

PHILOSOPHY'S GAMBIT

Play and Being Played

Edited by

Jeremy Sampson

University of Aberdeen

Series in Philosophy



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To David Wooff (1933 – 2021)

Gone, but not forgotten. An outstanding teacher but an even better friend.

“Great is thy faithfulness.”

Lamentations 3:23

“Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee.
Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not.
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.”

Thomas O. Chisholm (1866 – 1960)

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Press, 1993), *Kant's System of Perspectives: An architectonic interpretation of the Critical philosophy* (Philosophy Press, 1993), *Dreams of Wholeness* (Philosophy Press, 2008), *Kant's Critical Religion: Volume Two of Kant's System of Perspectives* (Routledge 2000, 2019), *The Waters of Love* (Philosophy Press, 2003), *Comprehensive Commentary on Kant's Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason* (Wiley Blackwell, 2021); and *Kant and Mysticism: Critique as the Experience of Baring All in Reason's Light* (Lexington 2022). His other books are *Four Neglected Essays by Immanuel Kant* (Philosophy Press 1994, a translation of four essays by Kant, with an editor's introduction and several supplementary chapters), and three edited volumes: *Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion* (Indiana University Press, 2008, with Chris L. Firestone), *Cultivating Personhood: Kant and Asian Philosophy* (De Gryter, 2010), and *Kant on Intuition: Western and Asian Perspectives on Transcendental Idealism* (Routledge, 2019). In 1999 he founded the Hong Kong Philosophy Café and in 2015 he founded the Hong Kong Kant Society.

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Also, he is writing a historical volume entitled *Superpowers of the Ancient World: The Deadly Rivalry Between Rome and Carthage* (2026). Latterly, he has written short stories for European publications and is working on his first novel *The Long Dark Play Time of the Soul*.

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Foreword: The Play's the Thing

Francis J. Mootz

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Abstract

The purpose of this chapter is to stimulate the reader's interest in the phenomenon of play. This volume is not to explain play in a rationalistic manner and thereafter absorb it into traditional philosophy. I observe that the approach taken in this volume is not to present play as a clinical object of scientism. Yet rather it is to highlight play as a mode of philosophical thinking that has the capacity to challenge the serious business of traditional philosophy and offer something more flexible and fluid in its place.

To this end, I have highlighted the diversity of thinkers who offer a somewhat playful element to their thinking. As a result, it is not a question of either/or but both mediated by a ludic dynamic that does seek its own philosophical primacy but has the ability to reconcile apparent opposites such as in the famous Gadamer/Habermas debate. Also, I pay tribute to the effective way in which supposed disparate thinkers such as Rupa Gosvami and Hans Georg Gadamer can be brought together into a thoughtful and productive relationship. Finally, I draw on how play as a mode of philosophical thinking has its own ontology, as seen, among others, in the work of Arthos and Sampson. Such a ludic ontology will offer new ontological possibilities that many readers will find clearly rewarding.

Keywords: Play, Ludic, Dynamic, Philosophical, Thinking, Gadamer, Rupa Gosvami, Wittgenstein

We tend to regard philosophy as a serious business. Studiously revealing the nature of human existence is certainly not a frivolous undertaking. If philosophy is to succeed according to modern academic standards, it must embody deep and disciplined thinking that ignores playful diversions. Or so we assume. How does this assumption square with the undeniable fact that playfulness is an essential characteristic of life, for both animals and human beings? If the sober philosophers are to speak to the full experience of existence, then, they must come to grips with play. The incongruity is palpable.

To quote a studied understatement in this volume, most of “Kant’s readers do not perceive him as funny or playful”¹

Skillfully organized by Jeremy Sampson, this volume demonstrates how leading philosophers have taken account of play as a core feature of human experience. The chapters offer a wide-ranging discussion of a diverse group of thinkers and their philosophical treatment of play. From Kant and Schiller to Heidegger, Gadamer and Derrida. From Zhuangzi and Gosvami to Wittgenstein, Hegel and Fink. The range of those who consider the place of play is broad and deep. Although each contributor provides connections between theorists addressing play – in this regard, Jeremy Sampson’s efforts to connect the approach of Gosvami to that of Gadamer is exemplary – there are few connections drawn between the chapters themselves. This volume does not represent a coordinated effort to uncover deeply shared themes. Rather, the volume demonstrates the variety of approaches to play in the broad philosophical tradition. It should prove to be an invaluable and diverse resource for ludic philosophers as a result of its refusal to collapse into simple, shared themes.

Some philosophers have addressed play in a more fundamental manner. This volume clearly establishes play as a *topic* of philosophical thinking across time and traditions, but play is also uncovered as a *mode of philosophical thinking*. This leads to the question: If philosophy embodied a playful disposition, would it better reveal and revel in the playful nature of existence? Can we take play seriously; can serious thinking embrace its unavoidable playfulness? Or, put more pointedly, can philosophy be a playful activity without it collapsing into sophistic?

Gadamer is the leading contemporary philosopher who puts play at the centre of his work. Indeed the metaphor of play that guides his aesthetic approach in Part One of *Truth and Method* continues to be at the center of his analyses of the historicity and linguisticity of meaning in Parts Two and Three. As John Arthos concludes, play “is as close to a metaphysical term as anything” in Gadamer’s work² Similarly, in his later work, Wittgenstein’s attention to overlapping language games places him at the centre of this ontological movement. Jeremy Sampson emphasizes that such a “ludic dynamic is not merely dialectic of aesthetic. It is fundamentally ontological”³ One of the most important provocations of this volume is to explore the implications of

¹ Jeremy Sampson (ed.), *Philosophy’s Gambit: Play and Being Played* (Wilmington, USA 2024), 108.

² Jeremy Sampson (ed). *Philosophy’s Gambit: Play and Being Played*, 207.

³ Jeremy Sampson (ed). *Philosophy’s Gambit: Play and Being Played*, 165.

adopting a ludic ontology, and I shall use the chapters on Wittgenstein and Gadamer to illuminate that project.

As is well known, the “early” Wittgenstein remained silent in the face of non-logical propositions, but his later work embraced the metaphor of reality as “comprised of endlessly overlapping games”⁴, a “metagame” of complex rule-following without rules for how to follow drawn between the chapters themselves. This volume does not draw between the chapters themselves. This volume does not games, how do we gain critical purchase on that existence, which, after all, is the point of philosophical reflection? The answer to this dilemma is to abandon the subject-object model of understanding and to acknowledge that understanding emerges from what Gadamer terms a “fusion of (ludic) horizons.” As Sampson concludes with reference to the Gadamer-Habermas debate, “there is no need to choose between reason and hermeneutics” because both “are held in a relationship created by a ludic dynamic.” In this way, a capacious reading of Gadamer’s ludic ontology brings Wittgenstein’s insights to bear in a distinctive manner.

John Arthos finds in Gadamer a metaphysics of play that is premised on the presentation to spectators who begin outside of the play before being drawn into an event of meaning. Ritual and public meaning are paramount, and although “the audience completes the meaning of the play through its own imagination . . . Gadamer is seeing this feature as an ontological condition”.⁵ The play cannot exist without the spectator, and so rather than a subject-object dynamic we have a medial process that is centered in the game. A game is closed by its setting and rules, but the audience effects a new experience of understanding that exceeds the work.

The author’s creativity is only one phase in the creation of the work. This part of [Gadamer’s] theory is by now broadly understood, and understood as basic to a hermeneutic perspective; there is no meaning outside the interpretation. But this has an ontologically radical implication—the audience is part of the work, and the world that emerges out of the collaboration is also part of the work.⁶

The work of art shows us that it is play all the way down and back up again. How can philosophy follow the radical implications of Gadamer’s extension of play to ontological status? The answer is traced through Gadamer’s extensive writings about the productive constraints of historically emerging meaning. Everything cannot be up for grabs at all times. Classic works have an authority

⁴ Jeremy Sampson (ed.). *Philosophy’s Gambit: Play and Being Played*, 159.

⁵ Jeremy Sampson (ed.), *Philosophy’s Gambit: Play and Being Played*, 212.

⁶ Jeremy Sampson (ed.), *Philosophy’s Gambit: Play and Being Played*, 228.

that overcomes the authoritarianism of contemporary prejudices. Of course, the classics are effected through play across times and cultures, and contemporary unproductive prejudices can be illuminated in the playful challenge of the game. In the end, philosophy must abandon grandiose claims for the operation of reason and come to grips with the fact that the play is the thing.

Introduction: Can We Take Play Seriously?

Jeremy Sampson

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This introduction does as a rational or empirically observed study of the phenomenon of play. There are many easily accessible studies that do just that. Neither is it a historical survey that charts the evolution of play over the centuries. Although it lists its key thinkers in chronological order, this introduction and indeed that of the focus of the volume itself is the ontological significance of the play.

As such, the introduction frames the volume in a wide perspective that includes Zhuangzi from Ancient China, together with the sixteenth-century Indian philosopher Rupa Gosvami. Interestingly, the chapter on Zhuangzi includes a fascinating connection with the thought of Argentinian philosopher and feminist Maria Lugones. Such a pairing highlights how new pathways can be created to reflect the depth of ludic connectivity. Often, such philosophers are left out of similar surveys, which tend to focus almost exclusively upon European twentieth-century thinkers. That is not to say this volume does not explore the key ludic ideas of Heidegger, Wittgenstein and Gadamer, because it does but the introduction seeks to counter the myth that ludic theory somehow sprang up from nowhere into the twentieth century. This is why the introduction points to the inclusion of chapters devoted to Kant, Hegel and Schiller as key forerunners to modern ludic theory. Also, there are chapters exploring the thought of Derrida and Rorty. The chapter on Fink will be of particular interest as he was a contemporary of Gadamer but took his exploration of the philosophy of play in a significantly different direction.

Keywords: Zhuangzi, Lugones, Rupa Gosvami, Kant, Schiller, Hegel, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Huizinga, Gadamer, Fink, Derrida, Rorty playfulness

Play: A Trivial Pursuit?

Can we take play seriously? This is a question in the past decade that has been returned to with increasing frequency.¹ Yet why should this question be of pressing philosophical importance? Predominantly, play appears to stand in stark contrast to the serious business of traditional philosophy. AJ Ayer confidently asserted that only statements that could be proven by rational or empirical means were meaningful.² Here, there seems to be no room for play. However, are the pillars of the rational and the empirical so self-evident in producing reliable knowledge or is there some room for play after all? Is Ayer's assertion itself confirmed by rational and empirical evidence or does it fail its own test? The latter seems to be the case. Ayer's Logical Positivism, which sought to uplift rationalism and empiricism as the saving power against the so-called chaos of metaphysics, became itself a metaphysical assertion. Therefore, this philosophical irony possesses an engaging playfulness that requires serious attention.

Ayer who is often credited with the creation and development of Logical Positivism invariably often cites Descartes' *Cogito* (I think therefore I am) as its principal foundation. As some of Descartes' contemporaries quickly pointed out what if the *I am* is part of another being's dream? Then *my thinking* ceases to be when that being awakes. Apart from the idea of another's dream subverting what some, like Peter Markie in his essay 'The Cogito and its Importance', might want to assert as the absolute claim of the *Cogito* at the centre of rationalism,³ it also reveals that the metaphor of dream highlights that the dreamer is simultaneously the deceiver and the deceived. Even the most ardent Cartesian philosophers concede that even Descartes could not come to a definitive conclusion about whether it was thought or existence that came first in the philosophical order of things.⁴ Yet does one have to be above the other in the philosophical order of things? Could a more subtle interplay

¹ Tom O'Connor "Play" in Niall Keane & Chris Lawn (ed) *The Blackwell Companion to Hermeneutics* (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons 2016), 265– 269; Emily Ryall, Wendy Russell & Malcolm Maclean *The Philosophy of Play* (London, UK: Routledge 2013); Cynthia Nielsen "Gadamer on Play and The Play of Art" in Theodore George & Gert-Jan Van Der Heiden *The Gadamerian Mind* (London, UK: Routledge 2022), 139 -154; Jessica Frazier "Gadamer on Play as Ontological Explanation" in Cynthia Nielsen & Greg Lynch (ed) *Gadamer's Truth and Method: A Polyphonic Commentary* Lanham, USA: Rowman & Littlefield 2022), 59-78 and Cynthia Nielsen *Gadamer's Hermeneutical Aesthetics: Art as a Performative, Dynamic, Communal Event* (London, UK: Routledge 2023), 124-151.

² A.J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (London, UK: Penguin Books 1936, 1987), 46.

³ Peter Markie, "The Cognito and its Importance" in John Cottingham (ed) *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 1998), 153.

⁴ Peter Markie in John Cottingham ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes* (1998).

between the two be at work? Thus, can thought, existence, and other key philosophical concepts alternatively be presented not primarily as static forms but foremost as perpetual and complex dynamics?

Certainly, Johan Huizinga, in his seminal work *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (first published in 1938), highlights the universality and the ubiquity of play not merely within human civilization but also in the animal world.⁵ Huizinga observes at the start of his work: “Play is older than culture, for culture, however inadequately defined always presupposes society, and animals have not waited for man to teach them their playing.”⁶ Above Huizinga implies play is primordial, instinctive, and free. Yet one cannot assume this means that play is trivial, without rules, and has no value. Indeed, Huizinga describes play at the very outset of his argument as “a cultural phenomenon”⁷.

Having said this, such a cultural phenomenon takes many forms. Therefore, the current volume is not intended as a definitive and systematic explanation of the nature of play, which would not be desirable or even if it were possible. Instead each chapter is a philosophical exploration of play culturally, existentially, or even ontologically within a historical chronology. The volume also will highlight that the power of play upon philosophy is not merely a twentieth and twenty-first-century phenomenon but reaches back to ancient civilization and permeates through the succeeding centuries to include perspectives from China and India as well as the well-documented influence of Greece.⁸ Thus, this volume will display the phenomenon of play as possessing a dominant if hidden or understated presence throughout the global history of philosophy that may not be found in other volumes relating to the exploration of ludic theory and thereby whose study is no mere trivial pursuit but in itself could begin to re-fashion its inter-continental philosophical narrative and dynamics.

Possession, Pursuit and Playfulness

In the opening chapter of the volume, Sarah Mattice introduces readers to the often-overlooked tradition of ancient Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi⁹ and how

⁵ Johan Huizinga *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (Mansfield Centre, Connecticut, USA: Martino Publishing, 2014), 1.

⁶ Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (2014).

⁷ Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (2014).

⁸ Although there is no chapter devoted to a particular ancient Greek philosopher, the Greeks influence on ludic theory within this volume is ubiquitous.

⁹ Often the author and philosophical work produced share the name of Zhuangzi. The above philosophical work is usually attributed to a man named Zhuang Zhou. Almost nothing is known of the life of Zhuang Zhou, however, he was thought to have been born in the first half of the Fourth Century BC and died at approximately the turn of the Third Century BC. His thought has not only had a profound influence on Chinese history and

his thought relates to the philosophy of play. Here Mattice seeks to contrast Zhuangzian thought with key features of the “to and from movement, mediality, and absorption” within the ludic philosophy of Hans Georg Gadamer and strive to move beyond it.

Initially, Mattice highlights the contrast between Zhuangzi and Gadamer in what she describes as “the transforming *Hua*”. *Hua*, according to Mattice, unlike Gadamer’s philosophy of play, needs no Being or God to constitute it. Instead, *Hua* has no beginning or end and can reshape itself through a myriad of transformations. For Mattice, Zhuangzi offers human beings as players an opportunity to become increasingly in harmony with the world. It appears the meaning attributed to “world” is not in terms of geographical features or human population but of an unseen dynamic of hidden forces. Seemingly, Zhuangzi presents these encounters and transformations of play not rationally or empirically, but experientially through a series of narrations so that this can be recognized in everyday life.

Mattice also highlights the uniqueness of Zhuangzian thought in relation to mediality. For Zhuangzi, Mattice argues that the ludic dynamic is not merely a to-and-fro movement in the Gadamerian sense, but the entities involved in the transforming *Hua* paradoxically are revealed in the true nature of their provisionality through a rising negation as a result of their ongoing interactions with each other. Within this context, Mattice introduces two key terms of Zhuangzian thought, that being of *shi* and *fei*. She maintains: “These two terms in Classical Chinese are an affirmation and a negation, a ‘deeming it so’ and ‘deeming it not so’”. Although this might remind the reader of the relativistic overtones of Jacques Derrida’s Bottomless Chessboard,¹⁰ one needs to consider that provisionality and relativism are far from interchangeable terms and thereby may find it profitable to consider Anaximander *apeiron*,¹¹ Plato’s idea of two halves of a token¹², together with the latter’s ‘Doctrine of Two’¹³, all three being adapted by Gadamer to address, in part, the relativist challenge.

culture but also has a growing significance in Western philosophy. As evidence of this rising interest, “Zhuangzi” was the name given to an episode of the popular American show of *Westworld* (2022).

¹⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl’s Theory of Signs* (Evanston, USA: Northwestern University Press 1973), 154.

¹¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Beginning of Knowledge* (New York, USA: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2001), 110.

¹² Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 1998), 31.

¹³ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato* (London, UK: Yale University Press 1980), 174.

Interestingly, Mattice takes Zhuangzi's ludic insights and brings them together with those of twenty-first-century South American philosopher Maria Lugones. Mattice contends that because of her contrast between Zhuangzian thought and Gadamerian ludic theory, she concludes that Gadamer's primary focus is that of playing by oneself rather than in a wider more complex dynamic with others. She contends that there is a greater sense of playfulness within Zhuangzi's philosophy that leads to a genuine experience of forgetting oneself and thereby paradoxically realizing one's true self. Yet Mattice argues that the thought of Lugones highlights the lack of playfulness in Gadamer's ludic thought. For Lugones, according to Mattice, Gadamer's idea of play lacks the instinct of loving playfulness. Indeed, Lugones puts forward the argument that Gadamer is too concerned with the idea of adhering to the rules of the game. As a result, Lugones questions whether Gadamer's sense of play is truly characterized by spontaneity and in its place is something more formulaic. For Mattice, Lugones is calling for a dynamic that is more free-flowing and genuinely exhibits playfulness. Ultimately, Lugones seeks a dynamic that Mattice highlights as 'world travelling' Such playfulness should be compared with the "playful abandon" of Romano Guardini.¹⁴ Thus Mattice offers a ludic alternative through the thought of Zhuangzi and Lugones of a radical playfulness that carried to its fruition would transform not just individual thinking, but also human beings as communities of individuals, truly exploring knowledge and understanding in the medium of possession, pursuit, and playfulness.

The second chapter, like the first, has much that is relevant to the ideas of possession, pursuit, and playfulness. Here, Jeremy Sampson explores the ludic thought of sixteenth-century Indian philosopher Rupa Gosvami. Unlike many of his predecessors, Rupa Gosvami raises the question of whether human agency has a central role within the dynamics of ludic thought in terms of knowledge, understanding, and even spiritual self-actualization. As a way of introducing this vital question, Sampson highlights three key metaphors in the work of Rupa Gosvami: lover, loop, and drama.

In his highlighting of the metaphor of the lover, Sampson draws upon the work of Jessica Frazier.¹⁵ Sampson uses Frazier's pioneering work of Rupa Gosvami's ideas on play and human desire as a way of exploring this dynamic between the two. Indeed, Sampson rejects Frazier's contention that Gadamer merely advocates a simple submission to play, whereas Rupa Gosvami offers a more radical interaction involving human desire and the ludic dynamic. Whilst

¹⁴ Romano Guardini, *The Essential Guardini* (Chicago, USA: Liturgy Training Publications 1997), 152.

¹⁵ Jessica Frazier, *Reality, Religion, and Passion: Indian and Western Approaches* in Hans-Georg Gadamer and Rupa Gosvami (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books 2009).

agreeing with Frazier about the originality of Rupa Gosvami's thought about the romantic relationship of Krishna and Radha as a motif of the interaction of human desire and play, Sampson argues that it serves not as a sharp contrast to the apparent exclusive mode of the submission to play within Gadamerian philosophy and Western ludic theory, but an innovative means of bringing to light strong currents of human desire and play interwoven into the European tradition. Certainly, the emphasis on human agency highlights its connection with the idea of possession. Human agency's relationship with play energizes the implicit dynamic between possession, pursuit and playfulness. Ultimately, Sampson argues that Rupa Gosvami's concept of play and human agency works well in a reciprocal relationship with Roger Caillois' differentiation of ludic forms.

Such discussions about play and human agency lay productive foundations for the next ludic metaphor of a loop. Eileen Goddard highlights the motif of a loop within Rupa Gosvami's thought. Unfortunately, as Gadamerian thought, Rupa Gosvami's idea of a loop can easily be caricatured as an aimless back-and-forth movement or merely representing an eternal dialogue with no true conclusion or end point. However, this loop with Rupa Gosvami's philosophy possesses an ultimate movement forward towards spiritual bliss. Rupa Gosvami accepts that desire has a role to play, and it offers further stepping stones to enlightenment. Yet the loop is important as a means of testing the provisional claims of philosophy but also that of devotion in religious terms. Thus, the movement of the loop is a ludic exploration between that authenticity and inauthenticity. Sampson maintains that it is this looping movement between its origin and ultimate fulfilment that is shared in the thought of Rupa Gosvami, Gadamer and Caillois, and thereby test claims in terms of the dynamic between authenticity and inauthenticity. Ultimately, Sampson maintains this ludic dynamic enables truth and understanding to emerge and be safeguarded against the challenges of relativism.

Drama as a motif of play offers the most innovative possibilities. Of course, drama has been closely interwoven with the philosophical and ontological concept of play.¹⁶ However, Sampson, through his interaction with David Mason's work in this area, presents Rupa Gosvami's thought as original compared with the textual hermeneutics of Gadamer and others that predominantly influence the dynamic between drama and the philosophy of play. Clearly, Sampson recognizes with Mason that the Indian philosophical tradition represents the self as fluid and that drama, live performances and stagecraft present themselves as a fitting medium to articulate the nuances of this important idea. Yet

¹⁶ Luigi Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (New York, USA: Ithaca Press (1921) 2013).

Sampson rejects Mason's idea that the live performance resolves itself into nothingness but is preserved in the collective memory of the audience. For Sampson, this forms the basis of an alternative to the predominant textual hermeneutics. Sampson coins the term corporeal hermeneutics to describe the physicality of live performance and the complex interactions of the human bodies of the actors on stage.

The Unbearable Lightness of Playing

Play possesses an intrinsic paradox between the serious and the trivial, between heaviness and lightness. Such a paradox was implicitly touched upon in the previous section. This paradox is found in key phrases such as “theatre of war” and “courtroom drama”. Yet whilst play perpetually moves between these polarities, there is one constant that of intensity. Arguing that the intensity of play has no biological explanation, Huizinga concludes, “yet in this intensity, this absorption, this power of maddening, lies the very essence, the primordial quality of play.”¹⁷ It is this inexplicable intensity that gives play its property of “unbearable lightness”, echoing the similar sentiment of Milan Kundera's original novel,¹⁸ and thereby an appropriate sub-heading for the next section.

I would like to agree with you but then we'd both be wrong.

This unorthodox hook sets the tone for Stephen Palmquist's chapter of the volume. It vividly highlights Palmquist's perspectivist theory of humour. The above one-liner displays its comic power with Wildean wit. Yet more than merely entertaining, Palmquist takes his starting point from Roger Clewis' *Kant's Humorous Writings*,¹⁹ Here Palmquist argues that the declaration possesses great philosophical potential beyond the rational and the empirical.

At the outset of the third chapter, Palmquist suggests that the topic of humour and Immanuel Kant is an unusual choice. In fact, he admits that the women of Königsberg, Kant's hometown, used to set their clocks by his daily routine. Yet Palmquist manages to inform and entertain with this unique chapter. Beginning with the Liar's Paradox of Zeno around 600 BC, Palmquist highlights how the deliberate indeterminacy of intended humorous statements can raise serious and important philosophical questions about reason and truth. Interestingly, Palmquist explores extensively the implications of the Liar Paradox as a foreshadowing of Kantian thought in relation to humour. To this end, he

¹⁷ Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (2014), 2.

¹⁸ Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (New York, USA: Harper Collins Publishers, 2009).

¹⁹ Robert R. Clewis, *Kant's Humorous Writings* (Chapter 1) (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021).

foregrounds his discussion on Kant by referring to Hobbes, Hutcheson, Bergson and Wittgenstein and their theories, among others, of superiority, and relief, together with perspectivism.

Contrary to his supposed reputation of possessing a robotic routine, Palmquist seeks to prove that Kant did have a sense of humour. However, developing his perspectivist argument in relation to Kant, Palmquist contends that such a discovery does come with significant philosophical implications. After all, this is Kant. Palmquist draws upon Kant's 1763 essay "An Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy" as his starting point. Such negative magnitudes present humour as a form of negation of accepted reason and truth. Yet this humour is not nihilistic but playful. However, Palmquist also makes links to several of Kant's major works. In the end, Palmquist argues that Kant not only possesses a sense of humour, but the clash of perspectives and subversion of expectations is not just the essence of the ridiculous and comic but offers a new pathway of presenting philosophy and truth. Ultimately, one may present Palmquist's argument of humour as a playful twist and continuation of philosophy by other means.²⁰

Lorenzo Manera's chapter brings to light the sometimes- overlooked theme of philosophical play in the eighteenth century, Manera makes Frederick Schiller his focus for his study. However, he does so, within the context of a comparison with Baumgarten, Fichte and most prominently Kant. In this chapter, Manera's primary focus is *Spieltrieb* (play drive) in the thought of Schiller. When exploring this idea Manera establishes a parallel between the ludic theory of Schiller and Kant. Just as Kant maintains that play mediates between imagination and understanding within the realm of aesthetics, so Manera argues that *Spieltrieb* (play drive) mediates between form drive (reason) and material drive (senses),

Although Manera maintains that there is a ludic parallel between Schiller and Kant, one may interpret him as arguing that unlike Kant, who seems to restrict his ludic theory to aesthetics, Schiller is presenting a more expansive idea of philosophical play. Manera asserts: 'Play is considered a mediating element, dialectically receptive and active at the same time.' Here Manera highlights the profound agency of play as both bringing reason and senses together and simultaneously preserving them as distinct entities. Then Manera goes on to quote Schiller in his 15th letter: 'For once and for all, Man plays only when he is in the full sense of the word a man and he is only wholly Man when he is

²⁰ This is a playful twist on the writings of Carl Von Clausewitz.

playing.²¹ Certainly, as implied by Manera, there is the inclusion of the scope of the ludic dimension of Kantian aesthetics, Schiller seems to go into the realm of the spiritual sublime.

Such employment of the spiritual sublime in association with play is reminiscent of Romano Guardini.

The Soul must learn, at least in prayer, the restlessness of purposeful activity: it must learn to waste for the sake of God. And to be prepared for the sacred game with sayings and thoughts and gestures, without always immediately asking "why" and "wherefore?"²²

Yet, as Manera mentions, Schiller and his ludic theory did have their contemporary detractors. Among these detractors was Frederick Holderlin, who accused Schiller using his ludic theory of trivializing and devaluing art and poetry. Others, as Manera points out, like Friedrich Schleiermacher in his book *Towards a Theory of a Sociable Contract* (1799) draws upon similar ludic ideas as Schiller. In his book, Schleiermacher presents culture as an elaborate game. Thus, Manera presents an insightful introduction to ludic theory in eighteenth-century Europe. As a result, this chapter may offer itself as a useful comparative guide with the ludic theorists and philosophers of more recent times.

The Immanent Transcendence of Play

Brandon Love makes the above phrase his primary focus in the introduction of his chapter on Hegel and ludic theory. Love draws upon a connection between Sampson's ludicity²³ of Being and his own understanding of Hegel's presentation of the play of God. He employs ludicity's framework of dynamics to explore the nature of Hegel's ludic theory of the infinite in comparison with the play of the infinite within the Eastern Patristic Christian Tradition.

Here Love makes the Aristotelean concept of *energeia* a key element in his consideration of the play between immanence and transcendence. *Energeia* for Love is not a playful process moving towards a definite end, it has that ending within itself. As a philosophical theologian, he explores whether the play between immanence and transcendence is in terms of God's own self and his relation to the world as Hegel maintains is a game essentially that is finite or in

²¹ Fredrich Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2000), XV, 73: "Denn, um es endlich auf einmal herauszusagen, der Mensch spielt nur, wo er in voller Bedeutung des Worts Mensch ist, und er ist nur da ganz Mensch, wo er spielt".

²² Romano Guardini, *The Essential Guardini* (1997), 152.

²³ Jeremy Sampson, *Being Played: Gadamer and Philosophy's Hidden Dynamic* (Wilmington, USA: Vernon Press 2019), xxvii.

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