

THE STRUCTURE AND
CLASSIFICATION OF GAMES

In 1933, the rector of the University of Leyden, J. Huizinga, chose as the theme of his solemn speech, “the boundaries of play and of work in culture.” He was to take this subject up again and to develop it in a powerful and original work published in 1938, *Homo ludens*. Most of the statements in this book are debatable. Nonetheless, it opens the way to extremely fertile research and reflection. It is to Huizinga’s lasting credit that he masterfully analyzed the fundamental characteristics of play and that he demonstrated the importance of its role in the development of civilization. He wanted on the one hand to find an exact definition of the essential nature of play; on the other hand, he attempted to shed some light on that part of play that haunts or enlivens the principal manifestations of all culture, the arts as well as philosophy, poetry as well as juridical institutions, and even certain aspects of war.

Huizinga achieved brilliantly what he set out to do. However, if he discovered play, whose presence and influence had until then been overlooked, he deliberately neglected to describe and classify the games themselves, as if all play represented an answer to the same need and explained the same psychological attitude. Thus a study of his first formulae helps

Translated by Elaine P. Halperin.

us to understand the strange lacunae in his inquiry. We recall that he defined play in the following manner:

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 within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an 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.¹

Such a definition, though all the words have value and meaning, is both too broad and too narrow. It is meritorious and fruitful to have grasped the affinity between play and secrecy or mystery, but this relationship should not enter into a definition of play, which is almost always ostentatious. Undoubtedly secrecy, mystery, disguise lend themselves to an activity of play, but it should be immediately added that this activity necessarily takes place at the expense of secrecy and mystery. It exposes, publicizes and in a way *expends* secrecy, tending, in a word, to deprive it of its very nature.

Then again, that part of Huizinga’s definition which alludes to play as an action devoid of any material interest entirely excludes betting and games of chance—that is to say, gambling houses, casinos, horse races, lotteries which, for good or evil, occupy an important place in the economy and in the daily life of different peoples, under an infinite variety of forms which makes the constancy of the relations between risk and profit all the more impressive. Games of chance, which are also money games, figure almost not at all in Huizinga’s work. This deliberate exclusion is not without consequence.

Under these circumstances, it would be better to address ourselves to another formula of Huizinga’s, less fruitful than the preceding one, but which, in my opinion at least, does not give rise to any major difficulty:

Play is a voluntary action or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that it is “different” from “ordinary” life.²

Although this second definition does not deliberately ignore games of

1. *Homo ludens* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949), p. 13.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

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chance, neither does it attribute a sufficient place to them. Moreover, the last part of it not only advantageously replaces the too explicit mention of secret and of mystery, but also gives one to understand that play could consist in the *representation* of something. Here, it is no longer the world of betting that is taken into consideration, but that of spectacle and interpretation, of dramatic play.

These observations, which extend very markedly the domain explored by Huizinga, still overlook such things as kites, cross-word puzzles, and rocking horses, and to some extent dolls, games of patience, Chinese puzzles, hoops, most toys, and several of the more widespread diversions.

What do we get from these summary observations? First, that play is certainly an activity that is

1. Free: the player cannot be forced to participate without the game immediately changing its very nature.
2. Separate: circumscribed within boundaries of time and space that are precise and fixed in advance.³
3. Regulated: subject to conventions which suspend ordinary rules and temporarily establish a new law which alone counts.

However, these three attributes—whose prime importance I in no way challenge—imply, perhaps because of the fact that they do not affect the structure of the data they define, that such data should in turn be made the object of a distribution which attempts, this time, to take into account, not the characteristics which oppose them as a whole to the rest of reality, but those which confer upon them, among other things, their decidedly irreducible originality. In other words, once the *genus proximum* has been determined, it becomes urgent to state precisely the *differentia specifica* of each subsidiary category.

To this end I suggest a division under three principal headings in accordance with whether, in the different games, the role of competition, luck, or disguise predominates. For all practical purposes only one of these, the first, attracted Huizinga's attention. I shall call them, *Agôn*, *Alea* and *Mimicry*, respectively. All three definitely belong to the realm of play. One *plays* football or billiards or chess (*agôn*); roulette or the lottery (*alea*);

3. As for space: the hopscotch diagram, the checker-board, the chess-board, the stadium, the playing field, the track, the ring, the dueling ground, the stage, the arena, etc. . . . As for time: the beginning and the end of a game, the complications of a possible prolongation, the kind of disgrace entailed by a default, which the fact of calling, "I give up," represents, or by any withdrawal during the course of a game or of a match, unless it is caused by a physical accident.

pirates or Nero or Hamlet (*mimicry*). However, these terms do not cover the world of play in its entirety. Perhaps one should also single out the existence of a common principle of diversion, of turbulence, of free improvisation and of insouciant self-expression whereby a certain uncontrolled fantasy, which we shall call *paidia*, manifests itself. It likewise seems necessary to define a complementary tendency that is the inverse of this instinct in certain respects but not in all: the penchant for adapting play to arbitrary, imperative, and deliberately hindering conventions in order to obtain a perfectly useless although strictly determinate result. I shall call this last component *ludus*.

It is not my intention, in employing this foreign nomenclature to establish some sort of pedantic mythology, totally devoid of meaning. But, because I had to assemble disparate manifestations under a single rubric, it seemed to me that the most economical way of so doing was to borrow from this or that language both the most significant and the most comprehensive term possible in order to keep each ensemble studied from being uniformly marked by the particular characteristic of one of the elements that compose it; this could not fail to happen if the name of one element was used to designate the entire group. Besides, as I proceed with my attempt to establish the classification which I have fixed upon, everyone will have the opportunity to appreciate for himself the necessity of utilizing a nomenclature that does not refer too directly to concrete experience, which it is partly designed to break down according to a hitherto unstated principle.

Agôn

A whole group of games appears in the form of competition, as a struggle in which equality of chance is artificially created in order to make sure that the antagonists confront each other under ideal circumstances. This will give a precise and incontestable worth to the victor's triumph. Each time, therefore, the contest hinges on a single quality—speed, endurance, vigor, memory, deftness, ingenuity, etc.—operating within defined limits and without any external help. The winner will therefore appear to be the best in a precise category of feats. Such is the rule for athletic contests and the *raison d'être* of their multiple subdivisions—whether two individuals or two teams are competing (polo, tennis, football, boxing, fencing, etc.), or whether an indeterminate number of competitors are participating (races of all kinds, riflery, golf, athletics, etc.). Games in which each contestant begins with the same number of identical elements

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also belong to this category. Draughts and chess are perfect examples. The quest for equality of chance from the start is so obviously the essential principle of the contest that it is reestablished by assigning a handicap to players of superior ability. In other words, within the equality of chance established from the start, a second inequality, proportional to the supposed relative strength of the participants, is created. It is significant that such a system exists for the muscular type of *agôn* (sports matches) as well as for the most cerebral type of *agôn* (chess, for example, in which the weaker player is given an extra pawn, knight or rook).

For each contestant the mainspring of the game is his desire to excel and win recognition for his ability in a given domain. Furthermore, the practice of *agôn* presupposes concentration, appropriate training, assiduous effort, and the will to win. It implies discipline and perseverance. It makes the champion rely solely on his own resources, encourages him to make the best possible use of them, and forces him to utilize them fairly and within fixed limits which, being the same for everyone, result in rendering the superiority of the winner indisputable. The *agôn* appears as the pure form of personal merit and serves to demonstrate it.

Outside of or on the periphery of play, one observes the notion of *agôn* in other cultural phenomena that conform to the same code: the duel, the tournament, certain constant and remarkable aspects of what we call polite warfare.

Alea

In Latin this is the word for the game of dice. I use it here to designate all games—in contrast to *agôn*—which are based upon an inequality external to the player, over which he has not the slightest control. Consequently, it is far less a question of triumphing over an adversary than over destiny. To put it more plainly, fate is the sole agent of victory; and where rivalry exists, victory means only that the winner was luckier than the loser. Dice, roulette, heads or tails, baccarat, lotteries, etc. provide unmistakable examples of this category of games. In this case not only is no attempt made to eliminate the injustice of chance, but it is the pure arbitrariness of luck that constitutes the sole mainspring of the game.

Alea signalizes and reveals the boons of fate. The player's role is an entirely passive one. He does not display his abilities or his propensities, the resources of his skill, of his muscles, or of his intelligence. All he does is to wait for the decision of fate. He gambles a stake. Justice—forever sought after, but this time differently, and, here again, prone to operate

under ideal circumstances—rigorously accurate, the proportionate reward for his gamble. All the efforts referred to above to equalize the contestants' chances are employed in this case to scrupulously balance *alea* and profit.

In contrast to *agôn*, *alea* negates work, patience, skill, qualifications. It eliminates professional endowments, order, training. In one instant it abolishes accumulated results. It is either total failure or absolute favor. It bestows upon the lucky player infinitely more than a lifetime of work, discipline, and hardship could procure for him. It seems like an insolent and supreme mockery of merit.

Agôn is a vindication of personal responsibility, *alea* a resignation of the will, a surrender to destiny. Certain games like dominoes and most card games combine *agôn* and *alea*: chance governs the way the "hands" of each player are composed and they then do their best, according to their lights, to exploit the lot that a blind fate has assigned to them. In a game like bridge, science and reason constitute the only means a player has to defend himself, and it is these that permit him to make the very most of the cards dealt to him; in a game like poker the attributes of psychological insight and human understanding are more likely to count.

Generally speaking, the role of money is all the more important since chance plays a greater part and consequently the player's opportunities to defend himself are less good. The reason for this is very clear: *alea*'s function is not to make the most intelligent person win the money, but, on the contrary, to abolish the natural or acquired superiority of individuals in order to place everyone on an absolute and equal footing in the face of luck's blind verdict.

Since the result of *agôn* is necessarily uncertain and must, paradoxically, relate to the effect of pure chance, given the fact that the contestants' chances are, in principle, as even as possible, it then follows that any encounter that possesses the characteristics of an ideally regulated competition can be the object of betting, in other words of *aleas*: to wit, horse races, or greyhound races, football or Basque pelota matches, cock-fights. It even happens that the stakes vary constantly during the game, according to the ups and downs of *agôn*.⁴

Agôn and *alea* represent contrasting attitudes, and in some way, symmetrical ones, but they both conform to the same law: the artificial establishment of conditions of absolute equality among the players, which reality denies mankind. For nothing in life is clear unless it is precisely that

4. For example, in the Balearic Islands at a game of pelota, or in Colombia and the Antilles, at cock-fights.

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everything in it, luck as well as merit, is always disorder in the beginning. Play, *agôn* or *alea*, is therefore an attempt to substitute perfect situations for the normal confusion of everyday life. These perfect situations are such that the role of merit or of luck appears clear and unequivocal. They also imply that everyone must enjoy exactly the same possibilities to prove his worth, or, on the other scale, the exact same chance to win. In one way or another one escapes from the world by making *it* other. One can also escape from it by making *oneself* other. This is what we call *mimicry*.

Mimicry

Every game presupposes the temporary acceptance, if not of an illusion (although this last word means nothing more than entry into play, *inlusio*), at least of a closed, conventional, and, in certain respects, fictitious universe. The play can consist not in the unfolding of an activity or in experiencing one's fate in an imaginary setting, but in becoming an illusory person oneself and in behaving accordingly. One then finds oneself confronted by a diversified series of manifestations whose common characteristic is that they rest on the fact that the subject plays at believing, at pretending to himself, or at making others believe that he is someone other than he is; he temporarily forgets, disguises, strips his own personality in order to be another. I choose to designate these manifestations by the term *mimicry* (which, in English, is the word for the mimetism of insects), in order to emphasize the primitive, elementary and quasi-instinctive nature of the impulse which produces them. They include, first of all, the behavior of a child who pretends he is an airplane (and acts like one by stretching out his arms and imitating the roar of a motor), who plays soldier, pretends he is a musketeer or a gangster, etc. They also embrace any diversion that requires a mask or a costume and consists in the very fact that the player is disguised and in the consequence of this. Finally, it is clear that theatrical representations and dramatic interpretations rightfully belong to this group.

The pleasure resides in being someone else or in making others think you are someone else. But since this is play we are discussing, it does not essentially involve fooling the spectator. A child who pretends to be a train will readily refuse his father's kiss, saying that one shouldn't kiss a locomotive. He does not attempt to make his father believe that he is a real locomotive. At a carnival, a masked person does not try to convince others that he is a real marquis, or a real toreador, or a real Indian, any more than an actor tries to make people believe that he "really" is Lear or Charles V.

The spy or the fugitive, however, disguises himself to really fool people because he is not playing a game.

Activity, imagination, interpretation, *mimicry* can scarcely have a relation to *alea*, which imposes upon the player the immobility and the chill of mute expectancy. *Agôn*, however, is not necessarily excluded. At the very moment when an actor plays a part, he tries, more indistinctly but also more profoundly, to be a better actor than the others, or to interpret a role that was created before him better than the others have done. He knows that he is subject to the public's judgment and to criticism. He plays, in the sense that he represents such or such a hero, but he also plays because he expects a prize in a prolix but unceasing competition with living or dead rivals.

Mimicry contains most of the characteristics of play: freedom, convention, suspension of the real, circumscribed time and space. But continuous submission to precise and imperious regulations is less obvious here than elsewhere. I know of course that on the stage the actor must adhere to his lines, but one can hardly compare this servitude to the observance of fixed regulations which define the structure of a game. In the latter, it is a matter of a *framework* always necessarily identical with itself; and in the former, a matter of a *content* which must vary in each case, which is not a limitation but rather the substance, the very being of the character to be invoked. The frame work is, in truth, nothing more than the text.

Rules are inseparable from play as soon as it acquires what I shall call an institutional existence. From that moment on, they become a part of its nature, transforming play into a fertile and decisive instrument of culture. But it remains true that a primary freedom, which is the need for relaxation and the whole field of diversion and fantasy, resides at the source of play. This freedom is the indispensable prime mover of play, and remains at the origin of its most complex and rigidly organized forms. Such primary power of improvisation and gaiety, which I call *paidia*, is fused with the taste for gratuitous difficulty, which I propose to call *ludus*, in order to bring about the different games to which, without exaggeration, a civilizing property can be attributed. They illustrate, in fact, the moral and intellectual values of a culture. Moreover, they help to fix and define them.

I chose the term *paidia* because its roots signify the word "child" and because I do not wish to disconcert the reader needlessly by using a term borrowed from an antipodal language. But the Sanskrit word *krēdati* and the Chinese word *wan*, as far as I can judge by the indications that Huizinga

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provided and reproduced, seem to me both richer and clearer. *Krēdati* denotes the play of adults, of children, and of animals. It applies more specifically to gambols, that is to say, to sudden and capricious movements which a superabundance of gaiety or vitality engenders. It is also used to signify erotic, illicit relations, the ebb and flow of waves, and all things that undulate to the caprice of the wind. The word *wan* is even more explicit, as much in regard to what it defines as to what it does not: it means essentially childish play, but also all the varieties of carefree and frivolous diversion which, for example, the verbs to frolic, to frisk, to jest,⁵ to trifle, etc. evoke. Besides, and this is more revealing, it also means to examine, to manipulate, to fashion into trinkets, which connects it with the modern category of *hobbies*, in other words, the collector's mania. It evokes, as well, the peaceful and soothing softness of moonlight.⁶ Finally, *it is not used* to denote either competition, games of skill, dice games, or dramatic interpretation; in other words, it excludes equally all three categories of institutional games: *agôn*, *alea* and *mimicry*.

In the light of these relationships and of these semantic exclusions, what can be the scope and the significance of the term *paidia*? I, for one, would define it as the word that encompasses the spontaneous manifestations of the instinct of play: the cat entangled in a ball of yarn, the dog licking himself, the infant laughing at his rattle—all these represent the first identifiable examples of this kind of activity. It occurs in all joyous exuberance, the kind that is expressed by an immediate and disordered agitation, by an impulsive, relaxing, and deliberately immoderate pastime, whose impromptu and unruly character remains its essential, if not its sole *raison d'être*. We do not lack perfectly clear illustrations of this kind of sudden movement, of color, or of noise, from pencil marks to daubing with paint, from squabbling to uproar.

Such manifestations generally have no label and cannot have one, precisely because they remain within the bounds of stability, of every distinctive sign, of every clearly differentiated existence which would enable our vocabulary to sanction its autonomy by a specific appellation. Besides, soon the conventions, the techniques, the tools appear, and with them the first games: leap-frog, hide and seek, the hoop, blind man's

5. It goes without saying that this last need is to be understood in its actual sense, because the *baguenaude* is really an assemblage of rings, the manipulation of which is complicated and demands the player's extreme concentration and which, therefore, belongs to the category of *ludus*.

6. Information which Duyvendak communicated to Huizinga, cf. *Homo ludens*, p. 32.

bluff, dolls. Here the contradictory paths of *agôn*, *alea* and *mimicry* branch off. The pleasure one feels in resolving a difficulty occurs here too; we are speaking of the complication that is deliberately created, arbitrarily defined, so that the fact that one has finally seen it through brings no advantage other than the inner satisfaction of having solved it. This main-spring which is clearly *ludus* also can be observed in the different categories of games, with the exception of those that depend entirely upon a decision of fate. It appears as both complement of an instruction for *paidia*, which it disciplines and enriches. It provides the opportunity for training and normally results in the conquest of a determined skill, in the acquisition of a particular mastery, in the management of such or such an apparatus, or in the capacity to find a satisfactory answer to problems of a strictly conventional order. It differs from *agôn* in that the player's tension and his talent function without any sense of competition or rivalry: he struggles against the obstacle and not against one or several contestants. Games like *bilboquet* (cup and ball), *diabolo* and yo-yo can be classified as manual skills. These simple instruments readily make use of natural, elementary laws; for example, in regard to the yo-yo, weight and rotation are involved and the skill consists in converting alternate, rectilinear movements into a continuous circular one. Inversely, the hoop rests on the exploitation of a concrete atmospheric condition. One can easily see that the possibilities of play are almost infinite. Games like *solitaire* or *baguenaude* (ring puzzle) belong entirely to another category of games: they make a constant appeal to the turn for computation and combination. Finally, cross-word puzzles, mathematical pastimes, anagrams, logogriphic verse of all sorts, the kind of active detective-story reading that is an attempt to discover the guilty party, chess or bridge problems—all these, devoid of instruments, constitute so many variations of the most widespread and the purest form of *ludus*.

One also observes a situation that in the beginning has a tendency to repeat itself infinitely, but on the basis of which new combinations can develop. They inspire the player to compete with himself and enable him to observe the stages of his progress on which he prides himself vis-à-vis those who share his taste. The relationship of *ludus* with *agôn* is evidenced in this way. Moreover, it is possible that, in the case of chess or bridge problems, the same game may appear sometimes as *agôn* and sometimes as *ludus*.

The combination of *ludus* and *alea* occurs just as frequently: it is particularly evident in games which one plays alone and where the ingenuity

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of the maneuvers influence the result to some extent, and in which the player can, to a slight degree, calculate how much impetus to give to the ball that marks the points and attempt to direct it. Nonetheless, in both these examples, it is mainly luck that determines the outcome. However, the fact that the player is not entirely helpless and that he knows he must rely on his skill or talent, even though this counts for very little, is enough to combine the character of *ludus* with that of *alea*.

Here, too, the player is competing with himself in a way, because he expects the next effort to succeed where the last failed, or he hopes to accumulate a higher number of points than his last score yielded. It is in this way that the influence of *agôn* is manifest, coloring, in fact, the general atmosphere of *ludus*. And even though both these games are played alone and, in principle, do not call for competition, it is quite simple to start a match at any time, with or without a prize, the kind, for example, that newspapers occasionally organize. Nor is it pure accident that slot machines are to be found in cafés—places where it is the custom for people to gather in groups, thus forming the embryo of a public.

There is one characteristic of *ludus* which, in my opinion, can be explained by the presence of *agôn*, and which is a constant burden: the fact that it depends largely upon fads of the moment. The yo-yo, the *bilboquet*, the *diabolo*, the *baguenaude*, came into being and then disappeared as if by magic. They took advantage of a certain passing fad that was to disappear without a trace and that was quickly replaced by another. Although somewhat more stable, the fad for intellectual pastimes is nonetheless a transitory one: riddles, anagrams, acrostics, charades—all these have had their hour. It is quite probable that cross-word puzzles and mystery stories will suffer the same fate. Such a phenomenon would be enigmatic if *ludus* represented as individualistic a pastime as it appears to; in reality, it is steeped in an atmosphere of competition. It can subsist only to the extent that it enjoys public favor, which transforms it into a virtual *agôn*. Lacking this, it is powerless to survive. In truth, it is not sufficiently supported by an organized spirit of competition, which is not essential to its practice, and neither does it provide material for any kind of spectacle capable of attracting the attention of a crowd. It remains uncertain and diffuse. It provides *paidia* with perpetually renewed forms. It invents a thousand opportunities and a thousand structures in which are to be found man's desire to relax and mainly his need, of which he apparently cannot be quit, to utilize the science and concentration, the skill and intelligence he possesses in the cause of pure uselessness.

In this sense, it represents that element in play whose cultural importance and fertility seem to be the most striking. It does not express as decided a psychological attitude as *agôn*, *alea* or *mimicry*, but in disciplining *paidia*, it works behind the scenes to give to the three fundamental categories their purity and their excellence.

There remains a last species of games which does not seem to belong to those already mentioned and which can be considered the only truly modern innovation in this domain: games which are based upon the pursuit of *vertigo*.

Without question, people have for a long time deliberately sought out the confusion that a slight giddiness provokes, for example, the activities of the whirling dervishes and the Mexican *voladores* (flying fish). Nor must we overlook, in the realm of the most anodyne play, the merry-go-round and the ancient swing. Every child knows well, how, in turning rapidly around and around, he is able to attain a centrifugal state of flight and wild prankishness in which his body has difficulty regaining its place and perception its clarity. Unquestionably he does it for fun and delights in it.

I suggest the term *ilinx* to include these different manifestations. It is Greek for whirlpool, from which is derived, precisely, and in the same language, the word *vertigo* (*ilingos*). This designation also includes the *vertigo* to be found in certain animals, particularly in sheep, many of the effects of intoxication, some dances like the waltz, and finally, the giddiness induced by high speed, the kind one experiences on skis, in a motorcycle, or in an open car. Powerful machines are necessary to give these sensations the kind of intensity and brutality that can cause giddiness in adults. It is therefore not astonishing that we had to await the industrial age to see *vertigo* really become a category of play. Actually, it is dispensed to an avid multitude by a thousand implacable machines set up in the market places and in the amusement parks. Here, small wagons run on rails whose outline forms an almost perfect semicircle, so that the vehicle, before it rerights itself, seems about to fall into space and the passengers, tied to their seats, feel as if they are falling with it. Elsewhere, other enthusiasts are locked in a series of cage-like seats which balance them and keep them upside down at a certain height above the crowd. In a third kind of machine, the sudden release of a giant spring catapults a car, which slowly returns to take up its position in front of the mechanism that will catapult it once again. Everything is calculated to incite visceral sensations of terror and of psychological panic: speed, fall, shocks, accelerated gyration combined with alternating climbs and descents. A final invention makes use

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of centrifugal force. This force is applied to the wall of a gigantic cylinder of unsupported bodies, immobilized in all kinds of postures, paralyzed, while the floor slips away and descends a few inches. The bodies remain “stuck together like flies,” as the establishment’s publicity reads.

These machines would obviously have exceeded their purpose if it were merely a question of exacerbating the organs of the middle ear upon which one’s sense of balance rests. But the entire body is subjected to the kind of treatment that anyone would fear if he didn’t see others falling all over each other in similar fashion. Indeed, it is worth our while to observe people as they leave these machines. They are pale, they stagger, they are on the verge of nausea. They have been shrieking with fear, they have been breathless, and they have had the terrible sensation that all their insides, their very vitals, were afraid, were curling up in an attempt to escape from some horrible attack. Yet, even before they have calmed down, most of them rush off to another ticket-window to purchase the right to suffer once again the same torture from which they expect enjoyment.

TABLE I

	AG ÔN (competition)	ALEA (chance)	MIM- ICRY (pretense)	ILINX (vertigo)
PAIDIA noise agitation laughter dance hoop solitaire games of patience cross-word puzzles ↓ LUDUS	races combats etc. athletics } not regulated boxing fencing football checkers chess	<i>comptines</i> heads or tails betting roulette lotteries, compound- ed or par- layed	childish imita- tion masks costumes theatre	children’s swings merry-go- round teeter-totter waltz outdoor sports skiing mountain- climbing

NOTE: In each vertical column, the games are classified very approximately in such order that the *paidia* element constantly decreases while the *ludus* element constantly increases.

I say enjoyment because I hesitate to call such rapture diversion; it is far more akin to a spasm than to a pastime. Thus pleasure and the quest

for vertigo exist when the latter is the object of *play*; when, in other words, it occurs under precise and fixed circumstances, isolated from the rest of reality, and when one is free either to accept or refuse it.

It seems legitimate, therefore, to inscribe the term *ilinx* next to *agôn*, *alea* and *mimicry*, in order to complete the picture of the motives of play. The penchant for vertigo must be added to those that are expressed, first, by an ambition to succeed solely through the meritorious agency of fair competition; second, by a resignation of the will in exchange for an anxious and passive awaiting of the decree of fate; and third, by the illusion of being cloaked in another's personality. In *agôn*, the player relies only on himself and he bends all his efforts to do his best; in *alea*, he relies on everything except himself and he surrenders to forces that elude him; in *mimicry* he imagines that he is other than he really is and invents a fictitious universe; *ilinx*, the fourth fundamental tendency, is an answer to one's need to feel the body's stability and equilibrium momentarily destroyed, to escape the tyranny of perception, and to overcome awareness.

The variety and fertility of the games that tend to satisfy these cardinal temptations attest to their importance and to their permanence. It is certainly not rash to suggest that psychology, along with sociology, will derive useful additions and instructive lessons from a study of games.