphere. (By implication we may say that he would support our four-way coextensives of faith-play-reality-culture within the Church though he does not examine the Church, as such, in this light.)

E. Sam Keen

Though he does not say so in as many words, it seems that Sam Keen's philosophy holds to a firm (if indirect) support of our secondary (regional-cultural) coextensives of reality-play culture. Man is essentially homo admirans from whose imaginative search for fullness (play) both culture and human reality flow in a virtually indistinguishable correlation.

Keen recognizes the historicity of reason. Categories of human reason are not eternal or transcultural. "They are born out of and bound to a specific environment and history." Reason is relative to the context of its nurturing. In short, each culture has its own basic categories of the real - and even of logic ("Buddhist logic differs in its basic categories from Western logic").³⁹⁹ Thus "culture" and "reality" are two sides of a coin. The extreme abuse of this identity occurs when:

The "average" or "normal" individual takes his clues from the accepted attitudes of his social context: common sense informs him that what "everybody" says must be true and what "everybody" does must be right.⁴⁰⁰

What is real becomes virtually identified with cultural norms because of man's search for sacred value, kept alive by wonder.

Keen's philosophy of wonder sees a conjunction of three elements: wonder, the holy, and value.

If we disregard the merely economic understanding, it would seem that what modern man means by value is functionally equivalent to what traditional man meant by the holy. A value is a point of orientation. Eliade has shown that, for archaic man, theophany, or the encounter with the holy, provided an organizational principle for the whole of life. The place of theophany became the axis mundi, the central point around which

³⁹⁹Sam Keen, Apology for Wonder, op. cit., p. 96.

⁴⁰⁰Ibid., p. 171.

personal identity and the self-understanding of the community was structured. [...] The wonderful, the holy, and the valuable all share the ability to make man tremble and thus provide an organizing principle for life.⁴⁰¹

It is Keen's idea that the disjunction of wonder, the holy, and value into separate compartments of modern life has to be repaired for a unified cultural existence. When they are so conjoined these three elements become mingled and virtually indistinguishable, hence identified as the really real in a human sense. It is this latter meaning which seems the same as our meaning of cultural "reality" so that culture and reality are one.

In archaic societies this conjuncture of "reality" and "culture" is more easily seen. What is more, the marriage of the real and cultural patterns of existence derive from a play-dynamic in man ("dramatizing") in his search for meaningful participation in the oneness of Nature. Thus a three-way correlative is contained in Keen's philosophy (reality-culture-dramatic play).

For example, (in archaic societies, Keen says:

Since the people, like the land, abide there are yearly festivals and holidays celebrating the changing seasons. And for the individual there are rites of passage which mark the transition from one period of life into the next. By dramatizing birth, coming of age, marriage, childbirth, death, and other hinge-points, primitive rites of passage eased the burden of change by inserting the individual within the context of a universal process.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 39-40..

⁴⁰² Sam Keen, To a Dancing God, op. cit., pp. 54-55. (Emphasis ours.)

Thus, through "dramatizing" (playing), the individual was incorporated into the cultural "reality" of a civilization, and this, in turn, was called real because it was viewed as part of "the context of a universal process". In our terms the regional sphere of "play-reality" was thought to be part of a cosmo-ontological process (the Game of Games). The dramatic participation rites were play-modes of incorporation into this cultural world-view concerning what was real, holy, significant, valuable - and unchangeable (since anchored in cosmic process).

Keen devotes a portion of his To a Dancing God to new methods for such "corporate calendars and rites of passage",⁴⁰³ which he proposes ought to be "dramatized" into modern existence. Thus for him, "cultural realities" can be "played" into existence and a virtual coextensive exists between culture, play, and reality. (We may guess that he would support a four-way coextensive of faith-reality-culture-play within the Church though he does not treat this subject as such.)

⁴⁰³This is the subject of his Chapter, "Education for Serendipity"; confer especially pp. 55-56.

F. Robert Neale

To deal with Robert Neale's work is difficult in regard to the secondary (regional-cultural) sphere of reality, for the subject of his work is principally located in the tertiary sub-regional sphere. Still, some of his work is highly suggestive of a bearing upon the cultural sphere of reality and consequently a close examination of it seems necessary in order to justify our opinion that his theory does not show any appreciation of our three-way coextensive in the regional-cultural sphere.

The basic difficulty with Neale's work lies in its connection to the secondary (regional-cultural) sphere of reality. At times it seems his theory would support the contention of a three-way coextensive; but at other times he seems to uphold the idea of separation of the elements of "play" from "culture" as well as from "the real". Let us look at this ambivalence.

Neale's doctoral dissertation makes a strong case for harmony of the human impulses to "discharge energy" and "design experiences".⁴⁰⁴ The harmony of these impulses is

⁴⁰⁴Confer his Play and the Sacred, op. cit.

defined as play by Neale following Schiller's argument for "living form" as a harmony of Stofftrieb and Formtrieb. According to Schiller, "living form", the harmonious blend of sensuousness and form, is the cause of human maturity and the rise of culture. "Living form" is "both nothing in that it does not grant any particular and immediate result in any specific realm and also everything in that it is the precondition of all human activity."⁴⁰⁵

As Schiller said,

The reality of things is effected by things,
the appearance of things is the work of man, and
a soul that takes pleasure in appearance does not
take pleasure in what it receives but in what it
makes.⁴⁰⁶

It is the imagination dealing with "appearances" which is the beginning of culture. It is beauty alone - or the play impulse - which creates the social individual and culture.⁴⁰⁷

Neale criticizes both Nietzsche and Schiller for fabricating an aesthetic religion in reaction to the moral religion of the day. For Neale, "living form" is wider than morality or beauty. "Living form", Neale tells us, "in

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 150.

⁴⁰⁶ Friedrich Schiller, op. cit., XXVI, p. 301.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., XXVII, p. 311.

man's response to nature is beauty, and in his response to human nature, it is morality."⁴⁰⁸

The conclusion is that the harmony of the two instincts creates both beauty and true morality on the same level, that both are equally products of the harmony and of equal status in the hierarchy of creation. Consequently, no quarrel between them is possible and the individual must participate fully in both nature and human nature.⁴⁰⁹

Thus play, which is the product of the harmony of the two instincts, is the creative force at the root of both morality and beauty. Play, therefore, is present at the heart of all human creativity in cultural dimension both in the rules of human activity in society as well as in the aesthetic appreciation of value.

Neale feels that play is the heart of religion. In fact, his main thesis is that full human play and religion are one and the same, as he goes on to say in the remainder of his work. Any cultural life which is positive and balanced will be imbued ipso facto with the play mode of its actualization for it is the balance of the two impulses of "discharge of energy" and "design of experience" which make for healthful and productive human life both for the individual and society.

⁴⁰⁸ Robert Neale, Play and the Sacred, op. cit., p. 152.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

Neale regards Huizinga's theory as contributing four insights into the nature of play: first, play is taken out of captivity to the realm of aesthetics and seen in many of the major areas of human activity. Second, play is understood as the fundamental source of civilization. Third, play has an important place in religion. Fourth, play is allowed to remain play for it is not transformed into the spirit of work as is done in the biological and psychological theories. Play resists all analysis and all logical interpretation, and it remains irreducible to other phenomena.⁴¹⁰

Neale reformulates Huizinga's thesis, giving a more explicit and logical follow up to the latter's implication that play is ultimate in culture and that it is found primarily in religion and secondarily in other realms of culture. Neale says:

Certainly his observation is correct, but the vision behind it can be more accurately stated as follows: the religious response to the sacred is play, and it is in play as religion that all other forms of culture find their origin. [...]

The theory of Huizinga requires a threefold alternative: first, that play is not only primarily found in religion, but that religion is full play; second that the play of the child and the childish play of the adult is immature religion; and third, that the sacred may be responded to by the perversion of play which is magic.⁴¹¹

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., p. 160.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., pp. 161-163.

In dealing with Caillois' theory, Neale finds that while Caillois believes that "the spirit of play is essential to culture"⁴¹² he nonetheless subverts his own assumption in his radical separation of play as games and as culture. For Caillois, both play and culture rest upon the four elements of competition, chance, simulation and vertigo.

All of this would seem to make it clear that Neale feels that "play" ought to be seen in a coextensive way with "culture", but it does not say that "play" is tantamount to the third coextensive, "reality". And, even to the contrary, Neale's position on play is to see it as both attitude and mode of being over and against the "reality" surrounding the person in society. Consequently, it cannot be simply identified with culture at large. Play is, paradoxically, at the heart of culture but can be distinguished from it as "not ordinary", in Neale's theory.

In fact, Neale asserts that "Caillois is right to claim that play is of no consequence in the ordinary world."⁴¹³ Thus, the ordinary world, the ordinary reality, the ordinary culture, is distinctly non-play. Neale does not see play in the sphere we have called secondary (cultural-regional)

⁴¹²Roger Caillois, op. cit., p. 58.

⁴¹³Robert Neale, Play and the Sacred, op. cit., p. 171.

as if play and reality are one. The third element in the coextensive does not appear in Neale's theory, when applied to the secondary (regional-cultural) sphere.

What is misleading in Neale's work is that he switches from the tertiary sphere of play-reality into the secondary sphere of reality without realizing that it too exists (is real) "playfully". Thus, it is in this switch-over to the cultural sphere at large that we find his theory inconsistent, and contradictory. This is particularly true in regard to his treatment of myth.

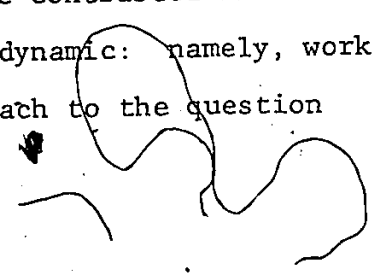
Neale relates the role of myth confabulation to a total world-view of the real.⁴¹⁴ Insofar as he does he seems to support a conjunction of "imaginative human creativity" (play) and "reality", supporting in turn the proposition of Mircea Eliade that myth is a story-mode of ontology.⁴¹⁵ This would seem to suggest also a conjunction with play so that a four-fold coextensive may be posited: play-reality-myth-culture. However, for Neale, the conjunction is in no way as simple as our own thesis has it - or at any rate, Neale never seems to have been conscious of it. Furthermore, insofar as in the general treatment of play as a psychologically important matter, Neale is not principally

⁴¹⁴Robert Neale, In Praise of Play, op. cit., p. 128.

⁴¹⁵Ibid., pp. 130-131.

concerned with myth and ritual in the sphere of culture, as such, but in the psychology of man where the "play" element can be distinguished from cultural reality at large. And, in this connection, it seems abundantly clear that Neale's view of the "real" is distinct from "play", "play" being something which the human being does with the "real" by the balancing of discharge and design. The coextensive of play-reality-culture in the secondary sphere of play-reality is, therefore, not made by Neale - even though in regard to myth there seems to be a position close to it. In this sense, Neale's theory seems ambiguous. In other parts of his theory only two of the coextensives are appreciated (play and culture) while the third is clearly distinguished from them as reality. (Thus, it is also clear that he does not recognize the four-way coextensive of faith-reality-culture-play within the Church.)

What has to be said in Neale's defence, of course, is, as we have already said, that he is treating play as a third sphere of reality phenomenon of man's psychology which as attitude and dynamic can be contrasted with another psychological attitude and dynamic: namely, work. This is an entirely different approach to the question than we take.



G. Response to the Theologians

Hugo Rahner appreciates a cultural marriage of reality and play but fails to make a three-way coextensive of culture-reality-play. Jürgen Moltmann does not confront this problem area as such. Harvey Cox gives us oblique but strong support by his general appreciation of the play element in man's culture and his estimate of the real. Robert Neale supports only two parts of the coextensive. David Miller, after some confusion, ends up in support of the three-way coextensive. Sam Keen seems to clearly understand and give indirect support to the three-way coextensive. Thus, of the six theologians listed, only three seem to have affirmed the appreciation of the play-reality-culture equation.

As to the question of a coextensive (faith-reality-culture-play) within the Church, the same three present a view which would support it. - and even these may be named only by implication of their general appreciation of the secondary sphere of reality. It is obvious that our thesis presents something new for the consideration of play theologians.

As we saw in Part One, in the Regional-Cultural Sphere, Play-Reality is a ludus of the Paidia of the

Cosmo-ontological sphere. We also saw that it was a ludus of man's paidia in the tertiary sphere. Thus the regional-cultural sphere is placed mid-way between the primary and the tertiary spheres because it is a ludus of both the Divine-world paidias and the human paidia. In fact, it is a ludus of the Divine Paidia expressing itself in both the primary cosmo-ontological realities of the world's paidia-ludus and the special paidia-ludus of man.

We will restrict ourselves to only one aspect for theological study in this play-reality-culture understanding - namely, how faith itself is an instance of it.

Because culture is a term which designates the shaping of man himself and his world through the exercise of his own mind and freedom, man can never exist without culture. His faith is part of his culture insofar as it stems from culture in part (the other part of his faith deriving from the subregional sphere of the play-real proper as we have explained it in Part One).⁴¹⁶

Christian life can never be hostile to culture or seek to be simply acultural. [...] But this culture [...] is determined by all man's existential categories [...] [and is] the objectivating material medium in which (explicitly or implicitly) man accomplishes the act of faith [...]. Religion, insofar as it is the work of man, is also part of his culture, which conditions and differentiates it.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁶This second part of faith, its essence, is, therefore, treated in the next Chapter with the appropriate title, "Man: Imagination and Grace".

⁴¹⁷Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, op. cit., "Culture", p. 113. (Emphasis ours.)

Culture, then, is the context of human meaning-systems out of which a peculiar sub-division may develop its own particular overview. Such a peculiar sub-cultural meaning system with an over-arching application to the general scheme of culture at large may be recognized in the special culture known as the Church, a community of faith. This is to say that the faith-community has its own culture (where the four-way coextensive of play-reality-culture-faith operates) and that this Church-culture adopts a perspective upon the larger whole of culture (our secondary sphere of play-reality) and deigns to judge it. This over-arching reflexive action of cultural faith in the Church articulates its prophetic vision on the secondary sphere, even though, ironically, a large part of its vision has been brought to birth, as it were, within the context of the secondary sphere itself and even though its very critique of the secondary sphere has to be verbalized in terms of meaning derived from and still acknowledged as legitimate (for the task of "critique") by the secondary sphere and even its sub-division, the Church, (e.g., language concepts themselves).

Thus faith derives from a secondary sphered context in part. This is so because all visions have to have a locus of origination, in some way centered in the humanly accepted "real" (the secondary sphere). One cannot adopt a perspective without some vantage point or footing - even

if the perspective reflexively criticizes the suitability of the vantage point.

The secondary sphere, however, is not the sole originator of the peculiar sub-division of itself called the community of faith. In fact, faith itself originates essentially not in the inherited meaning-systems we call culture but rather in the creatively freer sphere called the tertiary sub-regional one by this thesis. For this reason, only a relatively minor part of faith's structure stems from the secondary sphere of the play-real, and we must look to the next Chapter, dealing with the tertiary sub-regional sphere, to get an account of the play meaning of faith and for the four-way coextensive (faith-reality-play-culture) of the Church to take on more meaning as secondary sphered ludus of tertiary sphered paidia.

For the moment, without attempting to develop a full play theology of the secondary (cultural-regional) sphere, we may offer a few comments about its connection to cultural faith and religion in order to clarify our critique of play-theology's understanding of the connection of play-culture-reality.

To begin with, the expression of faith, perforce, has to be made "real" according to the system of reality which we have called the secondary sphere, that is, the

culture-system. Any of faith's theology, as well as its ecclesial life in rites and ceremonies, are, therefore, ludi of faith itself and are indispensably a part of the vitality of faith, making the vision of faith "real" in a socially recognizable sense. Faith known and recognized as such is a cultural reality and all of its expressions belong to the secondary cultural sphere.

The play theologians we have studied seem to have only a vague awareness of this fact - or, at any rate, to have given it little attention. They say something of the paidian element in man but very little of its ludi as culture. They do not take the ludus of faith - as culture - seriously enough. Ideas of God Himself, Christ, the Church, the sacraments are all ludi of faith but are scarcely recognized as such. Our thesis points out a great lacuna of theological work in play theology. It says that these cultural ludi of faith are important precisely because of their situation mid-way between the primary cosmo-ontological sphere and the tertiary as a ludus of both. That is, rites, ceremonies, theological language, and all other expressions of faith are the socially recognizable points of contact between the mystery of God's Paidia at the heart of the primary sphere and the paidia of man in his tertiary sphered search for an "ordo amoris"⁴¹⁸ through new "possibilities". It is

⁴¹⁸Rubem A. Alves, Tomorrow's Child: Imagination, Creativity and the Rebirth of Culture, New York, Harper and Row, 1972.

in the secondary sphere where faith-phenomena expresses the wedding of Infinite Possibilities to finite need to express (make ludi) the union of possibilities and actualities.

As we have already intimated, there may be a four-way coextensive made in the community of the Church, namely: play-reality-culture-faith. But, since in our view, faith originates in the tertiary sphere of play-realities, there is a point of over-lapping of meaning of "faith" (as individual, free and human reality in the tertiary sphere - and as communally shared and celebrated in the secondary sphere). Perhaps the reality of "faith" as "play" will become clearer when we take the ludus of faith in the Church to its paidian origins in the tertiary sphere, our next topic. This is to say that, according to our thesis, faith, as a source of cultural meanings may exhibit itself in cultural form (the Church). But faith itself comes to be in the same way as other meaning-systems arise, that is, in the tertiary sphere of play-realities, as an imagined vision of how things are in the ultimate (in the primary cosmo-ontological sense) or as they ought to be - or will be - in history (in the secondary, regional, cultural sense). Cultural faith, therefore, is playful, because it is an expression in itself of the three-way coextensive (play-reality-culture) and because it derives its ludus from the

playful imaginative realities of the tertiary sphere (as a paidia-ludus of the tertiary sphere).

If we keep in mind the general axiom of our thesis that the secondary sphere is derived from the tertiary and is always somewhat of a crippled expression of its origins in the tertiary, we can say that the cultural expression of faith (in the ludus of the Church) will always imperfectly express the "reality" of faith's beginnings in the tertiary sphere. The claims of theology about ultimacy and "truth", therefore, can never do perfect justice to the heart of faith. (Theology and faith exist in distinct spheres of the real.)

Only liturgical expression (in myth and symbol) seems sufficiently paidian enough (in their openness to many levels of meaning) to convey the life of the faith beyond the ludus-abstractions of theological speculation and preaching. By its concentration on a given expression of what is and what could be in the ultimate, the cultural expression of faith in the Church (prayer, liturgy, the social gospel, etc.), as ludus, proclaims "the demonstrative value of being" (wonder) and the attractiveness of the possible (adventure).

In fact, both wonder and adventure become meaningful themselves in terms of the faith-value given "reality". Thus, cultural faith gives meaning to the wonder of what is

and the adventure of what might yet be (as promise) as a cultural "fact" in the present stage of salvation history, that is, in the penultimate times before the Second Coming. Thus too, the Church as a cultural play-reality may be seen as the vanguard of the Kingdom of Play (Kingdom of God).

Because of the constant interface and transaction between the community of faith as its own culture and the wider culture of the world (the secondary sphere), even the so-called "secular" cultural sphere and "secular" history become necessarily coloured by the faith-perspective of the Church. It is, therefore, possible to say that there is really a four-fold coextensive in the "culture" of a Christian believer: that of play-culture-reality-faith. For this reason, theology must make itself conscious of the co-extension and investigate it as a proper area of its speculations and concern. This assertion needs some more substantial "proof"; - which leads us naturally to the development of "faith" as "play" proper in the tertiary sphere, the subject of Chapter X.

CHAPTER X

MAN: IMAGINATION AND GRACE (THE THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE SUB-REGIONAL SPHERE OF THE PLAY-REAL)

Introduction

In Part One, it will be recalled, we spoke of the usual and popular meaning of the term "play" and its sphere of reality. We called it the tertiary (sub-regional) sphere of play-reality. Within the so-called "play-world", as it is often called, we pointed out that "play" and "reality" are one. In this sphere the play-reality equation amounts to little more than the obvious for it is in this sphere that it is easiest to see that the kind of reality which obtains is wholly playful. Yet a full explanation of this obvious point is difficult, especially since, as we have insisted, this sub-regional sphere ought to be judged and studied on its own merits, as it were, and not only in terms of a negation or difference from the other spheres. In the last analysis, we may conclude that, as with the study of any reality precisely as reality, we are faced with "mystery" in the Marcelian sense or an attempt to explain the unexplainable in terms of itself.

It remains worthwhile, nevertheless, to state the obvious play-reality equation in this third sphere. For

we want to bring attention to the fact that this sphere of play-reality is its own; - it is not to be given value only in terms of what it is not; that is, ideally it should be seen on its own and from the "inside", as it were, not from the "outside".

Though the manifold theological implications of this vast sub-regional sphere are what occupy most of the pages of the play theologians' work we will not review or respond to their insights except very generally in the following areas: the understanding of man, especially his freedom, his openness to possibilities, and his fantasy-power; these we will review under the theological headings of faith, hope, and grace. What the play theologians say of "play and faith" as well as "play and hope" we feel roughly correlates with our appreciations of "wonder" and "adventure" respectively, while "grace" is what makes a world of difference. Thus, this wide and general perspective on play theology in the sub-regional sphere, we trust, will give some sense of unity and cohesion with the earlier part of our work.

A. Hugo Rahner

In Hugo Rahner's development of the notion of homo ludens he makes use of the Greek ideal of spoudogeloios.

Man is the "grave-merry" man, "the man with a gentle sense of humour who laughs despite his tears, and finds in all earthly mirth a sediment of insufficiency."⁴¹⁹ In his theology, Rahner describes the "grave-merry" man as

a man who feels himself to be living in invincible security; but he is also a man of tragedy, a man of laughter and tears, a man, indeed of gentle irony, for he sees through the tragically ridiculous masks of the game of life and has taken the measure of the cramping boundaries of our earthly existence.⁴²⁰

According to Rahner the ideal of the grave-merry man can be achieved by a practice of the virtue of eutrapelia ("right-turning")⁴²¹ which is remarkably like Keen's homo tempestivus ("timely man").⁴²² Rahner gives attention to eutrapelia as the virtue of the Greeks most naturally Christian in its serious-serene balance between two extremes. The extremes avoided by eutrapelia are the way of life of man who takes nothing seriously ("bomolochos") and the man who sees nothing funny anywhere ("agroikos").⁴²³ The

⁴¹⁹Hugo Rahner, op. cit., p. 27.

⁴²⁰Ibid.

⁴²¹Hugo Rahner, op. cit. Confer esp. Chapter V: "Eutrapelia: A Forgotten Virtue", pp. 91-105.

⁴²²Sam Keen, Apology for Wonder, op. cit., pp. 190-200.

⁴²³Hugo Rahner, op. cit., pp. 93-94.

Christian may play because he sees a balance of seriousness and playfulness as the ideal and as justified ontologically because God Himself has shown such serious playfulness. As we would say, the tension between the tertiary and secondary spheres of play makes the Christian in need of eutrapelia, the recognition that the ludus of everyday reality is serious but that there is a greater seriousness to be attached to paidia even within the finite necessities of everyday life.

Genuine play, Rahner tells us, is made possible when in faith the Christian holds that the Incarnation truly happened. God truly became a man. This bit of divine play makes it "possible for us to gain that 'gay security and freedom' without which we cannot attain the ease and effortlessness of genuine play at all."⁴²⁴ Again he says, "The most serious part of the Christian ideal of man is to be found in the fact that he who has faith and truly loves God is also the man who can truly play, for only he who is secure in God can be truly light of heart."⁴²⁵

To be really free to truly play, Rahner is saying, one requires some firm ontological ground (God) whose very

⁴²⁴Ibid., p. 35.

⁴²⁵Ibid., pp. 57-58.

nature liberates one to flee the constraints of everyday unchangeable reality. In our terminology, the Paidia of God is the justification for the paidia of man to come into its own, as it were, to be true to itself - for it is given authenticity and validation because that is how Ultimate Reality really is. Man is thus freed to escape the limits of cultural ludi (regional reality) because the reality of play in the tertiary sphere echoes the reality which is ultimately the ground of all others (the primary sphere). Rahner is indirectly making the case that the Incarnation is true play - since it is the basis for Christian playfulness. The play of God legitimates human play.

"To play", Rahner says, "is to yield oneself to a kind of magic, to enact to oneself the absolutely other, to pre-empt the future, to give the lie to the inconvenient world of fact."⁴²⁶ Here Rahner is speaking precisely of our tertiary sphere of play-reality. He describes the basic attitude of this sphere as follows:

In play earthly realities become, of a sudden, things of the transient moment, presently left behind, then disposed of and buried in the past; the mind is prepared to accept the unimagined and incredible, to enter a world where different laws apply, to be relieved of all the weights that bear it down, to be free, kingly, unfettered and divine. Man at play is reaching out - as has already been said - for that superlative ease, in which even the body, freed from its earthly burden, moves to the effortless measures of a heavenly dance.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁶ Ibid., p. 65.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., pp. 65-66.

Thus, for Rahner, play moves from present actuality to possible actuality, from present ludus to future ludus, and this we have characterized as the movement of tertiary (sub-regional) play vis-a-vis the reality of the secondary (regional) sphere. The sub-regional sphere presents a vision of alternate possibilities as real: that is, really possible. This vision of the tertiary sphere is the origin of hope.

Rahner recognizes the congruency of the playfulness of man's nature and the life of grace. For the truly Christian man there must be "that beautiful unity of grace and humanity, insofar as he has not lost himself in the omnipresent intellectualism of the day."⁴²⁸ It is in the Church that such a man "answers the game of grace with his counter-play of liturgy and sacrament, so that Church grace and liturgical action become for him no more than a prelude to that final carefree gaiety of heart which he will experience one day in the everlasting game of the Beatific Vision."⁴²⁹

Rahner calls the outpouring of God's life to man, the life of grace, "a game - and in this", he says, "I have followed some of the most illustrious of Christian

⁴²⁸ Ibid., p. 10.

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

mystics - because there is, as I have said, nothing here of compulsion or calculation".⁴³⁰

Indeed, there is an even better reason for calling this a game than for applying that term to the creation, for in this game of grace Christ has actually become the playmate of man.⁴³¹

That is why the mystic experiences his surrender to grace as though it were an immersion in the flood of an entirely new freedom, as a handing over of himself to a love that knows no bounds, as a kind of release from all constraint such as we can only imagine in the heart of a child.⁴³²

For Rahner, play is the fitting vehicle of man's hope for it is in man's imagination that hope is enkindled and even the goal of hope is a life of play.

He [the religious man] hopes for freedom, rest, release from all preoccupation of mind, for untroubled gladness of soul; he longs to be once more a child, a child in utter security, and like a child, to play; he hopes [...] to move and sway to the measures of a heavenly dance.⁴³³

In this heavenly dance are expressed "the strivings and aspirations of the mind [...]."⁴³⁴

⁴³⁰ Ibid., p. 46.

⁴³¹ Ibid., pp. 46-47.

⁴³² Ibid., p. 55.

⁴³³ Ibid., p. 60.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., p. 66.

There is a sacred secret at the root and in the flowering of all play: it is man's hope for another life taking visible form in gesture.⁴³⁵

Thus, Rahner speaks eloquently of the transforming power of faith and hope as play. It is the life of grace which activates this appreciation of life. Play for him is what breaks the bonds of ordinary reality (what we have called wonder) and opens up man to the realm of possibilities (what we have called adventure). It is in this realm of possibilities where Rahner sees the presence of God. For this reason we feel Rahner's appreciation of play ties in with our notions of paidia and ludus as well as wonder and adventure in the tertiary sphere.

B. Jürgen Moltmann

It is in the doctrine of creation, especially the creation of man in the image of God, that Moltmann explains man's creative play.

Is not man's playful rejoicing in his existence, his pure unforced pleasure in creative play, and his fondness for expression and representation exactly that "demonstrative value of being" of which Buytendijk speaks in reference to animals? Then man's free self-representation has to be the human echo to the pleasure of God in his creation. The glorification of God lies

⁴³⁵ Ibid., p. 65.

in the demonstrative joy of existence. Then man in his uninhibited fondness for this finite life and by his affirmation of mortal beauty shares the infinite pleasure of the creator.⁴³⁶

Man's existence is justified and beautiful before any effort on his part. That is why he is free even at the beginning of any activity. He does not have to work to establish a justifying ground for his free activity. It is a gift. He is open to possibilities, therefore, and not limited or constrained to a narrow horizon. The world itself is "an open process". Man's playfulness and his hope are, therefore, closely allied to the "openness of the world toward the future."

The world is groundless and bottomless, and precisely for that reason a free zone for the liberty of playing creatively with correspondences to the totally-other God. So the stakes in the game are not realizations, successes, and accomplishments but the endless beauties and liberties of the finite concomitants of the infinite joy of the creator.⁴³⁷

At no time does the free play of man lose its pre-justification in the very constitutionality of man's being as gift - as "participated being" in the playfulness of God Himself. Man "presents and represents himself and, in

⁴³⁶Jürgen Moltmann, "The First Liberated Men in Creation", op. cit., p. 21.

⁴³⁷Ibid., p. 23.

a manner of speaking, answers a call" of the openness of the world itself.

At the very beginning of man's response to the openness of the world by his own openness he does not have to concern himself with some purpose - for he is radically free even from purpose, even of self-realization, when he confronts the world. Man expresses himself freely but without necessity relative to the world.

This self-representation is not identical with self-realization by labor, for the creative play of expression does not depend on successes and accomplishments, although it does not preclude these.⁴³⁸

The play of imagination [in what we call the tertiary sub-regional sphere] gives freedom.

We enjoy freedom when we anticipate by playing what can and shall be different and when in the process we break the bonds of the immutable status quo. [...]. We are then no longer playing merely with the past in order to escape it for a while, but we are increasingly playing with the future in order to get to know it.⁴³⁹

Playing games gives us "perspectives for change" and permit us to "discover with a laugh that things need not at all be as they are and as we have been told they have to be."⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., pp. 12-13.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

For Moltmann faith in God and religion are meaningful in themselves. Ultimately both faith and religion are not to be used so that we may enjoy the world. Rather, ideally, the world ought to be used to enjoy God through faith and religion.⁴⁴¹ "Purpose-free rejoicing in God may then take the place of the uses and abuses of God."⁴⁴² This is what Moltmann calls "the Augustinian reversal of the use of God and the enjoyment of God."⁴⁴³

We may situate Moltmann's appreciation of "play" in light of his theology of hope. Moltmann considers hope a sadly neglected aspect of the Christian gospel for he sees it as virtually the key to faith understanding and the most crucially needed emphasis in today's world.

Moltmann would like to carry through his program of a theology of hope so that virtually every item of theology would be reconstructed in light of hope in the future. Instead of a supernatural entity, God would become, (as Harvey Cox interprets Moltmann):

⁴⁴¹Ibid., pp. 58-66.

⁴⁴²Ibid., p. 64.

⁴⁴³Ibid., p. 65.

a reality for whom "futurity is the essence of his being." [...] Christ becomes the one who introduces a new age whose full reality is yet to appear. Christ is more important for Moltmann as the "coming one" than as the "historical Jesus" of Schweitzer or the "Christ, here and now" of the radicals. Our knowledge of Christ, he says, is "anticipatory, provisional and fragmentary knowledge of the future, namely of what he will be".⁴⁴⁴ Faith is not belief but hope. Instead of the Medieval formulae "credo ut intelligam" (I believe that I may know), Moltmann suggests our formula today should be "spero ut intelligam" (I hope that I may know). The Church becomes the "exodus people" forever leaving the present behind and pushing toward an unknown future.⁴⁴⁵

Moltmann views hope as "the medium of Christian faith as such, the key in which everything in it is set, the glow that suffuses everything here in the dawn of an expected new day."⁴⁴⁶ Christianity is, from first to last, eschatology. It is "hope, forward looking and forward moving, and, therefore, also revolutionizing and transforming the present."⁴⁴⁷ Thus, the future defines the present in anticipation rather than the present defining the future through extrapolation.⁴⁴⁸ We may correlate Moltmann's hope to imagination. His notion of man's hopes for an imagined future which alters

⁴⁴⁴Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope, New York, Harper and Row, 1967, p. 203.

⁴⁴⁵Harvey Cox, The Feast of Fools, op. cit., pp. 128-129.

⁴⁴⁶Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope, cited by Harvey Cox, The Feast of Fools, op. cit., p. 127.

⁴⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸Jürgen Moltmann, Diskussion über Theologie der Hoffnung, Munich, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1967, p. 209.

the present even in anticipation is the same idea of imagination of possibilities actually changing the present actualities of a situation - as is clear in any revolutionary movement. The essence of hope is an imagined future which alters the present by the very belief that it engenders now. The play-reality, in other words, has revolutionary impact upon the so-called "non-play" reality of the here and now.

God Himself, as the Absolute Future of man, invites man to live in this "not-yet" aspect of our experience. "As the God who raises the dead, he is the one who 'calls things that are not, as though they were' (Rom. 4, 17)."⁴⁴⁹

The role of the future in determining the past and the present, and the role of the future as continuity-factor of past, present, and future are central in Christian theology. The eschatological is the controlling orientation in Christian understanding of "real historical events."

"Therefore, we arrive, if we want to do justice to the Old Testament histories and prophecies, at an understanding of history from the perspective of the future. History is the element of the future. From the future, from that which has not as yet become history, one experiences, suffers, and shapes history. From that which comes that which was is criticized and preserved. Hopes do not result from memories, but memories from hopes which keep them awake and alive."⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, "Theology as Eschatology", p. 1, n. 2. in: F. Herzog, ed., The Future of Hope, New York, Herder and Herder, 1970.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 20.

Thus, the not-yet is very real for the Christian, the un-real is the most powerfully real orientation of Christian life.

The kingdom of God brings an entirely new dimension of play-reality into the order of creation. Relative to the primary, secondary, and tertiary spheres of play, God judges and rejuvenates them by His own play-reality. This is the "good news": - something different has been added to reality, - a new dimension which makes it possible to be what one longs to be.⁴⁵¹ The kingdom of God legitimizes fantasy and utopian hopes.

How does the mission of the Christians for the future of the world realize itself? It cannot be realized in contemplation, since contemplation relates to that which has come into existence or to the eternally existing. The future of the world that Christians hope for, however, is in its reality something still expected and thus also something still originating and coming. The Christian hope in the Spirit anticipates this future and brings it into the present.

[...] In that the future is anticipated in hopes it is in the process of coming. We are construction workers and not only interpreters of the future whose power in hope as well as in fulfillment is God (Metz). The Christians must understand themselves as "co-workers" of the promised kingdom of God and its universal peace and its righteousness. For they live not for a future which has not begun as yet, but which has already arrived in Christ and which - coming from him - will change the world. If the Christians hope for this future of God, they not only wait for it, but also look for it, love it, and strive for it.⁴⁵²

⁴⁵¹ From the wonder of faith, one is led to the adventure of hope, as we would say.

⁴⁵² Ibid., p. 46.

The double-ness of present grace and anticipated kingdom is a vibrant bi-sociation in the consciousness of the Christian. It is a juxtaposition which gives life. Insofar as it is so it exhibits one of the characteristics of play, as we have seen earlier. A theology of hope is ipso facto a theology of play.

Thus, we see the connection of Moltmann's theology of play with his theology of hope. We can see especially that man's playfulness is his movement from his present condition to the imagined and hoped for future - which is the realm of the believed-possible, God. All of this is eminently compatible with our own play metaphysics and especially our understanding of the relationship of man to God in what we have called wonder and adventure in the tertiary sphere.

C. Harvey Cox

Harvey Cox wrote his The Feast of Fools to bring attention to festivity and fantasy, vital elements of human life and, as he says, "worthwhile in themselves". "Festivity" he defines as "the capacity for genuine revelry and joyous celebration" while "fantasy" is defined as "the faculty for envisioning radically alternative life situations."⁴⁵³ The festival is a special occasion for the celebration of

⁴⁵³ Harvey Cox, The Feast of Fools, op. cit., p. 7.

some event and "affirms the sheer goodness of what is." It also may observe "the memory of a god or hero", and incorporate into a man's life "the joys of other people and the experience of previous generations". While porpoises and chimpanzees may play, only man celebrates.⁴⁵⁴

Fantasy, on the other hand, is man's power to "invent wholly new ways of living his life as an individual and as a species" and so extend "the frontiers of the future."⁴⁵⁵

In this respect "festivity" and "fantasy" correspond to our "wonder" and "adventure".

Cox makes a distinction between imagination and fantasy.

In imagination we set aside for a moment our usual decorum and social inhibition. In imagination we sneak into forbidden situations, we explore terrifying territory, we try out new styles [...]. Or we sketch the outline of a situation we will soon face, and rehearse our performance. We can [...] speculate on what might have been or what may be.

In fantasy [...] We suspend not only the rules of social conduct, but the whole structure of everyday "reality". [...] We abolish the limits of our powers and our perception [...]. But unlike dreams, in fantasy there is an element of art and conscious creativity.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 61-62.

The job of fantasy is "to operate a dialectic of the real and the possible."⁴⁵⁷ We need fantasy "because the substance of the universe of thought is just too changing and too complex to be appropriated in a merely rational manner."⁴⁵⁸

Cox recognizes that the "fact" world and the "fantasy" world are both real.

Both worlds are "real" worlds. So both the hardheaded citizens who enclose themselves completely in facts and the flipped-out individuals who live only in fantasy inhabit truncated worlds, sealed off from full reality.⁴⁵⁹

What is more, Cox is in agreement with our idea that the tertiary sphere may "judge" the other spheres as much as the others "judge" the tertiary.

Fantasy has a life and logic of its own. It cannot be demoted to a mere appendage of the fact world. Fantasy helps determine what we consider to be fact just as surely as the other way around.⁴⁶⁰

The fantasy aspect of faith can determine reality too. Cox refers to the sixteenth century peasants revolt as an example of what the fantasy faith of Christians with regard to a new heaven and a new earth can promote.⁴⁶¹ Utopian

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 65.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 66.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 79.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., p. 113.

tradition in politics springs from biblical faith.⁴⁶²

Together, festivity and fantasy give man a sense of origin and destiny - that is, a realm of meaning. Both festivity and fantasy are required - for basically three reasons: (1) Man is homo festivus and homo fantasia. It is his capacity for festivity and fantasy which set man apart from the beasts; (2) In a world of constant change, the stabilizing power of festivity and fantasy is indispensable for survival. "Festivity, by breaking routine and opening man to the past, enlarges his experiences and reduces his provincialism. Fantasy opens doors that merely empirical calculation ignores. It widens the possibilities for innovation."⁴⁶³

We recall the past not only by recording it but by reliving it, by making present again its fears and delectations. We anticipate the future not only by preparing for it but by conjuring up and creating it.⁴⁶⁴

(3) Religiously both fantasy and festivity are necessary. Without them man is robbed of "a crucial means of sensing his important place in fulfilling the destiny of the cosmos."⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶²Ibid., pp. 113-114.

⁴⁶³Ibid., pp. 11-12.

⁴⁶⁴Ibid., p. 13.

⁴⁶⁵Ibid., p. 16.

Thus, the loss of fantasy is personal, social and religious.

While "Fantasy offers an endless range of future permutations" and "It inevitably escalates man's sense of his powers and possibilities"⁴⁶⁶ it also tends to externalization and the projection of possibilities upon the world.

For Fantasy requires embodiment in society and history, Cox says.⁴⁶⁷ (In our terms, paidia tends to become ludus, and the tertiary sphere tends to become expressed in the secondary sphere.)

It is the resurrection - and the "incredible notion of the resurrection of the body" especially - which characterizes Christianity as a vision-system which declares that ideas and fantasies that are not "embodied" have little reality. The fact that the resurrection makes no sense, "that it does not fit nicely into the 'fact world' is also important. It keeps us alert to that larger reality that is not fully exhausted by 'facts'."⁴⁶⁸

The social dimension of the need for "embodiment" touches political visions, religious fantasy, and the church as Experimental community.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 80.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 74.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 82-97.

Faith itself is a playful thing, for Cox. This is clear from the remarks he makes with regard to the marvellous quality human beings have of juxtaposing seemingly contradictory ideas or emotions at once.⁴⁷⁰ "Men are able at one and the same time to laugh, worship, fear, be fascinated, be curious and repulsed, and even to love and hate."⁴⁷¹ Faith permits just this kind of evaluation of the human origin of our symbols and the reality to which they point.

As Cox says:

The problem is this: as sophisticated and self-critical postmoderns we know our religious symbols are human phenomena. We are often bored with them. We know our beliefs are historically conditioned and our faith influenced by social factors galore. We are no longer even interested in doubting them. The coming of Christ the harlequin means, however, that symbols, belief, and faith need not simply be jettisoned. That was the simple-minded critical response of an earlier generation, one that had not yet uncovered for itself the playful element even in such a serious thing as faith. Our ability to laugh while praying is an invaluable gift. It is not understood either by the sober believers or by even more sober atheists among us.⁴⁷²

For Cox, the spirit of Christ Himself may be considered "the spirit of play in a world of calculated utilitarian seriousness".⁴⁷³ Hence faith in Christ sees him as the harlequin.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 143-144.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., p. 143.

⁴⁷² Ibid., p. 144.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., p. 145.

Prayer which is "undeniably central to religious life"⁴⁷⁴ is likewise playful. Prayer "produces action toward a goal. It is not an escape from the world but the first step in its recreation." It "provides a form of human fantasy."⁴⁷⁵

Anyone who gives vent to joy, sorrow, or gratitude, or refuses to be bound by the narrow world of facts is really living a prayer. Faith too is more than mindless credulity. Both prayer and faith are really forms of play. Therefore, it is pointless to lament the passing of a particular, dated style of prayer or the disappearance of a narrow notion of faith.⁴⁷⁶

Christian faith is a comic perspective on life - an affirmation of creation as good in the present humanness of life, and in the eschatological vision of things to come. The comic vision is one which sparks laughter and hope. So too faith.⁴⁷⁷ The positive joy and confidence characteristic of Christian faith justifies the label "comedic and playful". Christian faith as well as the comic sensibility promote play; for "the opposite of the comic is tragic necessity and perhaps even stoic resignation."⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁴Ibid., p. 146.

⁴⁷⁵Ibid., p. 148.

⁴⁷⁶Ibid., p. 149.

⁴⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 149-150.

⁴⁷⁸Ibid., p. 153.

At this juncture of his analysis of faith as the playfully comedic vision of reality Cox presents the ultimate problem of dealing with play and reality - this time in his own way. Here he touches upon the problem of how the philosopher or theologian can prophetically analyze any aspect of the secondary sphere's coextensives. As we might put the question: How can the categories for analysis, themselves derived from the cultural sphere, be used in the tertiary sphere in an attempt to escape the ludus of the secondary sphere?

As Cox says, this Christian faith as comedic vision is playful - but a vexing philosophical question lurks in the depths of the question of religion and the comic sensibility. "It is the question of whether a human being can ever stand far enough back from his own religion (or irreligion) to get any 'comic perspective'." ⁴⁷⁹

Religion or its equivalent provides our root orientation to reality. How do we "step back" from it without toppling into the abyss? Can we "step back" from the symbols of our own religion or would such a step merely indicate that these symbols are not really important for us, that there is another and larger system we are part of, one we might not be willing to laugh about? ⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 154.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

Cox tells us there are two school of thought on this question. The first is the school of Hegel and Husserl. Hegel believed that the power of the human mind could see religious themes in the perspective of cultural history. Husserl depended upon the method he called "bracketing", that is, scrutinizing a symbol or experience without asking about its final truth or validity. The opposite school is represented by Kierkegaard and Heidegger. Neither of them believed that "bracketing" is possible. For Kierkegaard one always has to be "inside" some order of existence. "Though a person can have a sense of comic distance about someone else's ultimate symbols he cannot have such a perspective about his own. Otherwise he would not be existing at all."⁴⁸¹ Heidegger argues similarly, "that symbols provide our access to reality. They make possible our perception, therefore, we cannot look at them - we look through them."⁴⁸²

Cox then proposes what we consider a dubious solution to this debate by suggesting that the comic sensibility, by juxtaposing both schools of thought, gains perspective even on our most cherished beliefs and values. Cox thinks that it is possible to live in these disparate perspectives at once.⁴⁸³ It is our opinion that even such an act of

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., p. 154.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., pp. 154-155.

juxtaposition is not really possible since it will be done . . . using the categories of apprehending the world (i.e. the ludus of the secondary sphere for the sake of juxtaposition). In other words, we think, with the school of Kierkegaard and Heidegger, that ultimate perspectives cannot be "bracketed", by definition. It is important to note Cox's own estimation of objectivity regarding cultural phenomena which we mentioned in the last Chapter. There he said that "no one writes without premises or a point of view." There he showed little confidence of the liberating power of his would-be comedic sensibility and the power of juxtaposition. Because of this fact, we feel that Cox's "Appendix" to his book The Feast of Fools considerably undermines his statement about the possibility of comedic perspective and sensibility.

In his The Seduction of the Spirit Cox treats the subject of faith as play more directly as he sees it connected to radical liberation theology. He begins by saying that "Play is not about fun: Play is what links instinct and imagination with poetics and social reconstruction."⁴⁸⁴ In regard to religion play has essential importance. The reason for this is that:

⁴⁸⁴ Harvey Cox, The Seduction of the Spirit, op. cit. p. 184.

Play is doing freely something we know is symbolic, whose procedures we know are in some ways different from those of other worlds we inhabit. Play is something we do for the values and satisfactions inherent in the activity itself, not for some extrinsic purpose.⁴⁸⁵

[...]

Play is not one activity among others. It is a radical form of consciousness and therefore a radical form of faith.⁴⁸⁶

Relative to what this essay has called the secondary sphere of reality, the third sphere of play (which is the one Cox is talking about here) sees "the boundaries set by the political structure [among others] as something human beings create in their attempts to cope with reality."⁴⁸⁷ Here Cox's "reality" means both the primary and secondary ludi which are painful in one way or another.

Within this third sphere of play-reality Cox tells us:

When I play I know I am more real than the rules. I can alter them, if the other players agree, make up new rules, make a whole new game.⁴⁸⁸

Ideally, a culture, Cox says, ought to be saturated with "myths, fantasies, and projections." "A culture of liberated play would abound with myths, rites and symbols [...]"

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 185.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

But such a culture would see myths for what they are and recognize both their worth and their mutability."⁴⁸⁹

It is because it would recognize that its ludi are derived from the distinct tertiary sphere of man's imagination, that such an ideal culture would not attempt to be "permanent" - "but on unending cultural revolution".⁴⁹⁰ "Play", Cox explains, "as radical consciousness means we see all our games as games; then we can play them, alter them, or play something else."⁴⁹¹ "When play becomes, as it now must, our defining stance toward "reality", both our mysticism and our politics become playful."⁴⁹² The power to change conditions by fantasy is not limited then to the external world. "As an example of the internal transforming power of "useless" play, Cox argues that our prayers of penitence are based upon the ability we have to imagine ourselves in another role not determined by the conditions of the past.

It is to act "as if" one were not bound by the past and, in pretending, to be in fact freed from it [...] This is not possible in a world of inexorable necessity. It is possible in an open world of unlimited possibilities.⁴⁹³

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 185-186.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 186.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., p. 187.

⁴⁹² Ibid., p. 189.

⁴⁹³ Ibid., p. 145.

The last statement supports our basic metaphysical view.

Cox comes close to an insight which would link a doctrine of grace with our notion of paidia and "the realm of possibles". He says:

Grace, or whatever word we can use to convey of that idea to postmodern man, must be real and accessible - the incalculable source of surprise and newness in a closed and jaded world.⁴⁹⁴

Grace is not an ephemeral power in the stratosphere but a concrete source of surprise and newness in the real and accessible sphere of possibilities in the here and now.

Cox recognizes that theology itself is play. Theology is a form of play in three ways: Play as "making fun of", play as "make believe" and play as "useless" or non-productive activity.⁴⁹⁵ In all three senses Cox's idea of play theology is in the critical tertiary sphere of the play-real.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 76.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 319-329.

⁴⁹⁶ As we have seen, "theology" is not the same thing as "faith" but is its ludus in one sense (intellectual and pastoral understanding of faith in the secondary sphere). Hence, what Cox says of theology here is more properly said of faith itself in the tertiary sphere and only secondarily of theology in the secondary sphere. Still, insofar as faith in the tertiary sphere is self-conscious, it has a form (ludus) existing in the tertiary sphere and may be called "theology" in the sense in which Cox uses the term.

Cox defines theology as "making fun of" when it is "a satirizing activity which debunks destructive myths". As such, theology is the activity of "the jester or holy fool" who is a "persistent muckraker of spurious mystiques" or a "demythologizer".⁴⁹⁷

Theology as "make believe", Cox says, is creative fantasizing, pretending, or imagining. Theologians should be transmuting old symbols, exploring alternative metaphors, juxtaposing unlikely concepts, playing with new and improbable images of man and woman, God and world, earth and sky. [...] Only a prosaic definition of what is "logical" could deny that play is "logical".⁴⁹⁸

Theology as "useless", non-instrumental, non-productive, activity is likewise playful, Cox says. Its pastoral and prophetic role⁴⁹⁹ paradoxically is to promote contemplation and the "uselessness" of what we have called "wonder" and "adventure".

It has an eschatological word, a kind of summons to mankind to decide about its future. [...] a radically alternative future. [...] The marvel of play is that it reminds us that productive work is not the ultimate end of man. Man was made not just to shape the world but to delight in it, not just to glorify God but "to enjoy Him forever". Play, among other things, is something we do for its own sake, with no extrinsic goal in mind. [...] My hope is that, in this sense, theology will always be a little useless.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 319.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 320-321.

⁴⁹⁹ Confer Ibid., p. 308 where Cox says: "[...] theology does make critical judgments. It is pastoral and prophetic. When it ceases to do so, it ceases to be theology and becomes an inferior form of sociology of religion."

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 328-329.

Harvey Cox sees Jesus as a player more than a worker.⁵⁰¹ He feels that Christianity may have to delve into aspects of its tradition that no one has taken seriously for centuries to discover that man's hope for the future is based upon a discernment that beneath the given surface of things there is a promise and possibility.⁵⁰² The playful spirit of style is a continuous celebration of the possibilities of the future where innovation applies to ends as well as means.⁵⁰³

Cox argues that the needed theological bent today is in regard to the form of radicalizing our relationship to tradition and so "not to come to terms with existing patterns of perception but to explode them, not merely to speak to existing social structures but to undermine them."⁵⁰⁴

What this future will be is unknown but we may hope for new life and vitality from it anyway. "Ours is a more or less formless hope, but a hope nonetheless. It is a hope in search of content, a hope that some form of hope will once again be made available to us."⁵⁰⁵ At the very heart of man there lies "a humane perspective rooted not quite in hope but in a hope about hope."⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰¹Harvey Cox, "God and the Hippies", Playboy, January, 1968, p. 208.

⁵⁰²Harvey Cox, The Feast of Fools, op. cit., p. 42.

⁵⁰³Ibid., pp. 85, 97.

⁵⁰⁴Ibid., p. 135.

⁵⁰⁵Ibid., p. 156.

⁵⁰⁶R.W.B. Lewis, quoted by Cox, ibid., p. 157.

We can see from Cox's reflections on play that his appreciation of play is fundamentally in accord with ours. Man's endless reach into the possible is his search for God who we have seen may be regarded as the Absolute Realm for Pure Playfulness-Pure Possibility Itself, thus accounting for man's disposition of wonder (faith) and adventure (hope) in the tertiary sphere.

D. David Miller

In regard to the primary (cosmo-ontological) sphere of reality, David Miller, as we have seen, holds to a distinction between "reality" and "play", for "play" is but a "metaphor" for the purpose of perceiving the manner of "the real". In regard to the secondary (regional-cultural) sphere, he eventually adopts a three way equation amounting to a mystery: culture-play-reality.

Insofar as the regional-cultural sphere is a patterned and accepted meaning-system arising out of man's playful apprehension of the real and his playful confabulation of meaningful relationship to it, it would seem to follow a fortiori that the freer, less structured tertiary sphere is a conjuncture of "reality" and "play". But there can hardly be a "recognizable" distinction between the secondary and the tertiary spheres of the play-real since the tertiary

tends to become patterned and accepted by convention and thus part of the cultural perception of "how things are". "Play" becomes "game".

As we saw in the last Chapter, Miller holds finally to an appreciation of play and reality in a united mystery. The mystery of play becomes apparent in the very attempt to examine the playfulness of man from an objective perspective. Such an objective view is impossible since one finds oneself engaged in mental "games" from the outset.⁵⁰⁷ So all pervasive is man's playfulness that even what appears as non-play (the very realm against which "play" is customarily judged) is in fact but another facet of universal playfulness inherent in man's being-in-the-world. For Miller, "Play is not only a dimension of knowing but also a dimension of living and feeling and willing, in short, a way of being."⁵⁰⁸ And again, Miller can say, "This is the goal at the end of life, not to win the game (we are all going to lose the game of life anyway), but simply to play and to play simply."⁵⁰⁹

Interpreting Miller here, we may say that the stability of the true player rests in his capacity to change,⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁷ Confer Miller's "Epilogue", as we studied it, p. 328 f., supra.

⁵⁰⁸ David Miller, Gods and Games, op. cit., p. 131.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 130.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., p. 149.

that is, to adapt newer ludi without anxiety because his stability rests in Paidia (playfulness) and not any particular embodiment of it in temporal patterns (ludi).

The ideal of playfulness for Miller, then, promotes "nonseriousness" as the highest seriousness (Aisthesis).⁵¹¹ It also posits creative make-believe (Poesis) as the basic human mode of making meaning of his life.⁵¹² Moreover, stability, correctly human, rests in adaptability to change, not conformity to the status quo (Metamorphosis).⁵¹³ Finally, playfulness means that purposelessness is the highest purpose (Therapeia).⁵¹⁴

These characteristics of playfulness must strike the "non-player" as utter nonsense, for each of the four aspects may be spoken of, respectively, as "nonseriousness is the highest seriousness", "fiction is the highest truth", "change is the highest stability", and "purposelessness is the highest-purpose".⁵¹⁵

⁵¹¹Ibid., pp. 139-142.

⁵¹²Ibid., pp. 143-145.

⁵¹³Ibid., pp. 146-150.

⁵¹⁴Ibid., pp. 150-156.

⁵¹⁵Ibid., p. 139.

Miller feels that each of the four functions of play involve faith and consequently may be called religious. Play mythology has religious importance, Miller says, because of the faith involved as well as the fact that myth itself is "the primary theoretical expression of the religious experience".⁵¹⁶ "Thus, to the extent that the meaning-system whose root metaphor is play is vital in our time, to that extent play is not only man's myth but also his religion."⁵¹⁷

These four characteristics of play are what make the "play" world distinct from ordinary "reality". But they basically adhere to the way things are in human life more than does ordinariness. In other words, the "play" sphere (the tertiary) is truer than the cultural sphere (secondary). Though Miller does not clearly state the cosmo-ontological reason for this (except that he quotes others who testify to the innate playfulness of the material universe itself) we might suggest that the tertiary sphere which Miller speaks so positively about verges upon a "return" to the universality of the Game of Games and thus accounts for itself as somewhat of an instance in human ludus of the Paidia of the universe (and of Paidia "beyond" it). This we say, despite Miller's habitual regard of the play of the

⁵¹⁶ Ibid., p. 154.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

play of the universe as metaphorical (or rather, perhaps ironically because of it), as we saw in the last Chapter.

Miller believes that "faith transcends belief and nonbelief. Faith is make-believe."⁵¹⁸ He tells us that the language of the New Testament and the history of Christian thought support faith as make-believe.⁵¹⁹

Tracing the history of Christian thought on this misunderstanding between faith and belief Miller notes that "the early theologians talked about faith as belief (fides as assensus, faith as assent to something taken to be true)." These theologians "anxiously added that faith is not enough in the life of man. It must be complemented by charity and hope."⁵²⁰

In the reformation period, Miller tells us, Martin Luther preferred the word fiducia to the word fides, because fiducia can never be confused with belief in something taken to be true. It, rather, means "trust" and "confidence".

⁵¹⁸Ibid., p. 164.

⁵¹⁹Ibid., p. 166.

⁵²⁰Ibid.

Miller explains this important fiduciary faith:

A man can have trust and confidence without solving the problem of whether or not the object of his trust and confidence is true or false. [...] Faith is not mental assent or emotional assent, either, whose object is a belief in some supernatural or historical datum which dogmatically and zealously insists on its truth.⁵²¹

Finally, Miller comes to his definition of faith:

Faith is being gripped by a story, by a vision, by a ritual (game). It is being seized, being gripped by a pattern of meaning, a pattern of meaning that affects one's life-pattern, that becomes a paradigm for the way one sees the world. It is not belief. [...] Belief is beside the point. Faith is not belief. It is not intellectual assent. It is not some ritual played so that something will happen. Faith is being turned on by an incredible vision. It is make-believe. Questions of truth and falsity remain irrelevant. Belief and disbelief are transcended in authentic faith.⁵²²

To bolster his definition of faith, Miller cites in a foot-note the metaphysics of make-believe by Heidegger in the latter's Being and Time.⁵²³ Miller says that questions of truth are irrelevant while one is in the midst of make-believe (while in the midst of faith) because one is "playing as if it were true."⁵²⁴ It is faith which grips us even in the

⁵²¹Ibid., p. 167.

⁵²²Ibid., p. 168.

⁵²³Ibid., p. 195, n. 30.

⁵²⁴Ibid., p. 168.

midst of our doubt. Faith is the fundamental vision of how one thinks things are or wishes them to be, without verification. It is a good spiel (good play), gos-pel,⁵²⁵ whose power is to "transubstantiate" the world beyond "the banal activities of life's meager possibilities."⁵²⁶

Miller's notion of aisthesis, the senses being "turned on" to the wonder of all being, is the first element in the meaning of play consciousness.⁵²⁷ It is the astounding affirmation that "nonseriousness is the highest seriousness". This is a sort of "spiritual knowledge", a "seeing with the imagination", or "joy".⁵²⁸ Because faith is play, it is "a way of being".⁵²⁹

This idea of aisthesis is our notion of "wonder". Sustained by aisthesis a true life of "adventure" seems likely to follow.

Miller sees that playfulness and grace in man are close. What is more the benefit of a distinctly "playful theology" would bring out the playfulness of theology's

⁵²⁵Ibid., p., p. 169.

⁵²⁶Here Miller, Ibid., p. 169; is quoting Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God, Vol. 1, Primitive Mythology, pp. 28-29.

⁵²⁷David Miller, Gods and Games, op. cit., pp. 139-142.

⁵²⁸Ibid.

⁵²⁹Ibid., p. 131.

endeavour and accentuate the conjunction of faith understanding (grace) and the playfulness of all aspects of human life.

A life of faith and grace is harmoniously one with playfulness. As Miller says, "Our present life is virtuous, therefore, to the extent that we live life playfully, adults living the divine gracefulness of a child in the present moment."⁵³⁰

Miller feels that a genuine playful theology, therefore, must accentuate the playfulness of our life in poiesis, metamorphosis, and therapeia but always in accord with an appropriate style to the task, i.e. aisthesis (the non-seriousness which is "real" seriousness).⁵³¹ "The ultimate concern of a play theology", Miller says, "therefore, is not so much the articulation and understanding of the faith of the church (a traditional definition of theology) as it is to articulate and understand the articulation and the understanding."⁵³²

All of this is eminently compatible with our metaphysics.

⁵³⁰ Ibid., p. 103.

⁵³¹ Ibid., pp. 158-159.

⁵³² Ibid., p. 159.

E. Sam Keen

Sam Keen's Apology for Wonder makes it clear that wonder is the basis for philosophy, science, art, and religion. He begins his book with a quotation from John Gardner:

Wonder is based upon the feeling that at the deepest levels the world and man's true self are one. This means that the aspirations and ideals, the beauty and goodness, which are natural to the human heart, lie somehow also at the center of the physical universe; that therefore standards of beauty and goodness are not irrelevant to the realities of an indifferent world, but are quite as pertinent to the study of universal events as are the qualitative standards of physical science.⁵³³

At the outset of his book, then, Keen quotes someone who posits an innate and essential sympathy between man's intrinsic character and the cosmo-ontological world. In our terminology, man's paidia-ludus, especially as it shows itself in ideals and aesthetics, in hopes, and in created meanings, echoes the essential paidian character of the primary cosmo-ontological play-reality called "the world" and this in turn bespeaks the Divine Paidia at its core.

Keen feels that it is precisely because man may understand himself as a creature, made in the image of God, that he can be a finite creator - of meaning and value. Thus,

⁵³³ John Gardner, "Wonder", N.E.A. Journal, February, 1957, P. 73, quoted by Sam Keen, Apology for Wonder, op. cit., p. 20.

while he must discover and accept the meaning implicit in the world, man's responsibility is

to complete the creation of a world that has been turned over to him only partially informed with meaning. Within the range of what is humanly possible, it is his responsibility to experiment and to create ever richer patterns of meaning and relationship. [...] Grace is the gift of responsible freedom.⁵³⁴

It is a man's freedom and responsibility at once which is exercised in his ability to transcend the givenness of his particular and individual life.⁵³⁵

Striking the balance between homo admirans and homo faber may be the man known as homo tempestivus ("timely man").⁵³⁶ Between passivity to the pattern of meanings in the cosmos which was characteristic of archaic man (homo admirans) and the compulsive and schizophrenic omnipotent-impotent homo faber of modern day, the balance of freedom and responsibility is struck in accord with the Judaeo-Christian belief in creation.

Man's imagination, within the limits of his being a part of nature which has its own natural law, allows him to freely create and grow out of the unnecessary strictures and patterns of the past. Man must play out his existence as homo ludens-tempestivus.

⁵³⁴Sam Keen, Apology for Wonder, op. cit., p. 84.

⁵³⁵Ibid., p. 85.

⁵³⁶Ibid., pp. 190-200.

In this undertaking, man's fantasy, his desires and his will are integrally related.

Fantasy, far from being an escape into illusion, is the way mind playfully explores alternative possibilities. [...] The more fully we are conscious of dreams, day dreams, fantasies - i.e., free associations - the more likely we are to be in touch with what our total organism desires. [...] Potent action arises when the organism is in touch with the fullness of its desire, has explored in imagination and fantasy the probable results of alternative acts, and has taken the risk of decision and commitment to one among many possibilities.⁵³⁷

Without fantasy I may never become lucid about the logic of my style of life, with its strengths and limitations, and thus may not choose with full knowledge of alternatives. Fantasy and realism are both required for lucid and virile action.⁵³⁸

In the terminology of our metaphysics, Keen is saying that the tertiary sphere of the play-real puts one in touch with a realm of possibilities (Ultimate Paidia within the Game of Games). Man's paidia is both an expression of Paidia Itself as well as a "gift" of Paidia to be like Itself - i.e. to playfully create possibilities for new ludi - within the world. Life, then, is inviting in the Christian perception of it. It is grace-ful or gratuitous "gift".

⁵³⁷Sam Keen, To a Dancing God, op. cit., pp. 67-68.

⁵³⁸Ibid., p. 70.

In the mature personality the pendulum is constantly swinging between wonder and action, and the further it swings in one direction, the further it may go in the opposite direction. The more the self is at home in the world it has created by accepting and defining its gifts and limits, the freer it is to wander and appreciate strangeness.⁵³⁹

To "appreciate strangeness", we would say, is to have a spirit of "adventure".

Sam Keen feels "that there is a common structure, or essence, of grace which may be identified in both physical and moral action."⁵⁴⁰ But such a view is not commonly accepted in theological circles where grace is held to be primarily operative through sacraments, symbols, and life of the Church. Yet a description of the popular and the theological meaning of "grace" "reveals a similarity between the athletic, social, and theological meanings of grace which cannot be overlooked."⁵⁴¹

For Keen, the basic attitude and implicit affirmations in all kinds of grace-ful actions are the same. First, there is trust in the context within which action must take place and confidence in the ability of the self to undertake appropriate action. "Grace involves a casual rather than aggressive stance, a nonthreatened acceptance of the self

⁵³⁹Sam Keen, Apology for Wonder, op. cit., p. 195.

⁵⁴⁰Ibid., p. 202.

⁵⁴¹Ibid.

and the world."⁵⁴²

Religion nourishes the sense of basic trust by affirming in symbolic language that the ultimate context of life is caring and trustworthy.

Since human life is rendered ultimately meaningful by its inclusion in a succoring and careful totality, relaxation, gratitude, and responsible action are the appropriate modalities of authentic life. In traditional religious language: man is justified by his faith in the trustworthiness of God; therefore, human life may be graceful.⁵⁴³

The function of grace, in whatever sense, is to facilitate humanness. Because grace is relatively rare, we are stuck with awkwardness, disharmony, division (mind against body, ego against id, essence against existence, spirit against flesh, civil virtues against private inclinations, future expectations against past experience, moral obligation against moral inclination, and so on). The rarity of grace is the source for the doctrine of the fall of man.⁵⁴⁴ Each man enters into life wounded, deformed, and graceless. The Christian vision is that in Christ the wounds can be healed, the deformity can be corrected, and the gracelessness can be filled with full humanity (union with God).

⁵⁴² Ibid., p. 203.

⁵⁴³ Ibid., p. 205.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 201-202.

This is to say that grace is operative in any time and place where humanity moves toward authenticity, whether Christ is explicitly known or not. "Grace is the natural mark of a fully human life. It does not need to be conferred by Jesus Christ nor confirmed by the Church."⁵⁴⁵ Keen considers that the traditional Christian formula for grace (hearing the word of God and the need for historical knowledge of Jesus and Israel) is narrow and unsatisfactory.

He attempts his own version of a definition of grace which does not refer to Jesus or ancient Israel but sees the primary locus of the "action of God" in the viscera. Keen says: "By grace I mean something concrete which may be described either poetically or phenomenologically..."

[...] let me define grace as "a sudden reorganization, in a more economic manner, of perceptions, attitudes, and dispositions which result in a relaxation of inner and outer conflicts and in liberation of previously bound energies for projects and relationships which are satisfying to the maturing self."⁵⁴⁶

The act of faith is a trusting in the unknown. As Keen explains the idea, "the touch of madness necessary to authentic life is identical with the decision to trust the self to move gracefully when there is no rule of casuistry."⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁵Sam Keen, To a Dancing God, op. cit., p. 23.

⁵⁴⁶Ibid., p. 145.

⁵⁴⁷Sam Keen, Apology for Wonder, op. cit., p. 198.

For Keen, there is a basis for this human trust in the unknown but he does not know how to name this basis, as we have seen.

Yet belief in God is intimately associated with man's "story-telling" ability, i.e. his myth-confabulating power.⁵⁴⁸ "God" is the symbol of an ultimate context, the great myth, the grand projection of meaning. This is not to argue that God is the product of man's need or imagination, though some have put the point that simply. Rather, it is to say that man, who is aware of Mystery engulfing him, can relate to it only imaginatively, (not strictly cognitively) in myth and symbol - or story.

As we say in Chapter VI, Keen even goes so far as to say that the symbol "God" has been used "to affirm the ontological priority of possibility over necessity."⁵⁴⁹ For Keen, the future possibles are unknown. "A religiously agnostic form of trust is merely the outcome of epistemological humility: we do not know the limits of the possible; therefore, we hope."⁵⁵⁰ "Agnosticism and hope are not incompatible."⁵⁵¹

⁵⁴⁸Sam Keen, To a Dancing God, op. cit., p. 86.

⁵⁴⁹Confer, p. 243, supra.

⁵⁵⁰Sam Keen, Apology for Wonder, op. cit., p. 206.

⁵⁵¹Ibid., p. 176.

Creativity is thus "the incarnation of hope in action."⁵⁵²

Sam Keen has said:

Freedom to create and act are possible only where there exists a continuing openness and receptivity to the givenness of life and a continuing movement toward transcending the given. [...]

Freedom, wonder, and hope form an inseparable cluster of attitudes, [...] If we may characterize wonder as openness to novelty in the present and freedom as action undertaken in the confidence that the self may create a new thing, then hope is the conviction that the future, no less than the present, is open to radical novelty [...]

Necessity may be the penultimate context of human life, but the ultimate context is possibility. Hope affirms that novelty is ontologically more fundamental than law and that therefore we should face the unknown future with wonder, expectancy, and the willingness to decide.⁵⁵³

The act of faith is a choice of vision, where "the mature man whether religious or non-religious, chooses to credit the context that nourishes and creates him as being worthy of trust, and this is the source of the ability to relax and act gracefully."⁵⁵⁴ It fills his life with the kind of wonder which sustains adventure.

It may be concluded then, that what defines man is his openness to the Ultimate Mystery and his attempt to play

⁵⁵² Sam Keen, To a Dancing God, op. cit., p. 54.

⁵⁵³ Sam Keen, Apology for Wonder, op. cit., pp. 174-175.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 206.

out a meaning in regard to it. (In our terms paidia responds to Paidia). Our thesis names Keen's Ultimate Basis for human faith (trust) in life and lends cohesiveness to his thought.

Keen makes a case that modern theology ought to be more Dionysian than Apollonian (more paidian than ludic, as we would say).⁵⁵⁵ In a Dionysian theology, "a static God is dead"⁵⁵⁶ and God is dynamically "relativized by a real relationship with the moving force of human history".⁵⁵⁷ Such a God is immanently with man and his world (panentheistically).⁵⁵⁸ He is a process-God.

A living theology is a dance, the rhythmic oscillation between the experience of the nameless power that gives life and invites us to wholeness, and the domestication of that power through language and institutions.⁵⁵⁹

The relationship between the "experience" and the "domestication" is what we have called the relationship between paidian faith in the tertiary sphere and its ludus of theology in the secondary sphere.

Again, our thesis serves to ground Keen's thought in a metaphysics: Dionysus becomes the human paidian response to Divine Paidia.

⁵⁵⁵ Sam Keen, "Manifesto for a Dionysian Theology," in Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman, eds., New Theology, No. 7. (The Recovery of Transcendence), London, Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1970, pp. 79-103.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 94.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 95.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 99.

F. Robert Neale

The most properly psychological of the play theologies is Robert Neale's whose theory of religion as play is the most significant development of play appreciation in the tertiary (sub-regional) sphere, i.e. the area of man's psychology proper: his unconscious and conscious interaction with his environment. It is here where Neale's healthful view of play has been most needed to contravene the negative and escapist prejudices of previous psychologies of play.

Neale begins boldly with the confident claim that the chief end of man is to play.⁵⁶⁰ Following Schiller, Neale believes that play is the harmony of forces which normally live in tension against each other and which often produce a state of imbalance in man's psychological equilibrium when one force dominates the other. These forces are the "impulse to form" (Formtrieb) and "impulse to sensuousness" (Stofftrieb).

A consciousness of the evolving and incomplete nature of man caught between the limits of bodily existence and the expansiveness of his spirit was part of Schiller's

⁵⁶⁰ Robert Neale, Play and the Sacred, op. cit., p. ix.

philosophy. According to Schiller, the reconciling forces of these impulses is the instinct of play. It is commonly recognized and experienced as "beauty" or "living form".⁵⁶¹

"Whereas the object of the sensuous instinct is material existence (life) and that of the formal instinct is form, the object of the play instinct would be 'living form'."⁵⁶²

Play is the force which tempers the other two instincts, keeping them both within their appropriate limits; but it also excites them, seeking to maintain them in full force.⁵⁶³

Neale criticizes Schiller's theory by saying that the particular progression from harmony of the two instincts to the appearance of beauty, thence to the creation of morality is nowhere fully justified. As Neale says, "It could be claimed just as easily that true morality is the source of beauty." But the fundamental insight of Schiller, that the harmony of the instincts is play remains valid.⁵⁶⁴

According to Neale, "living form" expresses itself as beauty when in response to "nature" and as morality when

⁵⁶¹Freidrich Schiller, op. cit., pp. 262-263.

⁵⁶²Robert Neale, Play and the Sacred, op. cit., p. 5.

⁵⁶³Schiller, op. cit., p. 266.

⁵⁶⁴Robert Neale, Play and the Sacred, op. cit., p. 152.

in response to "human nature". Both beauty and morality exist on the same level, both equally products of the harmony of the instincts.⁵⁶⁵

For Neale, "Play is psychologically defined as any activity not motivated by the need to resolve inner conflict."⁵⁶⁶ Thus,

the objective nature of an observed activity or what is conventionally regarded as work or play is not being considered at this point. The one thing of importance is the psychological source of the activity; that is, whether conflict or harmony provides the impetus to the action. [...] "playing" at the game of golf and "working" at digging a ditch are not always what they seem if one looks beyond the outer conventional appearance into the dynamics of the individual.⁵⁶⁷

Man's two basic needs, Neale translates as the need to discharge and the need to design experience. Both are needed for human fulfillment. Play is the force in man which permits both to exist in mutual stimulation and creativity.

Within the distinct sphere of "play", as distinct that is from the "work-a-day" world of ordinariness (the strict needs and obligation of the cultural world), the

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶ Robert Neale, In Praise of Play, op. cit.; p. 24.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

player "demonstrates another way of life by his own behaviour" and provides an example of life's possibilities.⁵⁶⁸ As such, though Neale does not say so in so many words, the tertiary sphere of play-reality of "what could be" offers a critique of the secondary sphere of "what is". The difference between the two spheres, according to Neale, apparently, is in attitude and style with regard to the rules of the game at hand. While the secondary sphere of cultural realities often appears inflexible and demanding of a consequent "work" attitude and style, the play world exists to shatter that impression; another universe of values, attitude, and style is asserted as possible; change according to the imagination or according to desire (for an ordo amoris as Alves calls it) is real. Or, as we might put it, the tertiary sphere exists, relative to the secondary, as a sign of radical alternatives to the status quo.

Interpreting Neale in our own categories, we may say that strictly speaking the paidia of the tertiary sphere demonstrates that a new "game" (ludus) with self-authenticating rules may replace the old "game" (ludus) of society's norms of sanity, normalcy, legitimacy, and value. In the last analysis, this is no more than saying that the paidia

⁵⁶⁸ Robert Neale, "Religion and Play", Crossroads, July-September, 1967, p. 94.

of the world shows up in the psychology of man as an ongoing dynamic search for full humanness in an ideal ludus. The Christian, of course, sees this search as an implicit search for the Kingdom of God embodied in the divine-human ludus of Christ.

Neale believes that "play happens by chance - suddenly - as an occasion for surprise and wonder."⁵⁶⁹ It cannot be controlled in advance. The "sense of the unusual and different experience" is what characterizes play. For this reason, play is always "remarkable".⁵⁷⁰

Wonder sparks adventure, a state of being which regards the future as full of chance, as entailing risk, and as being of remarkable purport.⁵⁷¹ Adventure also embraces and unifies elements of peace, delight, freedom and unworldliness.⁵⁷² Adventure is simply the automatic outcome of a psychological style of life issuing from the harmony of sensuousness and form - or "discharge of energy" and "design of experience" - or id and ego.

Though Neale wishes to speak of the psychological meaning of attitudes and thus distinguish "work" and "play",

⁵⁶⁹Robert Neale, In Praise of Play, op. cit., p. 42.

⁵⁷⁰Ibid., p. 43.

⁵⁷¹Ibid.

⁵⁷²Ibid., pp. 44-56.

he cannot escape the general context of his psychological point of view which is that there are two worlds: first, external reality, and second, the psychological interaction with this external reality issuing in harmony or disharmony of the instincts ("play" and "work"). The general context of his psychology assumes a non-play reality against which the human psyche may react in either of the two ways, as we have seen in previous Chapters.

It is here where we feel Neale's profound insights into the psychology of play lack philosophical balance vis-a-vis the other spheres of reality. It is likewise here that the note of "trust" to which Neale rightly calls attention is the attitude of humanness which logically would seem to be a good launching point for a theological extrapolation on "faith", especially of the fiduciary kind.

Neale has argued that faith itself is make-believe. He has pointed out that there are three possible responses to the sacred dimension of life: the magical, the profane, and the religious. The magical response attempts to control or influence the sacred, and the profane response denies the authority of the sacred. The magical and profane responses are work-serious responses, attempting to manipulate life and meaning according to reason and will. The religious response is a certain "letting be", a certain play-response to the inner psychic experience of the sacred.

Neale points out that the magical response is basically "belief", the profane response is "non-belief", while the proper religious response is the play response of "make-believe".

Neale explains:

Believing is the acknowledgement of the sacred for the sake of the profane, a work reaction to the manifestation of new energy and new design [...] One always believes "because". The mother believes in play because it will remove her child's restlessness. The adult believes in the sacred because he will receive wealth or health (survival). The statement, "I believe", is always incomplete. So the primitive magician affirms, "if I pronounce the sacred words over the sacred symbol, I will catch my fish". Thus, believing is the result of an inappropriate work response to what offers the potentiality for play. The sacred is purposeless, and the attempt to use it is antireligious.⁵⁷³

In his doctoral thesis this same passage occurs almost verbatim. There he states that the functionality of make-believe transcends both belief and non-belief and "Questions of truth and falsity remain irrelevant" [...] "And for the one who fully participates in the story, nothing else is required."⁵⁷⁴

This insight of Neale's derives from his study of myth but it is tantamount to our simple observation - amounting

⁵⁷³ Robert Neale, In Praise of Play, op. cit., p. 143.

⁵⁷⁴ Robert Neale, Play and the Sacred, op. cit., p. 199.

almost to a truism - that within the tertiary sphere of play (if we look at this sphere of play itself and not over and against any other) the two parts of our equation: "play" and "reality" - are one. Though Neale arrives virtually at the same point ~~through~~ the long route of study of myth, it is our observation that the short route (the logical one) of philosophy would have made the point as well. Suffice it to say that on this point Neale's theory and the present work are in agreement. In fact it is interesting to note that Neale immediately goes on to say:

It follows from the above conclusion that when an individual becomes concerned about the validity of a story, he has entered into the realm of the profane.⁵⁷⁵

In the words of our own essay, this conclusion of Neale's may be put this way: the integrity of the tertiary sphere is not to be judged by the categories of the secondary. But the "reality" of play in the tertiary sphere (which is the sphere to which attention is drawn by Neale) is at best only a symbol of a possibility, namely, a possible life without tension. Moreover, this "reality" of the tertiary sphere is utterly incapable of direct influence upon the reality which surrounds and upholds it as its foundation, that is, the ordinary reality which is extra-mental. Any

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

influence of the "play" world upon the "real" world is indirect, oblique, tangential and most often fleeting at that. Furthermore, the "play world", as Neale uses the term, is but an "inner environmental" one, a psychological state or attitude which, as we have argued earlier could be only that and nothing more - and could be viewed as no response at all to anything that is outside the mind of the "player".

As to the theological enterprise itself being a playful activity, Neale offers this observation:

Since any human activity may be playful, dogmatizing and theologizing cannot be excluded from this possibility. If such activity is regarded as unnecessary, useless, far from the definitive, and as only a gracious offering of the mind for the sake of full play, it is appropriately playful and allows the sacred story to remain uncorrupted and autonomous.⁵⁷⁶

Even allowing an appreciation of theology as ludus in the secondary sphere, this too would seem to make theology merely an extrapolation upon an inner psychic experience of the sacred - without a necessary referent to "outer environment" or need to be checked by the secondary, regional sphere or the cosmo-ontological one.

We may reinterpret and reformulate Neale's theory boldly by asserting that the harmony of discharge of energy and design of experience in the tertiary (sub-regional)

⁵⁷⁶Robert Neale, In Praise of Play, op. cit., p. 145.

sphere(play) is the human side of grace, the evidence that from a psychological point of view play may be understood as the state of humanness in "peace", "freedom", and "delight". In contrast to the un-graced or conflicted state of humanness play may be regarded as "separate" or "different" (thus lending a radical different meaning to Neale's note of "illusion").⁵⁷⁷ But the "illusory" way of being is paradoxically an illusion of an illusion for reality itself is playful. Thus man may psychologically play all the time (the instincts may be in harmony) and still not be outside of the really real.

We may say further that the play psyche of man, with its attitude of trust and its willingness to take a risk in the adventure at hand is evidence that the harmony of the instincts is essentially a result of a vision of how things are in reality, that is, an implicit psychological faith that reality is trustworthy or of such a nature as to summon man to peace, freedom, delight. The reality outside of man provokes this faith response in the form of an experience of "import", which cannot be proved (thus "risky"). The mode of life of such a response is truly an adventure. But the full "reasonableness" of the adventure is in the faith that Reality itself is such that play is the fitting response

⁵⁷⁷ Neale calls peace, freedom, delight and illusion the "elements of adventure". Confer his In Praise of Play, op. cit., pp. 45-56.

to it. This is to say that Reality itself may be playfully constituted as what it is: a play-reality identity (our cosmo-ontological sphere).

This we believe is what implicitly Neale wanted to say but was incapable of saying (thus contradicting himself) because of his assumption that play is illusion and illusion is correctable by the real which is non-play. A resolution of his problem might have been forth-coming had our basic distinctions in Part One been known or assumed, for Neale oversteps the tertiary sphere of play and gets into trouble, when speaking of the "reality" outside it.

G. Response to the Theologians

Ontology of Trust

Faith, as Hebrews tells us, is "the assurance of what we hope for; it is our conviction about things that we cannot see."⁵⁷⁸ In other words, faith is an affirmation, a trusting attitude and valuation, given to a sphere which is regarded as real but which is not accessible by demonstrable proofs of the order of science. Human reason alone does not provide faith.

⁵⁷⁸ Hebrews 11: 1.

To say one has faith is to say that one affirms the existence of such a realm beyond the ability of unaided reason to establish (fides). It is also to say that such a realm can be trusted or relied upon absolutely (fiducia).

Faith affirms a transcendent centre of reality (God) who is foundation of all spheres of reality. God, is, in this sense, more fundamentally real than these other realms of reality.

In this respect the affirmation of faith is a declaration that there is a realm set apart from the ordinary dimensions of the real (as Paidia to ludus) and that this realm may legitimately judge the ordinary dimensions of the real. The realm of faith has its own values, exists for its own intrinsic purposes, and operates, qua faith (in the tertiary sphere) independently of the affirmations made in the ordinary day-to-day reality disclosed to our consciousness (in the secondary sphere). The style of faith, likewise, operates with its own autonomous self-authenticating, self-consistent ease and confidence - in tensionless freedom for its own ends - and freedom from the valuations and categories of ordinary waking consciousness.

Faith is thus a play-reality attitude and affirmation, a declaration and a valuation of a realm of reality beyond ordinariness. Faith is an "other-worldly" orientation - linking

up the human consciousness to the truly foundational and all-enveloping play-reality which we have called the primary sphere and disclosing through it, by its own dynamic, the Divine centre of Reality, Perfect Paidia, Infinitely Playful Possibilities.

To the non-believer the affirmations of faith are about the un-real, the insubstantial. Faith is thus labelled illusory, fanciful, self-deceptive, un-realistic. Faith appears un-real and absurd, a product of fearful, neurotic imagination.

As we have shown in Part One, it is possible to say that what appears as un-reality, and unrealistic faith-attitude, appears so as the result of a grounding of the critic in a different sphere of the real than that of the phenomenon itself. Because it is un-real in one sphere of meanings is no argument that it cannot be real in another. In fact, the believer can affirm that the un-real or play realm of faith is very real and playful all at once since it exists in the third sphere of the play-reality identity. The believer sees the objections of the non-believer as arising in the secondary sphere of play-reality and, consequently hemmed in by the "game" aspects of rational analysis we have explained earlier. The believer, in other words, says that the non-believer is too much bound up with

ludus and he lacks true openness to "possibilities" of meaning (paidia) beyond his "games" (ludi). The unbeliever lacks paidia in sufficient degree (in the tertiary sphere) to put him in the realm of true playfulness, the primary sphere of the Play-Reality-Identity who is Full Playfulness Itself embodied in the Game of Games.

In other words, to the believer, faith gives certitude in its own way (a tertiary sphered way) of how things are ultimately (in the primary sphere). The assertion and certitude of faith are ordered to the fundamental sphere of the divine-world interface and so faith sees itself as more "realistic" than the critic who is caught in the net of limitations of his cultural categories.⁵⁷⁹

It is here where faith can be distinguished from its articulation (theology) which automatically cripples the intuition and personal intimacy of faith by its own cultural "words".

The mature person needs ontological weight in his openness to life. If trust is a necessary element for each state of healthy personality-growth it is necessary that implicitly this trust be ordered to something in the depths of life itself as justifying trust, an ontological anchoring

⁵⁷⁹ The linkage between faith-life in the tertiary sphere to the playfulness of the primary sphere is thus established as an instance of our axiom that the tertiary exemplifies and extends the reality of the primary.

point for trust in life as well as confidence in human ability to approach it in appropriate action. Reality must be trustworthy and not just because of past personal experience (my mother nursed me tenderly to be a trusting person) but even despite past experience (my first grade teacher was cruel), an affirmation of a Beyond in our midst justifying trust in life.⁵⁸⁰

This trustworthiness of life-in depth is the source of man's confidence in himself as well, permitting him to alleviate his fears, his tensions, his anxieties and allowing him, therefore, to positively play out his existence. The alternative attitude of distrust precludes healthful and positive play and produces a negative or aberrant play as in paranoia and schizophrenia.

This basic trust in the wondrous adventure (the quest) of life has its own felt (believed) ontology - aesthetically intuited, non-provable (because itself the basis for all proving). It is the believed immediacy which founds all epistemology.

Since we do not know the outcome of future events we have a basic attitude of trust and hope - even love - of the unknown possibilities of our life and this despite whatever pain or imperfection may be part of such possibles.

⁵⁸⁰ Cf. H. Richard Niebuhr, The Responsible Self, New York, Harper and Row, 1963, p. 119.

As Sam Keen says, "Since we cannot understand the limits of the possible or control the happenings that form the context of human history, we must remain open to the emergence of radically novel events which may nourish and refresh."⁵⁸¹

Faith orchestrates our experience and re-shuffles it according to its own premises so that it places elements into our experience.

We are told that death is not a final separation, nor at any moment a complete separation. This introduces an historical note into experience. It introduces the quality of limitation of boundary into our seeing (I am not seeing all that is there.) Therefore, it very deeply modifies experience itself.⁵⁸²

[...] Conversion of point of view, the very possibility of seeing or experiencing things differently, implies that we can change and can see things differently, implies that change is not an enemy or a threat but a possibility of life and of salvation itself.⁵⁸³

The possibility of seeing things differently which is part of faith and which naturally leads to hope in being able to be different (to enter into this new way of being) may be appreciated as a play-possibility.

⁵⁸¹Sam Keen, Apology for Wonder, op. cit., p. 206.

⁵⁸²William Lynch, "Faith, Experience and Imagination", New Catholic World, July/August, 1972, p. 171.

⁵⁸³Ibid., p. 172.

There are two parts to the notion play-possibility. Let us look at each. We are suggesting here that the very capacity to see things differently is an imaginative power (playfully to entertain radically alternative ways of being). Because this "vision" of possibility comes about in the play of imagination it may be recognized as the first step in an intuition that somehow the realm of the possible (which is disclosed in play) is really how things are. That is, reality is wider than what is disclosed in any given actuality. Reality, in other words, is the sphere of possibles (paidia) out of which some actualities (ludi) may be experienced. Thus, the experience of any particular actuality is to be seen as an experience of something which exists in a domain of possibles.

What is more, "the domain of possibles", as "the really real", is discerned as intrinsically playful (God is Pure Playful Possibilities) since possible realities exist over and against "actualities" - as play in the tertiary sphere exists relative to the other sphered "realities". Moreover, in the Christian faith God's nature is what justifies faith as trusting play. Thus God Himself must be the justification of the playfulness within faith itself (God is Playfulness Itself). Thus the experience of any particular actuality is to be seen as an experience of something which exists in a domain of playfulness.

Now according to our metaphysics the domain of possibles and the domain of playfulness are one. Therefore, faith and hope are "play-possibilities". This is the juncture where our appreciation of "wonder" ties in with faith. What is truly "wonderous" is the reality disclosed in faith, and faith is kept alive by this awareness of the wonder of its object. Faith is wonderous insofar as it is focused upon its vision of "what is". But since "what is" is, by definition, a unified source of radical possibilities (either as Pure Paidia or a finite paidia-ludus), then "what is" naturally leads to the adventure of "what could be" (hope). Faith and hope thus correspond to wonder and adventure.

This connection of play to faith and hope, by way of wonder and adventure is indirectly acknowledged by the present theology of play.

Faith, thus considered, liberates one from the narrowness of the obvious and the provable, and situates one in the realm of the not-yet actualized - and even in a humanly participatory way, in the reality of God's infinite non-"actualization" (Absolute Possibility: Absolute Playfulness or Paidia).

The Christian faith provides a sense of itself as gift, and a sense of gratitude for the grace of a participation

in God's life of playfulness. According to our thesis, Christian's faith, therefore, ought to exhibit its own playfulness in all aspects of the life of the person demonstrating his awareness of the wonder of "what is" and the adventure of life's possibilities.

It is in this sense that faith is fundamentally a play-reality with a play attitude and dynamic. It is also in this sense that metanoia, as called for by faith, is a call to "play" oneself into authenticity and wholeness with the transforming grace of the Spirit. ("Play" in this sense is what Robert Neale means by it, a tensionless, naturally felicitous way of human activity.)

The essence of Christian wisdom seems to be this attitude to life's values - not to take everything too solemnly, that is, narrowly - even life itself. Life is to be approached and lived for itself - for the wonder and adventure of sharing in the greatest of secrets, the fellowship of the Spirit of God. The Christian is invited to participate in the play of the Logos before the Father, the realm of infinite possibility. Proverbs 8.30 says, "I was daily his delight, always making play before him."

Jesus' own attitude to His Father was as child to father. The Hebrew word for Father, Abba (as in the Lord's Prayer) is properly translated as "Daddy". It is the supreme

Christian expression of trust to address the Godhead as Abba. It is the title of God which legitimizes wonder and adventure in life. Through the use of Abba Jesus taught Christians to play out their lives as children under the sovereign providence of a loving Father.

Interpreting the meaning of Jesus according to our metaphysics, we may say that Jesus as God-Incarnate, or as God-become-man, is the conjunction of the Divine-man spheres of the play-real. He is the fullest efficient exemplar of the power of the playful sub-regional sphere to transcend the cultural and even the cosmo-ontological limits of ludi, disclosing the Divine centre of the Game of Games as "Abba". Jesus is the ludus of a union of Divine Paidia to human paidia. He demonstrates in Himself the unique path of human potential to realize the wondrous and adventurous possibility of union with divine Paidia.

The wonder and adventure of faith and hope may be seen as the impulse of grace. In fact, it is the gift of grace which authenticates man's vision of "how things are" and "how they could be". For grace gives to faith and hope an actual and lived dimension and the conviction that such life of faith (wonder) and hope (adventure) is rooted in the Ultimate. This Ultimate has within Himself the same wonder and adventure, i.e. God's Self-wonder and Self-adventure

as the qualities of His own Paidia. In this sense faith and hope are grounded in the Reality which is wonder and adventure Personified.

In fact, grace may be understood as the union of Divine Paidia and human paidia so that what is done through man's true playfulness is also done in the playfulness of God.

In the Christian perspective of the human dimension of the Game of Games, wherever there is real human freedom, there is a conjunction of play and reality, as we have seen. Now, if the heart of play is paidia, and paidia is graced because grace is always actually proffered by God to man within his Paidia, (wherein man is most like God) then, we must say that there exists a three way coextensive in this free human domain: namely, play (paidia), human authenticity (reality), and grace. This is to say that it is virtually impossible to distinguish these coextensives from each other - that is, to find one isolated from the others.

But "grace", according to Christian understanding, is the power of man to enter the kingdom of heaven, to be like Jesus, one with the Father. It is the capacity to act like God.

As such, play in the graced union of Paidia and paidia, serves the role of ultimate significance; it is

implied religion. Huizinga faintly says as much by holding that play is primarily found in religion and secondarily in the other realms of culture.⁵⁸⁴ Ultimate play, or religion is discovered in the very dynamic of man's playful nature.

The proper human mode of life, then, in recognition of the play of God in his life in grace, is to play. That is, in grace, man is called to enter into the nature of his own paidia even more deeply and to recognize that such a play-mode of existence is a meeting with God Himself.

The elements of man's paidia - his wonder and adventure - thus may be explained as his radical openness to the marvel of "what is" and his thirst for "what could be". Both wonder and adventure bespeak the anonymous presence of Divine Paidia in all finite instances of ludi - most especially in the peculiar paidia-ludus who is man himself.

⁵⁸⁴ John Huizinga, Homo Ludens, op. cit., p. 16.

CONCLUSIONS TO PART TWO

We have applied our philosophical hypothesis of a three-fold identity of "play" and "reality" to the contemporary theology of play and have responded to the theologians in the light of it. While leaving many of our responses undeveloped, we have demonstrated, nonetheless, the heuristic value of the hypothesis. This heuristic value was precisely the clarification of the fundamental theological question of how "play" and "reality" connect.

While demonstrating the heuristic value of our metaphysics when applied to Christian theology, we have also clarified the meaning of our metaphysics itself. Thus Part Two was a hermeneutical development of Part One.

We have discovered that the theologians of play have spoken rather extensively of play-realities in the third sphere - but the implications in the other two spheres have not been well developed. In fact, very little has been said about the theological play realities of the secondary sphere in specifics, though the play-reality-culture coextensive is not unknown to the theologians. Interestingly, there has been very little said of the theological enterprise itself as something culturally and playfully produced.

The fundamentally, primary sphere of the God-world relationship, as well as the nature of God and the nature of the world as distinct realities also, surprisingly, have not been well explored by the theology of play. A little has been said of God as Player, but the world itself is not seriously pursued as a possible play-reality. In short, much has yet to be done on the most basic question of how play relates to reality by contemporary theology of play.^{584a}

We have found that while our hypothesis has congruencies with a great deal of contemporary play theology, at the same time it may be used to criticize much of theology's basic "play-reality" understanding. It, likewise, provides seeds for a further development of a full-blown theology of play, based upon the utilization of our metaphysics: of the distinct spheres of play-reality identity, of paidia and ludus, and of the elements of "wonder" and "adventure" in man's paidia.

Specifically, we have seen that Christian faith, hope, and grace may be appreciated as play-realities in the tertiary sphere, with repercussions in the other spheres. Theologically man is affirmed to be radical openness to the marvel (wonder) of Paidia in all finite ludi, even his own, and as finite paidia in adventurous search for union with

^{584a} As noted in Conclusions to Part One, we see also here the need for theology to see implications of each sphere of play-reality with the other two spheres. These implications need explicitation and in such a way as to avoid the negation

Infinite Paidia, and thus more accession of his true authenticity. This confirms our intuition that the elements of "wonder" and "adventure" in man's paidia speak mainly of Divine Paidia anonymously present in all "that is" and all "that could be". The "Game of Games" is defined precisely as this God-world interaction, epitomized in man, as a microcosm of a macrocosm. Theologically understood, "wonder" becomes the Christian's faith attitude and perspective on "what is" in the ultimate sense. Likewise, theologically speaking, "adventure" becomes the Christian's hope attitude and perspective on "what could be" in the ultimate sense.

Man's cultural realities ("Theology" itself, "God", "Jesus", "Church", "Sacraments", and so on) are affirmed as the meeting ground in social dimension of two kinds of expression (ludi) of the playfulness of the really real - the Paidia of God and the paidia of man.

A fully integrated theology of play must spell out the connection of the play-reality question, and our hypothesis has demonstrated the first step in this discovery, the entertainment of the possibility that the three-fold sphered equation, the notions of paidia and ludus, and of "wonder" and "adventure" may provide the general framework for the understanding of this mystery. It is the basis for a beginning in the reexamination of the significance of play in a more substantial theology of play.

As we mentioned in our Introduction (p. XXXIIC) theologians have tended on the whole to not take seriously the depth of play in the secondary sphere. That is, they have not seen clearly the fact of the play-reality equation. It is not that theologians have offered reasons for rejecting this secondary sphere of the equation - but rather they have tended to ignore it altogether, even though many important thinkers have regarded it as a valid vision of the reality which forms human environment. There is little evidence that these theologians have examined the question systematically, nor have they shown deep awareness of the inescapability of its implications in their own writing. As we have seen, some theologians (Cox, for example) are aware of the problem. But generally, theologians of play have not seen all spheres together, nor worked out the connection of one sphere to another. The present work offers a framework for such a holistic view.^{584b}

^{584b} See also our remarks in our Conclusions to Part One on the mutual implications of spheres.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

There are numerous theories as to the nature of play in various disciplines (psychological and sociologico-anthropological studies particularly) affirming the importance of play - but most theories are inadequate to a full appreciation of the meaning of play and most theories end up either contradicting themselves, or, at least, contradicting the theories of one another.

Basically, the fundamental problem encountered in a review of the major theories of play is that play is assumed to be of the unreal and yet is affirmed to be the very real foundation and seedbed of much that is real: for example, the whole of cultural realities.

The hypothetical solution we have offered is that it is only by going to the metaphysical level that the relationship of "play" and "reality" may be clarified and that this metaphysical relationship is the needed basis for any other study of play in other disciplines. By taking play more seriously than most, we end up critically opposing the most common assumption, namely that play is of the unreal.

Part One of our study has supported an hypothesis that reality is fundamentally playful in three distinct,

yet interconnected spheres: the primary cosmo-ontological, the secondary cultural-regional, and the tertiary sub-regional-conscious. It has said that reality is playfulness (paidia) and game (ludus). Within the special paidia-ludus which is man, paidia has the elements of "wonder" and "adventure" which put man at the vanguard of the playful cosmos.

Such a metaphysical hypothesis permits a clarification of philosophical difficulties in the theories of play, as well as resolves major contradictions in some theories in psychology and sociology. For example, it permits an understanding of how play in one sphere may be essentially autotelic and "useless" but highly "productive" in relation to another sphere. The hypothesis also provides a holistic and balanced appreciation of play, integrating the basic findings in various disciplines (for example, sociology and psychology) which customarily treat play in their own private domains without reference to a possible universal meaning, applicable to all disciplines together. The hypothesis seems to blend together a comprehensive understanding of play from the compartmented appreciations of it in the past.

Applied to Christian theology of play in Part Two, the hypothesis performs the same kind of task.

Some theological clarifications arise: the world itself is seen to be one ludus of Infinite Paidia, and culture is the expression of God's Paidia and man's as well, being a ludus of both. Theological speculation is man's effort to transcend the categories of cultural understanding of faith-realities and to be "faith-ful" to the paidia of man and the Paidia of God, but must inevitably be restricted to an imperfect expression (a ludus of culture).

Theologically, the regional-cultural sphere was found to be a neglected realm by the theologians of play, despite its obvious importance.

Faith is seen as the Christian's deepest engagement in "wonder" at reality "as it is", in an ultimate sense, while hope is viewed as the Christian's basis for real "adventure" in regard to "what could be".

God Himself is a fourth reality but is known only in the same context as the world itself. Thus, God is not a fourth sphere of play-reality but rather the core of the one primary, cosmo-ontological play-reality.⁵⁸⁵

Our conclusion is that our thesis sheds light not only on the relationship of "play" and "reality", but it helps re-cast the large question of the God-world-relationship and at the same time challenges believers to take

⁵⁸⁵ Our thesis does not fit the four-fold division of realities in some classical studies, for example, as in Heidegger, Voegelin, and Jung. Cf. David Miller, "Theology and Play Studies", op. cit., p. 349.

"play" more seriously (for "play" is the nature of the "real). The thesis also sharpens the focus of statements about "play" by play theologians. What is more, it gives the question of "play" a more panoramic and legitimate place in theological studies, not only as theme, but also as method and style. Part Two, in effect, says that the Christian faith, its hope and its appreciation of grace, are already recognized by play theologians as intrinsically "playful-realities". Though this play-reality question is underdeveloped and inconsistent in play theology, it can be said that play theology, on the whole, unconsciously supports the hypothesis and that, given full consciousness of it, may correct some of its own understanding of both "play" and "reality". The hypothesis seems a good beginning of play theology. The Christian way of life is thus better appreciated (from the outside) when put into the categories of our metaphysics.

Our metaphysics, in providing a precisely "play" appreciation of "reality" gives a new area for the continuing dialogue of theologians and philosophers (be they believers in God, agnostics, or atheists) about the nature of Ultimacy and the Absolute.

A critical treatment of our hypothesis of three spheres of the play-real would have begun, doubtlessly, with the popular sphere of play (the tertiary) where, from

the vantage point of "everydayness", the congruency of play-and-reality in the so-called "play world" would be recognized. The question would then have arisen as to the relationship of the "play-world" to the cultural one and thus suggested that culture too (the secondary sphere) was a similar play-reality congruency. Finally, from such an awareness of the secondary and tertiary spheres of play-reality, it would have become possible to entertain the vision of the primary cosmo-ontological sphere as itself a play-reality conjunction.

Though we have not adopted the critical method as such, our systematic development of the hypothesis has shown that it is a credible one.

The essay has not tried to demonstrate the value of the hypothesis by a treatment of the meaning of religion in general, nor has it applied it to other world religions. It has provided a model for understanding the connection of play and reality and applied it to Christianity only. Eventually, however, it could be applied to these other topics and so bring a further hermeneutical spiral to the speculation of the play-reality question.

We have offered an intuition and speculated upon it in the philosophical manner of playing with wonder. We have intellectually marvelled at the reality which engulfs all experiences. We have philosophically played with "play"

and "reality" as we set out to do. We have reviewed the same question theologically. In all this, we have, indeed, proffered only theoretical knowledge. But we have striven to show a love of wisdom and a human appreciation of the mystery of man's existence.

We have been theoretical - not to hide behind clouds of abstraction - but to respond to the knowledge of human reality as a gift of intuition. As Hannah Arendt has said:

Theoria, in fact, is only another word for thaumazein [wonder]; the contemplation of truth at which the philosopher ultimately arrives is the philosophically purified speechless wonder with which he began.⁵⁸⁶

In this perspective, Part Two of our work explored possibilities of a more comprehensive use of "play" in theology - both as theme and as method - and thus was playing out its own adventure. Our work has been, in this respect, an instance of a ludus of the cultural sphere insofar as it has been committed to actualizing something beyond the feeling of the importance of play (paidia in the tertiary sphere) to the form of philosophical language concepts (in the secondary sphere), and insofar as it was another ludus (namely, theological) of the ludus of philosophical understanding.

The whole enterprise of our thesis sees itself as a ludus in the cultural sphere which hopefully has caught some of the divine playfulness (Paidia) and in this way has been true to authentic human playfulness (paidia).

⁵⁸⁶Hannah Arendt, op. cit., p. 267..

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

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In planning the path to be pursued in this thesis the widest and most general way of linking play in philosophy and theology has been chosen. Alternatives to this path are many; for example, other paths could have been the pursuit of isolated metaphysics, for its own sake, without reference to any other field of intellectual interest; or, the pursuit of straight theology of play, again without reference to a fundamental metaphysical theory which would operate as a tool of understanding; or, the pursuit of a particular and narrow cultural view of play out of which to offer a critique of particular works or particular authors, whether philosophical, theological, psychological, and so forth.

It has been felt that there was a real need for a general and panoramic overview which would bridge the various disciplinary meaning of "play". This general cross-disciplinary overview necessitated a metaphysics which would be faithful to the literature in various fields of learning. This we have offered in general outline in Part One.

An application and extension of this general theory of play to the particular field of theology was to show the heuristic value of the overview, again in the most

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basic and general way possible, as ground work for possible future particular studies of special uses of "play" in theology.

Finally we are sympathetic with Karl Jaspers' remarks that Metaphysics is a "game"

Metaphysicians play a game composed of rational acts oriented toward the ground of all being. This game may be a mere intellectual occupation, a pastime [...] or else it may be guided by a fundamental knowledge which governs the climate of thinking and carries immediate conviction because it supplies not only rationality but also its fulfillment. [...]. But guided by fundamental knowledge, the game can be played in earnest. Then thought, through an activity analogous to prayer, moves toward certainty at the source. Such meditation creates a contact with the ground of being.^{586a}

^{586a} Karl Jaspers, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

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ABSTRACT:

THE METAPHYSICS OF PLAY AND ITS THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Part One of this work presents a metaphysics in which "reality" and "play" are one. In support of this metaphysical view, the play-reality identity is presented in three distinct yet interconnected spheres with a Chapter for each: the primary, cosmo-ontological sphere; the secondary, cultural-regional sphere; and the tertiary, sub-regional (conscious) sphere. By utilizing the works of many theorists, each sphere of play-reality is explained and the relationship of the spheres to one another is then seen to clarify the play-reality problem of leading theorists of play, resolving contradictions in their writings.

The usual distinction between "play" and "reality" is seen to be the case of one sphere of the play-reality equation being treated in terms of another. This equation also details how play can be at once "useless" and autotelic, yet highly "productive" for human life.

For the primary, cosmo-ontological sphere, Heraclitus, Plotinus, Schiller, Nietzsche, Fink, and Axelos are reviewed. For the secondary, cultural-regional sphere, La Rochefoucauld, Heidegger and Ehrmann are studied. For the tertiary sphere, Ortega y Gasset, Roheim, Huizinga, and Caillouis are examined.

The fourth Chapter creates categories of playfulness (paidia) and game (ludus) in each sphere, arguing that ludus is a patterned structured (therefore limited, finite) actualization of paidia which in its Pure State, by nature, is free energy and unspecified openness to possibilities of actualization. In the absolute sense, a realm of "Pure Playfulness = Pure Energy of Possibilities" is postulated.

The distinct spheres are explained to be connected to one another as relationships of various ludi to a common Paidia, the primary cosmo-ontological sphere being the realm of Infinite Paidia actualizing itself in a finite ludus of the world, one of many playful possibilities, the secondary cultural-regional sphere being at once both a ludus of the primary sphere and a ludus of the tertiary sub-regional (conscious) sphere of man's free and playful imagination, concocting various actualities out of many possibilities.

The human being is then seen as a paidia-ludus over and against Absolute Paidia. - a microcosm of a macrocosm. The paidian character of man is detailed into "wonder" (at what is) and "adventure" (at what could be). Some elements of human "wonder" and "adventure" are then outlined.

In Part Two, the heuristic value of the metaphysical hypothesis is tested theologically, by reference to the "play theology" of the Christian faith. The hypothesis clarifies the play-reality question theologically, serving as a valuable tool for evaluating and criticizing the particular "play" works of Hugo Rahner, Jürgen Moltmann, Harvey Cox, David Miller, Sam Keen, and Robert Neale. God is posited as Absolute Paidia, and the world is seen as "imaged" (finite) ludus of His possibilities, yet not pantheistically identified with Him. By utilizing the doctrine of panentheism (and so clarifying the doctrine itself) and a positive and ambiguous "transcendence" (one the "image" of the other), the thesis steers mid-way between the extremes of the extrincist-intrincist controversy regarding the God-world relationship. The thesis thus opens up the play-reality question to a new perspective for theological speculation.

Because play and "reality" are one in the three distinct yet interconnected spheres, man's freedom is seen to be logically part of (and not opposed to) the nature of cosmo-ontological realities, man's paidia-ludus being anchored in and open to the Infinite Paidia of God. The "play-reality" identity remains mysterious (after Marcel's definition of mystery) and the hypothesis "explains" why it is so.

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The study concludes that the new metaphysics has heuristic value, providing a useful tool for the evaluation of Christian faith as a view of reality, and may be useful for a development of a full-blown theology of play.