

# just playing (with you)

some comments on the importance of being playful!

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## Abstract

What these “comments” will focus on is the importance of being and remaining “playful” in and for philosophy. This will not be a survey of the concept of play from the Pre-Socratics through Heidegger, nor will my comments attempt to offer either an exhaustive or definitive notion of play. Instead, my intention is to note and ask some questions regarding the very engagement of thinking and philosophizing beyond and/or “outside” the strictures and constraints we often agree to, abide by or otherwise find ourselves obeying. Thus my comments will be just that, *my comments* about what philosophy is for me in this context and what it is not for me as well—and how I understand and do philosophy outside the norms of the “game” of professional philosophy, as such.

What I will explore with those in attendance are various propositions and positions regarding “play” and “being playful.” For example, I will consider play itself; what are some of the qualities of play that make it different from doing work, or different from even participating in a game. And, while not quite offering a phenomenology of play or of playing, I will describe playfulness as I engage in it and with it. I will touch upon such issues as “rules,” “regulations,” and the very notion of “play time,” that is both the temporality of play, and the temporal limits imposed on playing and being playful, as well as other regulatory controls placed upon play and those who are playful. (Here I will also make some connections to games and sports).

I will end my comments with a suggestion that “being playful,” is a dispositional issue as it were (here evoking Pierre Bourdieu as he describes “disposition” in his book *The Field of Cultural Production*).



That those of us who play, who are playful, are so for many reasons, but perhaps not because we make the time to play, or force ourselves to play, but simply because we do play and we are playful. And, then some questions arise, how can we play with those who do not, and what risks are there in being playful in a world that is not? It will be suggested that genuine philosophical engagement emanates from a playful disposition, even when addressing the most serious of questions.

**Keywords**

Play, phenomenology of play, games, Derrida, Lyotard

I am now on flight 906 from Manila to Hong Kong which is the first leg of my journey back home to New York City. I am smiling as I write this for many reasons, but primarily because I am leaving Manila under the best circumstances, namely, I really do not want to leave. I arrived in Manila just a little more than two weeks ago, and two of my many pleasures were delivering these comments to those in attendance at the Philosophy of Sport and Games Conference and the conversations and dialogue that followed.

I began thinking about and started writing my comments while in transit to and from a board meeting for the Association For Ethnic Studies. I initially incorporated and then let stay my musings about the importance of being playful that I wrote while traveling because we find ourselves thinking philosophically (and being playful, and even playing games) where we happen to be, where we happen to *find* ourselves. Given the nature of my comments, I felt it best to let stand the playful (if I may) narrative, in "real time," which, of course, came and went, as has my very visit to De La Salle University and Manila. I suppose that regardless of one's philosophical temperament, all would agree that (even when we are residing in the same place) we all find ourselves being in transit, one way or another.<sup>1</sup> That I had the very good fortune of finding myself

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to note at least two additional (conscious) influences as to why I am publishing these thoughts I have (and or had) while moving about. The first reason that comes to mind is that I am currently involved in co-editing a volume titled *Being in Transit: Travel, Place and Culture*. It is the fifth anthology that I am co-editing with my friend and colleague Brian Seitz on philosophy and culture. The other reason that

included on the program of the Mid-Year Conference of the Philosophical Association of the Philippines focusing on Philosophy, Sport and Games, and then to be subsequently asked to submit these comments for consideration to this journal convinced me to leave my thoughts where and when I found them (however provisional and cursory they may be).

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As I begin to consider some thoughts and comments regarding the importance of being playful, I am on a plane going from New York City to Richmond, Virginia for a board meeting of the Association For Ethnic Studies. I find myself flying at yet another moment in US history that is decidedly not playful, although, like in many other places in the world, clearly there are a lot of (political) games being played. And so, as I start to scribble these initial thoughts and words, I seem to be, not unlike many others, yet again, in another uneasy, and even somewhat precarious, situation (place), namely, trying to remain playful during harsh and difficult times. So, I am pleased, if also a bit anxious, to have been asked to participate in a conference focusing on Philosophy, Sport and Games. The invitation to participate led me immediately to think about the notion of playing, and of being playful.

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I am still on the same plane to Richmond, Virginia, and still on my way to participate, to my mind, in some very important, serious and hard work. And I am now also distracted by my thoughts about the state of sport in the United States, while having warm memories of my father and brother, that is, proud memories of their success in professional sport.<sup>2</sup> But, I am also distracted and bothered by the ongoing issue of the conflict between the National Football League (the NFL) and those NFL players who are engaged in and with the

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immediately comes to mind is the evocative and important work regarding "place" considered by Edward S. Casey in his 2009 book *Getting Back Into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*.

<sup>2</sup> I would like to note that both my father and brother played American baseball.

resistance of appropriately “standing” for and during the national anthem of the United States.<sup>3</sup>

But despite my being deep in thought about all of this, the impulse to be playful surfaces, however modestly, and, in a sense, almost privately. I have just made the flight attendant smile. Evidently, he caught me making a funny face upon my hearing a passenger across the aisle from me quite seriously ask whether or not he could have a “drier, and less oaky” white wine. The passenger voiced this request as he indifferently raised his almost-emptied wine glass to the attendant who was looking over in my direction at that moment and so neither noticed the gesture nor was able to take the glass as he was attending to another passenger.

Did I mention that I am on a plane flying from New York City to Richmond, Virginia? It is a “commuter” flight, that is, it is a regional flight; this almost always means flying a smaller (and typically subcontracted) aircraft (and flight crew), and, almost certainly, a less than “five star” service—in short, it almost always means that you are flying a convenient and a somewhat, and understandably, uncomfortable flight. And, because of this fact, this reality, I decided to treat myself. For a modest additional fee, I indulged in bumping myself up to first class. It was, as I have said, a modest difference in cost, in part, because there is practically no difference between the two classes of service available on such flights, save that the “first-class” seating is so identified as such; and, on this plane, has a total of nine such designated seats (a total of three rows: one seat on one side of the aisle, and two seats on the other side of the

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<sup>3</sup> This issue of “standing up and standing for” the US national anthem is in and of itself a worthy topic of discussion here and now at this conference. And it should make us all consider the relationship between and importance of national identity and nationalism, and sport and games (both professional and amateur). At the moment I am writing these comments, I am aware not only of the issue of Black Lives Matters in the US and the NFL, but also of how Russian President Vladimir Putin is manipulating the issue of state-sponsored “doping” as a national issue, an issue of both national pride and national integrity. The connection between sport and games and national identity and nationalism is clearly important and important to the very reason of this conference, and thus the reason for my thinking “otherwise,” that is thinking differently about the very nature of philosophy, sport and games, and focusing on just playing and being playful.

aisle). Of course, one advantage to sitting (*being*) in first-class, even on this particular small aircraft and in this configuration, is that you are at the very front-end of the “equipment,” the technical term for aircraft used by the airlines. Thus being so placed, so positioned, disembarking is/becomes all the more speedy. But, another “perk” of flying first-class, of *being-in* first-class, is to experience being-served free snacks and alcohol, which means “not-so-fine” or expensive wine, vodka and the like, and pretty low-end snacks.<sup>4</sup>

Of course, everyone knows this, and everyone who regularly flies more or less accepts this; and everyone, more or less, winds up drinking way more than they should (free booze, it seems, being served to you is rather hard to decline, or so I have discovered); and everyone also eats the snacks that are too salty, too fatty and too sweet (and we do so, it appears, for the same reason we drink too much: it’s “free” and someone is “offering” it to you!). Everyone on that flight “got it.” That is, everyone on that flight, as is the case with most flights, understood the dynamics of what flying “first-class” meant, and means, everyone, of course, except the rather obnoxious fellow sitting across the aisle from me proved to be—an individual who proved to be decidedly not playful, but yet very gamey.

In the end (and perhaps from the very start), this fellow passenger appears to be insisting on playing the game of class, of being served and treated in a certain way. It is, from even where I too am sitting, at best a difficult game to be playing, especially given the almost indistinguishable privileged place he is attempting to claim (and on this flight is nominally occupying), and that of the other people finding themselves, for one reason or another, in coach, sitting just feet (literally just a few pairs of feet) behind him. But as I watch, he persists, he insists: this is evidently a game he has played before, perhaps it is a game he plays all the time, and apparently with little or no regard to how well he, in fact, plays this game. I say this only because at the moment I am writing all this down, and observing his disturbing behavior I am inclined to say, that in this particular game, based on dignity and decency, the flight attendant is winning, if he is in fact even playing. So, the score at the moment is: flight attendant 1, obnoxious, privileged passenger 0—game over!

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<sup>4</sup> Of course the “free” snacks and alcohol are already paid for in the additional cost of flying, of *being in*, first class.

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I am now resuming to write some comments about the importance of being playful on the return flight back home to New York City, from Richmond, Virginia. It was, by the way, a good meeting, to my mind: lots of hard, serious and important work, as I anticipated, and good work as well. There were also some playful moments. Some of my colleagues are genuinely warm and playful people. As I have just mentioned, there was a lot of hard and serious work done for the Association For Ethnic Studies, and for the field of Ethnic Studies itself. It was a good meeting, and as the immediate-past president of this important organization, I felt proud of both my colleagues and of myself. When I became president of the association it was during a very difficult time for the organization, and as a result a very challenging time for me,<sup>5</sup> but still I remained playful.

And, for some, that playfulness was perceived as, what many have come to call, “thinking outside the box.”<sup>6</sup> And to some degree this was true, but in

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<sup>5</sup> I would very much like to acknowledge the support and good work of a number of board members who despite the option of playing games to undermine my leadership and to advance themselves chose to work in solidarity and advance this important association. Three individuals who chose to play by different rules, perhaps by no rules, and offered me love and support at that dark moment deserve to be noted here, since I evoke their presence and contribution to the Association For Ethnic Studies: Irene Vernon, Connie Jacobs and Ravi Perry. It should be noted that each of these lovely and powerful individuals gave so much to the association and to Ethnic Studies without any demand or expectation for something in return, in short, they did what they did very much outside the context of playing games, of doing something and expecting something, and or expecting someone to care or notice.

<sup>6</sup> I think that it is worth noting here just how often we are offered, in biographies, memoirs and featured articles, the portrait of CEOs and “maverick” entrepreneurs as “thinking outside the box.” These corporate leaders and trailblazers espouse their own, individual, paths to success, in part, by embracing their “difference,” and ignoring “the rules,” disregarding the rules, and even inventing their own rules. And yet, what is of interest to me, is that once they are no longer blazing new trails and have “arrived,” and become successful, “on top of their games,” as people say, these renegades, almost to a person, then exclaim the virtues and need for everyone now to follow their lead, and to play by their rules—after all, so they argue, they have demonstrated to all that they

some respect that was as much out of default as it was by design. As a white male of an historically important organization founded and sustained by people of color, many of the things I did broke with tradition and crossed the line, whether actually so, or so perceived, and whether intentionally so or by accident. But by dint of my “being otherwise” (bureaucratically, administratively, professionally and so on) and because of the wonderful team of people who were also willing to be different, to play by different rules, we, in fact, navigated and negotiated our way through that difficult time. So, as I fly home, I continue to think about the importance of being playful, of being otherwise, that is, of being willing and able to act differently, beyond the rules set in place, beyond the “way things are done.”

I am, as I consider things, also a bit emotional, because as I fly home pondering what one might say about the complexities of play and being playful, I am also mindful that I am, as of this board meeting, no longer a member of the board of directors. My term was up, and I declined the opportunity to remain—it was time. I am now recollecting just how many difficult moments I encountered, and how many times I responded “otherwise,” that is, differently from the way things were previously done. I dealt with some difficult people as well, many of them playing the “race” game or some form of the “power” game. As best I could, I refused to play those games, or any such games, and I did so, in large measure, by remaining playful—that is, by ignoring and refusing to accept the proscribed ways of leadership and of addressing conflicts, and by embracing the risk of failure, rather than “to play it safe” and merely repeat the order of things, of things that, in fact, did not work, but did allow certain people to maintain their status, mostly by playing all sorts of games to cover themselves, to protect themselves. But I and the good people of the association chose to play our way through the crises we faced, rather than play games to protect ourselves, play games to advance ourselves.

But what does all of this really mean? What does being playful mean in the context of stress and conflict? What does it mean specifically as opposed to playing games?

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are winners and know how to play the game, sometimes even claiming that they have invented the game in question, whether that be in technology, finance, industry and so on.

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Many of you will rightly and impressively note that sport and games, in general, encompass a wide and diverse array of activities, interactions and engagements, as does just being playful. I would like, therefore, to comment on some, perhaps superficial but to my mind still important, aspects of and distinctions between sport (and games) and just play (and being playful). My comments are intended to note these aspects and distinctions and allude to why they may prove important with regard to philosophy.

Point #1: Games, by definition, have rules and regulations. You really cannot be said to be playing a game if you have no rules, limits, specific purpose or identifiable traits and characteristics (you are playing *this* game, *not that* game).

Point #2: Unlike games, play has no “official” start or end time. If you hear someone announce that “it is now playtime,” as they often do at schools in the early grades, or when you are older and playtime is announced in the form of “this is your vacation time,” I say that when you hear any such announcement “granting” you such time, that you should be suspicious indeed, for many reasons.

Point #3: As I indicated in my first point, games have a *telos*, a purpose: to hit a ball, to kick a ball, to throw something, to score points, to collect, to knock down something, or someone. Games have a goal, and end (in this sense sport and games smack of something a bit Hegelian). Play and playfulness, on the other hand, are less dialectical, as it were, less oppositional and binary. They are more open and flowing, this way and that, and perhaps can be view as somewhat more “dialogical” as opposed to “dialectical” (think here perhaps of the difference between Bakhtin, Paulo Freire and bell hooks, and again, thinkers such as Hegel, Freud and others).

Point #4: And my last point (of distinction), yet a further consequence of my third point, is that however meaningful and valuable play maybe (and as you can already sense, I believe deeply in the importance of being playful—thus the title of my talk, and this subsequent article), that play and being playful are essentially superfluous to anyone and everyone not playing or being playful at any particular time or place. (Of course, a parent, for example, might care or feel good that their child is playing, and is, at that moment, enjoying itself or is



otherwise occupying itself, and precisely not demanding anything from its parent or parents—a moment of potential liberation, *play*, for the parent or parents in question. And, of course, there are other such examples. But, the playing itself is and remains “superfluous.”)

While one, I think, could say something like this about sport and games, generally, and even perhaps about *every* game for that matter, I would like to stress that all sport and games are, in fact, played within some context and ideology of winning and losing, within some framework and or structure that often bears import and meaning even to those not playing the game (whether professional games or simple “party games,” or even the type of game played by that “privileged passenger,” on my flight to Richmond, Virginia). Unlike “just playing,” games have very particular histories, very specific histories, regardless of how recent. By contrast, playing is almost “a historical.” Of course, each moment, each instant of play also has a context in which it takes place, for sure. But I would like to suggest that this is different. For example, one doesn’t learn to play the way one learns a game. Games, even games “made up on the spot,” have an operational and perhaps even “material” value system and significance, within the very structure, order and hierarchy of the particular game in question (in the post-Hegelian, that is, Marxist, sense). And as such any game, that is to say all games (and sport) are directly connected to and tied to the history of competition, for example; that is to say, tied to some history of defeating an opponent (even if the opponent is the game itself, and not some other individual), tied to some history of winning and achieving victory—for, if you are successful you get the best of someone, or “you master the game.”

Of course, there are many more distinctions that could be made, that perhaps should be made, and debated about games (of all sorts) and “just playing.” But, I would like to just follow up a bit more only to emphasize the notion of play being essentially (if I may use such a strong word) superfluous. That is, that both playing and being playful “occur” and “unfold” without a specific (conscious?) regard for the values and attitudes of others, or of the rules, regulations and history established and enforced the games already established (of others). When “just playing,” one is aware, even though performing some action, gesture or move, that whatever one is doing, that it is not done necessarily for some specific reason or for or against someone. The “playing” is not done because of some set of rules, regulations, values or criteria. That is, whatever play (and playing) is taking place it is not happening due to any

predetermined parameters regarding the purpose or import of the given activity. And while playing may not, strictly speaking, be done in total isolation from history (of and from others), that is exclusively for and by yourself (although we ought to acknowledge that we, in fact, do often play by and for ourselves), we ought to note that when we play, we are more or less (and I would argue that we are very much less) concerned about or for others, per se. That is to say, that when we are playing we are not so much concerned about what others think or say about what we are doing or how we are doing what we are doing (whatever it may be).

As we play, we create and diverge from the norm. As we do so, we become unfettered and unconstrained, as it were, by the very rules, regulations and purpose of others, of what they may think or say about whatever we are and or are not doing, at any given time or place (we are playing now, we are at play here). In play, during play, we do not care, we do not concern ourselves with how we are holding up or how we may compare to others, or their rules (of the game). For, in play and by playing, we are forging our own way. In the moment of play, we find ourselves creating our own way, another way (of doing something and or of doing nothing at all, differently, otherwise).

In their book *Just Gaming*, Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean-Loup Thebaud take up this position (this tension) in the following way:

the artistic vanguard knows that it has no readers, no viewers, and no listeners. If, on the other hand, it is saddled with the image of a reader, viewer, or listener, if, in other words, the contour of an addressee is imposed upon it, and this contour filters out the experiments in sound, form, literature, and even theory, that the vanguard is allowed to make, then it will not be able to do anything. There is an important issue here: the problem is not only political, in the usual and simple sense of the term, but it is a problem of how one views history and society. When one says there are no readers for the people who write, no viewers for those who paint, no listeners for those who compose, it means that there is no subject of history. One cannot work telling oneself that, yes, there are values that arranged in a specific way form a subject. This is the subject to whom I speak: I communicate what I have to say in its name. To presuppose such an addressee or tutor, is to admit that all actions that form history, including those of the works [of art] in question, find their ultimate meaning in the accomplishment of a universal subject. It

is the idea of such a subject that the modern artists refuse. (Lyotard 1985, 10).

Lyotard goes on to explain and to expound: "What is at stake in artistic language today is experimentation. And to experiment means, in a way, to be alone, to be celibate.... These are things that Barthes had seen" (Lyotard 1985, 10). By so framing these activities, these expressions, these "experimentations" as Lyotard calls them, these acts of play by the "artistic vanguard," the avant garde modalities of being, Lyotard forces us to re-consider, re-confront, and re-embrace the Nietzschean project of joyfully becoming what we are, of playing, as it were, beyond the limits of what has been laid down by others (by history) for us. Not unlike Nietzsche, Lyotard seems to want us to play, to embrace a liberating (gay) science, to move ourselves beyond being judged, and beyond judging ourselves, and others. That is, Lyotard, wants us to move (aesthetically) "beyond good and evil," as prescribed and inscribed by a (moral) force, a morality that we overcome. And, in order to create such a new aesthetic, one must be alone, as Lyotard notes, beyond the reach of the herd (Nietzsche's term), beyond being judged and beyond judging.

But as Lyotard readily, honestly, and however contradictorily admits, he does, and all of us do in fact, judge, one way or another. As Lyotard acknowledges:

Absolutely. I judge. But if I am asked by what criteria do I judge, I will have no answer to give. Because if I did have a criteria, if I had a possible answer to [this] question, it would mean that there is actually a possible answer [to such a] question, it would mean that there is actually a possible consensus on these criteria between the readers and me; we would not be then in a situation of modernity, but in classicism. What I mean is that anytime that we lack criteria, we are in modernity, wherever we may be, whether it be at the time of Augustine, Aristotle, or Pascal. The date does not matter. (Lyotard, 1985, 15).

"The date does not matter..." but rather what does indeed seem to matter is the moment (whenever it occurs) that we free ourselves of the rules and restraints, of the conformity and the norms that, in fact, do hide behind "consensus."

Thus, contrary to the falsely and arbitrarily imposed notion and moment of “play time,” or “criteria” for artistic expression, *anytime* should be playtime, philosophically speaking, that is, as Lyotard rightly suggests, any epoch can give expression to “the new,” any time can prove to be a moment of expression of “modernity,” if the conditions are such that we are able to move beyond the limitations of “our time.” Here again Lyotard, I believe, is helpful when he tells us that

Untimeliness can be defined in the strong sense, as in Nietzsche.... It implies a position on the part of the author, his or her disagreement with the established public of contemporaries, the disavowal of her or his time. This is not all that Nietzsche meant, of course.... There is no nostalgia in the modern. It is threatened from another side: I think that it is very difficult to distinguish, when a modern work appears, between that by which it is truly modern, in the sense of experimental, and that by which it is innovative, that is, where it is but a way of [merely] repeating, without great difference, something that has already been done and that has worked. Innovation within fashion. I believe that these kinds of distinctions must be made one at a time, and without criteria. (Lyotard 1985, 14)

Without criteria, again Lyotard pushes this position. That is, he pushes this notion of “experimenting” without rules, without consensus—even though Lyotard readily, and perhaps contradictorily, admits that we all do judge and are judged, and are much more often than not ruled, and forced into agreement. Perhaps Lyotard, following Nietzsche, is in his own way struggling for a time and place, a moment and space of and for play, and of and for being playful. Such a time and place, such a genuine moment and space opens things up, opens us up, and takes us outside (beyond) the place and time of predetermined demarcations, beyond what is and is not permissible (here and now), both aesthetically and politically, and as Nietzsche suggested, asserted and demanded, beyond both “ethics” and “logic,” as fashioned for, and ultimately by, the “herd,” that is, by “consensus.”

This is, I suspect, why we play, why we want to play. This is why we forge ahead, or at least attempt to move forward, beyond all sorts of boundaries and limits. Thus, my modest attempt here, today, to claim the significance of play,

instead of focusing specifically on sport and games, as important as they both are, precisely because sport and games are, necessarily, circumscribed and limited. This is, perhaps, why we, who do play, who do or at least try to philosophize, make up (new) words and phrases (think here of Heidegger, especially in *Being and Time*). In fact, some of us come up with, or at least attempt to formulate, whole new languages, to give expression to and articulation of who and how we are in the world (again, here and how), think here of all those (claiming to be, one way or another) postmodernists.

But, as one of the most playful wordsmiths of us all in recent (postmodern) history reminds and warns us, Jacques Derrida himself soberly reminds us, that even our own “new languages,” even all of our playful words and expressions are not innocent or neutral. This is (necessarily) so because so much, if not all, of our language is, according to Derrida not innocent or neutral.

[Because it] is the language of Western metaphysics, and it carries with it not only a considerable number of presuppositions of all types, but also presuppositions inseparable from metaphysics [itself], which, although little attended to, are knotted into a system. (Derrida 1981, 19).

Thus, try as we might to playfully work our way out of and beyond the strictures and structure of metaphysics (whatever metaphysics we may find ourselves caught up in, “knotted” up in, as Derrida puts it), we are trapped. We are apparently, according to Derrida, alas, forever, in fact, caught up in and “knotted into,” and therefore limited and constrained, even as we play or try to play our way around, if not quite out of or beyond the very rules and regulations that Lyotard argues (hopes?) that his “artistic vanguard,” the truly playful ones, might manage to “ignore” and “pay no mind to,” if not actually able to work themselves “free” from the “knotted” system metaphysics (and the history of aesthetics) ties us to, bounds us to—at least most of us according to Lyotard and Derrida.

Yet, Lyotard asserts that he avoids and/or rejects the prescriptions of “our time.” And his “game plan” as it were, and if I may, in *Just Gaming*, is to force his way out of the very “knotted system” that metaphysics has weaved. But how so? Lyotard tells us that there is a way and that it

bears a name in a certain philosophical tradition, namely Nietzsche's: the will to power. It is obvious that for someone like Kant (the expression "ability to judge" is Kant's), the ability to judge is left mysteriously hanging. With respect to moral law, Kant says of the will, in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, that it is an unfathomable truth. But without it, there is nothing to say about it, that is: in truth. But, without it, there would be no experience of obligation and no problem of justice. Here is the answer then: The ability to judge does not hang upon the observance of criteria. The form that it will take in the last *Critique* is that of the imagination. An imagination that is constitutive. It is not only an ability to judge; it is a power to invent criteria. (Lyotard 1985, 17).

According to Lyotard, then, the very act of playing (as I am calling it), the very act of *will-fully* (as it were) imagining our way out the "knotted system" is achieved, not by dint of neither observing or obeying criteria, nor by virtue of destroying existing criteria, but rather through our own (individual) power (here again think of Nietzsche's "will to power"), that is our own ability to invent such criteria, and such (Kantian) critiques of judgement.

So, a question, actually a series of questions, that I would like to ask and to put into play here (today) is: If we dare philosophize at all (an historically bold, and decidedly serious act), how do we do so? How do we proceed? How can we loosen ourselves, at least enough, if not fully, to disentangle ourselves from the knotted system that still ties us and binds us to the metaphysics of racism, the metaphysics patriarchy, the metaphysics of homophobia, the metaphysics of class and the metaphysics of ability and disability? In short, how do we play our way out beyond the limits of the very metaphysics that has informed, if not determined, our thinking and our desires, even our desire to think and be *otherwise*, and not merely *to play just another game*, just another metaphysics. I suppose my question then is really simply this: would you all be willing to play with me, that is play in the very way I believe we must embrace and endeavor, if we ever hope to get some distance from, if not quite undo ourselves from, that knotted system.

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