

Discussion of excerpts from Schiller, *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* and Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*

Rebecca Spang: Thank you very much, Michel.

Fritz Breithaupt: First of all: wonderful! You [Michel Chaouli] really managed to bring these two absent gentlemen to life with us in all respects and call on a lot of themes that are really the ones that I would have wanted to hear about. But of course I will put you in an odd position now because I want you to defend these people—you were very clear in distancing yourself from that, I will fully acknowledge that—but I want to know what you have to say about the criticism that has been pointed especially at Schiller in the last twenty, thirty years from the theoretical angle of people that you know like Paul de Man and Lacoue-Labarthe. They basically accuse Schiller as saying that this notion of freedom that he elaborates on in—exactly, in the very passages that you quote—that this notion of “freedom” in play is actually not one for the player, it is *only* for the observer. The player in Schiller consistently is basically very bound by rules and so on and so on: the pleasure, the joy, the whole disinterest, the personal disinterest is only from the outside observer who can revel in it, while the actual participant has to either follow the dance steps—in the one famous example that Paul de Man quotes—or has to... in tragedies has to die, and all the cases that Schiller uses are then deconstructed in different ways by these thinkers. And so I’m wondering whether you see that as a fundamental lack: that the distinction between the participant-player and the observer is not considered, actually, by either of these two people, Schiller and Huizinga. . . How do you pronounce his name properly?

Cornelis van der Haven: How-zing-hah.

Breithaupt: Okay, okay, I will not be good at that... [laughter] So does that undermine their theories that they don’t really distinguish between them; is this whole notion of freedom actually a wrong one? I mean, the players seem to be so *involved* in it, so *driven* by it, that they actually... that they are dead serious when playing. I mean, whether we takes kids playing as something that is dead serious, or whatever play one has in mind here: actors in the theater, they have to follow the script and so on and so on. I mean, is this freedom not only one for the observer? I will add one thing here, because you missed it: Jonathan in the theoretical intervention in the first discussion said, “Oh, we have to think both roles here. But Jonathan suggested both of them are coming together here. I mean, if you use Kathryn’s example of the kids parading on the square: well, where’s the joy for the kids here? It’s probably not just simply in following the rules of the marching and parading on the square, but it’s also being ... in imagining themselves being the observer of themselves. I mean, so that, there could be a play of, both sides can come together as roles of the same person. I throw that in because you [Michel Chaouli, who missed the first session] didn’t hear that that part of the discussion: is that a way out of the criticism against Schiller and maybe by extension against Huy-zin-guh [laughter] as well? Because that is a lack in both of these theories, that they don’t consider that, and it limits the freedom because of that.

Michel Chaouli: So, I will not want to be the kind of point of focus of the discussion, I can say something... but many people in the room have at least as interesting things to say, and actually in most cases I would think much more so; you have been thinking about this much more than I

have. The one thing to say about the Schiller text and about “Johann”. . . [laughter] Did we do okay on this one? [laughter] ... I don’t *know* enough, but with Schiller there is a very curious thing, and that is that the notion of play actually seems to apply—as he develops it—*only* to the observer.

Breithaupt: Yes.

Chaouli: So there is no theory here of the artist. That is a black box, that is completely bracketed: whether the artist is playing or not playing we have no idea, and in a sense Schiller may not have an idea. So, what is at stake in the notion of play is precisely for the notion of an aesthetic experience to be in play, *that* is the sort of play that it seems to me he has in mind, he doesn’t have in mind the kind of participatory play that somebody else could observe and that you are referring to. So that is why I said it is unclear to me if *anybody* partakes *actually* of this type of play that he’s talking about; it is so idealized, and the passage I read to you says “this is what you should be doing.” The German has an interesting, very tiny, switch in it: normally he talks about *Spiel* (which is “play”) and then in that passage he talks about *Spiele*, the plural, and that is immediately just “games.” And I fudged that a little bit by saying “playing,” which doesn’t work quite as well. But he’s talking about “spiel” as a kind of normative category, not “spiele”—not the things that people actually play. So I think this is just another, as I understand it, another reformulation of a theory of aesthetic experience and not worried about the distinction between observer and producer. About Huizinga? I simply don’t know; there’s a lot that goes back and forth in the introduction certainly, and I’m not sure how to make sense of that. But others will.

Jonathan Elmer: Certainly Huizinga is very interested in *participation* in a way that Schiller is not. I mean, when Schiller talks about “spiele” he is thinking about people playing games, so there is, at least broached as a theme, the idea of participation and not simply observation. But your general point about him pulling the entire problematic towards the normative and towards the normative/aesthetic is, I think, really decisive, which does make it different, despite—and I’m completely convinced by you—that Huizinga is in a Kantian, has inherited a Kantian frame that he can’t even see outside, really.

Nonetheless, he is fundamentally interested in the participatory dimension which is what allows him, I think, to be very interested in all the instances that Schiller has to sort of leave beside because of his commitment to the normative, and why even though Huizinga wants to say this is not the normal kind of historical problem—insofar as play is older than and exists in a structural relationship to the entire social field that is very difficult to pin down—nonetheless he approaches it historically. So, and he says: it’s neither a metaphysical problem... if we say “will”, it’s too much, if we say “drive” or “instinct”, we say too little; it’s somewhere in between. And then he says: “I’m going to approach it historically.” So we have a very funny combination of an historical approach that can’t square—and I think I said something like this in my little intervention—that can’t be squared entirely with [history]... Well, it’s a complicated version of history in any case. He’s very... His decision to pursue the instances rather than the norms also opens the realm of play to something larger than the aesthetic, which is really what I’m trying to say here. So that the entire realm of the sacred or ritual, various kinds of social actions that are more or less codified, can be viewed within the compass of his problem in a way that I think for Schiller is not really, that’s not something that he’s particularly interested in. So a ritual, or reli-

gious ritual, I'm not sure Schiller is focused on, and religious ritual *does* require an ability to account for participation.

Chaouli: [To Daniel O'Quinn] Did you want to jump back in? ... I'm sorry what is your name?

Daniel O'Quinn: It's Danny. It is interesting when you pinpointed the Kantian sub-current in Huizinga which I'm also pretty convinced by, it then has me thinking of all sorts of extrapolations. Because if that's the case then is Huizinga—is his historical analysis?—looking for signs of history: is he looking for, like in that Lyotardian sense, in other words is he looking at historical instances of play to disclose things about... about freedom. That would be one way of going with this, right: that there's something articulated... Oh sorry, looking at historical events to disclose, to give an as-if presentation, of something that can't be brought into the world. So in other words, analyzing historical instances of play then is actually aimed at a way of getting at that which can't be spoken, or can't be articulated, which in this case would be freedom or God or the absolute. Is that where that analysis would end up driving?

Chaouli: Um, I'm not sure, whether you're then committed to a particular kind of historical project in... . I, I just don't know. It seemed to me reading the introduction the field is open, you really could go lots and lots of different ways. He then does choose a path, but it doesn't seem to me that it's theoretically committed, at least not as I read it. Yeah...

O'Quinn: Well then I'll try to be more specific: when Kant then goes to read the French Revolution as a, essentially, as a theatrical scene, right...

Chaouli: Yes.

O'Quinn: Which then allows us to see something that can't happen, that we can't realize, right? Then he is taking a historical event and analyzing it as a, in an aesthetic fashion and turning whatever happened in that place into a play. I'm just thinking, so does that, just ... [inaudible]

Chaouli: Interesting.

Nina L. Dubin: Can I add on to that? I just found myself thinking that of Burke who compares the Revolution to a gaming table, and I'm wondering: just struck by the discrepancy between how we're talking about play and how Schiller is talking about play, and wondering if Schiller himself is... You know, this is his context, you know; this is the moment of the Revolution being thought of as both freedom and gamble. So, I mean, does that kind of tension infiltrate his understanding of play at all? Does he...?

Chaouli: Well... Again, the way, that I, at least, the way that one would read the text faithfully... I think the entire project would be to get rid of contingency and chance, right. So it would be: the whole idea with play as he conceives of it is as a mode of behavior—though behavior is my term not his—it is a mode of *being* that, where, where the distinction between necessity and contingency has disappeared. Which is to say, you are doing things... Not *because* there is a rule, but the *way* that you do them encodes a rule or carries a rule in it, that might reveal itself in some, in some exemplary fashion. So, in that sense, everything about the play is

necessary, but necessary in this funny way; where you couldn't really jump in and say "you've just violated this such-and-such a rule" from outside, right? There is no rulebook to that behavior; and that's, I think, the closest kinship that it has to the Kantian aesthetic conception, which is that the rule comes into being with the thing itself and never outside of it: there can not be any rule for beauty, for example. You cannot look up something and say "Well does it qualify, does it fulfill this set of features?" and, you know, make check-marks. But it will come into being and disappear, the rule, with the thing. And I think that's kind of what he has in mind here. So that I cannot think my way into, into say gambling here. I don't see how... A *horror* scenario, it would be: gambling would be the thing to get away from, precisely.

Dubin: Just seems like a really, like a kind of recuperation of our, you know, an obviously idealizing definition of play in a context in which play is so frayed and with overtones of gambling.

Chaouli: Yeah, yeah I see. So in that sense defensive, yeah, yeah.

Dubin: Yeah, well, maybe.

Chaouli: Yeah, I think that's probably right.

[unidentifiable person]: Yes, Fritz, did you have a follow-up?

Breithaupt: Not to that one, so no, no.

Chaouli: So I have Dwight... Okay; please.

Dwight Codr: Just as an alternate possibility instead of gambling, although, I mean, I don't know that it's *that* different. You mentioned copulation and I was thinking about this instinct of play and how when I read the following lines, and it might just be the translation, it just sounds like he's describing fucking, I mean... [laughter] 248 seems to be the key sort of moment: "The sensuous instinct wishes to be determined, it wishes to receive an object. The formal instinct wishes to determine itself, it wishes to produce an object. Therefore, the instinct of play will endeavor to receive as it would have produced, and to produce as it aspires to receive." I don't know if that's more like sex or more like the sort of 'universalize your maxim', or the Golden Rule is, or somewhere in between. But the next paragraph is what is particularly interesting for me, in the way that every sentence is, sort of, is a series of balances. It's like a seesaw. And there's something quite *fun* about this paragraph after reading everything up to this paragraph. If I may just read a bit of it, so you'll see this sort of balancing: "The sensuous impulsion excludes from its subject all autonomy and freedom. The formal impulsion excludes all dependence and passivity. But the exclusion of freedom's physical necessity, the exclusion of passivity, is moral necessity," and actually that same kind of balancing act sort of unfolds throughout that entire passage. So I'm thinking about, I guess, sex and seesaws and the Golden Rule and [laughter] maybe that's... there's something's there. As another way of thinking about what this play instinct would be like, as a sort of performance of the concept.

Chaouli: That's good, I had not noticed it, and certainly Schiller uses the word *empfangen* for receive, and *Empfängnis* is another word for 'conception'.

Codr: Oh, interesting.

Chaouli: So, I think maybe you are onto something there. Richard, please.

Richard Nash: The recent comment about the 'abhorrence' of gambling and the 'horror of gambling' and the most recent comment about fucking has suddenly made Schiller make more sense to me than ever before. [laughter] Because I've been reading this and thinking: "Why on Earth would anyone call this *play*?" I have the hardest time when I'm reading Schiller understanding how what he's describing is play and particularly the more precise version. Why is what I'm hearing you [Chaouli] say—and I think I understand it is what he's describing as play—why is that not "reflex"? That is, that which is not determined by outside rules but is directed by a system of rules within itself, right?—that cannot violate the rule. It strikes me ... I am not understanding a distinction in Schiller's notion of play and what is reflex; and what strikes me as important to play is an *active* mind that *chooses*, that enters into something like reflex. That there is that choice to commit to a kind of spontaneity and that what is striking about play is precisely that move to get out of the binary that would either act by reflex or react by conscious choice where we consciously choose to suspend some of the rigor of conscious choice.

Chaouli: Well I think that is pretty much what he is trying to get at, exactly what you've described; I think you've done it very beautifully. That is the project.

Nash: I'm done. [laughter]

Chaouli: Right. So reflex would be within the realm of physical necessity, right? So you're obeying some other law, the law of whatever: physical, chemical necessity acting upon your body and so we suffer that kind of thing, we are on the receiving end of that (he would say), that's what happens. Somebody shines a bright light into your eyes and you have to blink: that's just, that's a reflex, that's just what happens. So that's precisely *not* the model of play, but the model of play is also not that of rule-following. But it is this funny in-between, I think, a spontaneous way of both receiving and forming at the same time which precisely is meant to heal (as I said), reconcile, whatever... harmonize—he has many words that go in this direction—this riff that he sees. So. You're in agreement, it seems to me... So do you want to jump in on this? Yes, Cornelis...

Van der Haven: ...there is play and then this keeping distance towards this instinct... It's coping with, coping with play and its effects maybe. On this page, 248 for instance, I was just wondering... Play is also nature as given, and we cannot change that we have to cope with it and duty comes out of this nature itself. I was thinking also about distance here equating the distance towards maybe there is also... responding on nature as observing it, and then... The beauty is given, the play is given... [inaudible]

Chaouli: Right. Well, again, I don't want to be the only ... But anyways I'll jump in... It seems to me here that the notion of "education" is the key one that gets you from the given—or is

meant to take you from the given—to the ideal, right? So, sure: things are given. All kinds of things are given: reflexes are given; the social life, he says; we find ourselves in a state of necessity, that's given; all kinds of things are given. But the project is to, for him, to find some way of *moving*, of giving this a direction and the way of doing it is to do it in a reasoned manner. That is, by means of concepts: so that is why this is a pedagogical project. So yeah, you find play and then you *form* it, because you have a particular goal in mind and that is to have a free society. So for him it is *not* sufficient just to register the given, right? It's only late, for him *animal* play comes in the last letter, Letter 27, when he talks about lions playing and what not, and so he says, "Sure, that... that all exists, but that's not what, that's not our endpoint. That's just the beginning point from where, where we then need to take things." So I'm not sure if that helps, but...Robbie?

Robert Schneider: I don't know if this is utterly banal, but I mean, I thought... I mean, to me the thing about Huizinga is that it's so—especially compared to Schiller—it's so, so rich and so deeply historical and anthropological whereas Schiller is so abstract. I mean, when you talk about education of course that fleshes it out a little bit, but it seems to me that one of the things Huizinga... that might be helpful to understand is, or to ask ourselves, is *why* did he take on this particular question, or why was it such a revelation for him and for us? Because it was a kind of, almost discovery and it seems to me that unlike... while Schiller takes us to a very rarefied realm, Huizinga deliberately wants to be as capacious as possible. In that sense I think he's, as a historian, he is sort of reacting to—or is a fellow traveler of—the *Annales* historians, who want to be, who want to sort of deal with, the totality of life in its anthropological and social fullness and yet not to use the Marxist paradigm to do that. And so he's trying to recover the fullness of life and to get away from Man as being the *Homo faber* but having other dimensions and clearly he derives his thinking and his history from others. I mean, Simmel is one influence. But, again, I think that it's at a certain moment in the 30s where there's this project that's shared among various historians to, to sort of join in with sort of the largest, largest and fullest notion of a Marxist project to explain society but not to, not to accept, deliberately to reject, the Marxist definition of man as being economic agent and that's, that's... Just to me it's helpful...

Elmer: And explicitly anthropological...

Schneider: Yes, yes...

Elmer: ... so making extensive use of what was about thirty or forty years of anthropological, rich anthropological data that *all* the thinkers in Europe were using at the time and sort of incorporating it.

Chaouli: Rebecca, you wanted to jump in?

Rebecca Spang: Just that...I don't really know much about Huizinga as a person at all, but when I was reading this text—and it's partially just because I just read this, because I taught it this semester—what it really reminded me of was something more like Frazier and *The Golden Bough*. I mean, the kind of craziness of this, "I take this example from here, and I take this one from here, and I take this this one from here...." Which to me is not at all what the *Annales* School was doing in the Thirties: it's a bit the way Braudel puts together *Civilization and Capitalism*,

but it's not the way he puts together *Mediterranean* and it's certainly not the way that Bloch puts together *Feudal Society*, I don't think.

Schneider: Well, I mean... The project, though, of doing a kind of totalizing history, a social history. It's the same thing with *The Waning of the Middle Ages*... I mean, very, very different, although it is like *The Royal Touch* in that respect, and highly psychological.

Spang: Yeah.

Schneider: ... and not dissimilar from what Bloch does in his other essay.

Chaouli: Fritz?

Breithaupt: That's correct. I mean, I think what I like, what I think is very interesting about Huizinga is one step he adds to Schiller. I think he's actually much, much closer to Schiller, actually, even though he uses a very different language, and I accuse Schiller of being completely obscure too and completely...I mean, full of contradictions actually. But the one thing that I think Huizinga adds is a beautiful question of *fun*. "Why is it fun?" I mean, Schiller is very clear and Schiller and Huizinga would both say, "Okay, the basis of autonomy in *Spiel*, it has its own sphere" and that's what they focus on... they try to figure that out, Huizinga is very good on that, focusing on that to say "Okay, what is playing for playing's sake?" and then both bring in freedom in different ways systematically, but that could be one thing: there's a certain freedom, autonomy and so on and so on. But then Huizinga, also, it's a question of fun: he says "Okay, there must be fun too." That is his objection against psychoanalysis, which also could have "oh it's about freedom, repetition compulsion, so on and so on"—No, no there has to be fun too, otherwise there wouldn't be play and gaming. Of course in this part we have here I don't think he can locate where the fun actually is. . . I would like to come back to this distinction, Jonathan's distinction between the player-participant and the observer: is it the player-participant who is rule-bound? I mean, both say that. Or is it the observer who has the fun? but the observer is kind of also, he can see the freedom of choice, but where's the fun, actually? This is actually a difficult question, I think, but an interesting one, and that's what I like about it; very far away from the *Annales* School too, yeah.

[various indistinguishable voices]

O'Quinn: It's also interesting as well that fun isn't talked about in terms of pleasure. Like he stays away from that language, at least in this translation...[murmurs of agreement]

Breithaupt: Very strongly yes, breaks out of Kant there too...

O'Quinn: ... that seems to be a very important methodological decision: we're not going to talk about pleasure but we have this other category called fun. Does it help to have... he loves examples right?

Dubin: I think that word ["pleasure"] is just too Freudian for him.

O'Quinn: Yeah, I think so. But I'm just trying to imagine this problem of participant-observer through an example, right, like, maybe that... What is the status of exemplarity here? That is the little addition I wanted to add about fun here: what kind of examples of fun will work for him here and which won't?

Chaouli: Well there's the lovely example of participant and observer with the father and the son playing with the... is it a train set? [murmurs of agreement]

Breithaupt: Yeah the train set, exactly.

Codr: They won't believe, the carriages won't believe...

Chaouli: That's right, that's right. This is on page 8 of, and our 47, he found his four-year-old son sitting at the front of a row of chairs playing trains. As he hugged him, the boy said, "Don't kiss the engine, daddy, or the carriages won't think it's real." So the father here is not playing properly, he's not playing along... Sorry, Johannes.

Johannes Türk: Yeah, a few small remarks: what I find interesting is that in Hoy-zing-hah [laughter] is that, is that he doesn't relate tension and fun and that's exactly, I think, the step that Freud will do, right? though he will do it-has he already done it? No, probably not even when Huizinga is beginning to write, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*... So to me Huizinga is basically a huge amassing of different aspects where he tries to, in the end, filter out somehow or distill general categories and that's what makes him so, to me, diffuse in a way, right: that all of those are right but in the end does he really stay with it. And he doesn't answer any of the questions he poses that are really interesting, like for example, Why is it that, what is the seriousness of play? What is the moment of illusion or being immersed within it about? He asks it and asks even what is religious ritual, is it really important that you participate in it? And the only answer that he comes up with, and this is a very interesting line, I think, of his argument, is that "what is certainly not possible over the seriousness of game ends is where someone become the game spoiler". In other words, the problem is not if you tell a religious Catholic, "look it doesn't really matter if your mind is with it or not". The problem is if you question his whole religion and say "Look, this is all ridiculous, because most of you are just going along with it and are not really believing it." But these were just a few points that I found *very* interesting actually in the Huizinga text, at the same time as a whole I found it diffuse.

But Schiller, on the other hand—just because we're rambling along, I'd say that Schiller I find very interesting—and I'll end with a question: I think the reason is the same that Jacques Rancière finds him interesting and he thinks that he's actually one of the most influential and most interesting theoreticians of modern art, and game is an important part of it. That is that Schiller thinks a far too pedagogical but an essential relationship between the freedom of play, aesthetics and politics, and I think he's the first and only one to do it. And he also, in a certain way, this is where the whole Frankfurt school has its origins, I think, because the Frankfurt school will come and do psychoanalysis and relate it to politics and aesthetics in a very similar form that Schiller does and Rancière is, I think, the direct heir of it and he also reads Schiller in many parts. And I find it interesting that, in the end, if you look at his idea of play: of course its normative, it's deeply rooted in the whole idea of a transcendent ideal that goes from Winckelmann runs up through Schiller.

But in the end, I think, his notion of play is performative, and I think that's actually what I find most, what I found most interesting in rereading it, precisely because it's so empty: it *seems* in a way representational, but then he doesn't say anything about it. So in the end what he says about play though, is that it *performs* something in relation to *two* distinct sides of man; and what that is and how it does it, actually, he doesn't say. And I think that makes it actually interesting: the notion that it performs something, namely... it's an act of balancing if you want, and you're right that there's a lot of vocabulary of symmetry that is very strong, and also of complementary symmetric pairs that he sees man or human nature consisting of. But what I think in the end is interesting, is through an inhibition, right, of each of the sides and at the same time a fulfillment, a materialization of a certain, of a playful, a playful materialization or enacting of both of these sides of the human, I think the game *performs* an educational and political task. So that what you seem to be lacking, you know, there's a weak definition of play, it isn't clear what it really is: is it representational, is it participatory? I find that exactly the strength of Schiller because he says it performs a certain *work*, it's a certain space of freedom; it's unclear what that looks like, but it performs something and it enables in a way freedom to materialize itself. And I think... In Huizinga this performative thing is somehow present but it doesn't really... its space is far less clear because in a way he says, "Look, it's just like ritual; it's a separate space; the only one who's clearly outside of it is the game spoiler." There are some rules developing there, but basically I find it more difficult to say actually what play is in Huizinga than I find it in Schiller (because it's even less clear what it performs). Maybe this has not been very helpful [laughter] but I...that's why I think Schiller is actually very interesting. Even though especially his norms especially are very strange and he has also led to a whole history of abuse in German schools and so on, right, [laughter] but if you look beyond that to the theoretical place that he carves out, then I find it very interesting.

Elmer: This is just a little... I may have misheard you, Johannes, but did you say in the beginning that you thought that something lacking in Huizinga's account was an account of play as tension?

Türk: Oh no, I think what Freud does is he relates Kant to the release of tension and that's exactly the step that he [Huizinga] doesn't do, that why fun remains so inexplicably... Such an empiric term that doesn't really have a definition.

Elmer: Well I'm looking at page eleven where he says, "baby reaching for a toy, a little girl playing ball... All want to achieve something difficult: to succeed to end the tension. "

Türk: Right, right.

Elmer: "Play is tense. It is this element of tension's solution that governs all solitary games and skills." So there's a little bit of an account there of the dynamic that you're attributing to Freud.

Spang: Right.

Türk: Yeah.

Elmer: Diffuse is a good word for his argument, certainly; you've got that.

Spang: I don't know enough but I may say it anyway. Both when Richard was describing the way he's always understood Schiller—and then Michel said, “Yes, that's right”—and then just now what Johannes was saying about Schiller. It sounded like the caricature I have in my mind of what the state does for Hegel: that it makes possible different kinds of freedoms and freedoms that are somehow better and greater than the freedoms you might imagine that you have outside the state. So I'm assuming that is how we understand that what Schiller is trying to do here is political? or am I just connecting things that are so unrelated to each other... And, I do [have to ask], just out of ignorance: could somebody tell me more about how Schiller leads to abuse in the German schools? [laughter]

Chaouli: So, I think there are many, many steps between this and the Hegelian project and I think it would take us a very long time to sort all of that out.

Spang: Right, okay.

Chaouli: Abuse I'm not sure about but it certainly leads to programs, and it leads to programs not just in, in German schools, I mean, it seems to me that the reception of this in the English tradition (ending up with Matthew Arnold) is as pedagogical and as institutional... and in fact we live with it, right? With the idea of a canon and Martha Nussbaum's idea that you have better citizens if they read the right kind of books ... I don't... It's a kind of, is a way of cashing this out in terms of an actual curriculum and then you can quarrel about should it be this book or that book, right, so he of course gives no such prescription. But that could be the engine that you might have in mind in terms of producing an actual pedagogical program for making free citizens. And that's in our system all over, it seems to me. Yeah, Jonathan.

Elmer: I have a larger question... just for the, for the room. I don't want to bring out all my hobby horses, at least not...

Nash: The play workshop is the place to do it. [laughter]

Elmer: But the line in Schiller that has always struck me as very potentially fruitful is right above the passage that Dwight read earlier. And it's, I think, a relatively well-known one from the Schiller text, which is the idea that play is the... I think our translation says is “the suppression of time in time”—the translation that I know better as is “the extinction of time in time”—and there's something, we could try and figure out exactly what that means within the dynamics of the Schillerian project and texts and that would be very important to do. But it does seem to me to at least gesture towards the idea of the autonomy of the aesthetic object and the aesthetic experience, both. An autonomy that is precisely the aspect of Romantic-era aesthetics, Kantian aesthetics, etc., etc., that comes under quite a lot of critical treatment at the hands of materialist critics in the twentieth century. That this is precisely the illusion or this is the ideology of the aesthetic: to imagine an autonomy, here specifically a temporal autonomy. Now, but I think it's worth resisting the materialist criticism—at least for a while—to try and think about what this temporal suppression or suspension might be like, I mean, and you can think from the participant's point of view in play there are various... You might think about absorption, you know, a well-described series of phenomena; there are phenomenologies of what it is to be carried away

and lose track. So that's one way of thinking about it but there's also more banal versions, a phenomenology of ... I know right now I'm going to waste twenty minutes playing Angry Birds, and this is the extinction of my work time in time. [laughter] I know I'm doing it, I haven't become absorbed as if I'm losing track, but I am in fact actively destroying time, wasting time, and I'm doing it for a purpose. But, for us, I think an even more interesting version of this, which has to do with the way in which the play experience can or cannot be sutured to a larger account of change over time. So one thing that people playing will do in the face of a spoil sport, they will say: "It's *just* a game. It doesn't mean what you want it to mean. It doesn't allegorize the state. It doesn't provide compensatory ideological supplements, etc. etc...." [laughter] "And if you insist it does that, you are fundamentally ruining my game. You are a spoil sport, or at least you are not playing with me, as an observer of this event." And when you ask the question, Kathryn, "What can historians do with children's play?" I think part of what is in your mind is being respectful, both respectful of an apparent autonomy and a quicksilver vanishing presence that Danny brought up as sort of un-sutureability or un-hookability of this world of children's play. But the need of the historian to in fact produce linkages, to in fact say: "Well, what just happened in the play space has meaning, *is connected* to a larger narrative, and *isn't* to that degree autonomous. It is in fact continuous with." And so this is, I think, a very delicate balancing act because I think many of us want to do both of these things: both respect this phenomenology of the extinction of—and the politics of—an extinction of time in time; to allow play not to mean, not to allegorize, and not to be ideologized or whatever. But also to acknowledge that, in fact, it is always the extinction of time *in time*: it is necessarily a historical phenomenon and so that puzzle is a really... And I think that it's really interesting to go back to some of Danny's questions earlier, or some of the things that begun out of Danny's paper—actually both your papers. It's really interesting to think about the role of the interpreter—whoever the interpreter is, either at the moment or after the fact (as, say, we are interpreters)—in continuing a certain kind of play relation or extinguishing it or ruining it.

Jesse Molesworth: I have a different reading of that, Jonathan...

Elmer: Yeah.

Molesworth: The sensuous impulsion requires that there should be change, that time should have contents; so, in that sense, formal impulsion requires that time should be suppressed, that there should be no change. But the instinct of play would have its time, its object to suppress time *in time* to conciliate a state of transition or becoming with the absolute being, change with identity. So I mean, there is a time, it's just it's a special time, and you know it's something that I'll be talking about later, through Benjamin. But I think the fascinating thing about that is that it's precisely the reverse of Freud where it's the id, that sense of the sensuous, that has no conception of time and it's the superego, the ego, and the rational that has a more chronometric sense of progression.

Elmer: No it is *in time*, I agree.

Chaouli: So Danny wanted to jump in.

O'Quinn: I'm really glad we came to this passage because it's so great, but it strikes me that one of things that Schiller is so sharp on is that he recognizes that the spoilsports aren't outside of the play. In other words, the chief spoil sport is you, right, and that certainly tallies with my own experience of fun, right. Like that it's, it's often... [laughter]

Nash: Always raining on your own parade?

O'Quinn: Yeah. [laughter] No, that there's... That the way the temporality of ...I'm avoiding 'pleasure'...the temporality of 'fun' is... Well it's perhaps best articulated in an example, right: when I'm struggling to dance, that's no fun. [laughter] But when dancing is happening properly, there's no more fun that I can imagine. But I'm very conscious of the fact that that's *my* problem, right: that's a problem of conciliation in me to the rules of the step. So, in other words, one of the things I don't like about the Huizinga chapter is that he's establishing spoil-sports outside of play and that simplifies the scenario, when it seems to me that the spoil-sports are already implied inside the play world. You have to overcome your spoil-sport. And that seems to me what's being stated here quite specifically: how does one both be outside of and inside of time? Because that's the point Schiller is pointing to when he says that—he uses a calculus metaphor to get at it—we can only approach that, we cannot fully enact it. He says that on two or three different occasions. So that would mean—using 'fun' in that regard—fun is an approachable limit, right? Something that we're striving towards. So an aesthetic pleasure would fall into that same limit category which does seem to tally with a lot of, being completely anecdotal, experiences of aesthetic pleasure. It happens in ways we can't predict.

Chaouli: Okay, so with a small thumb let's try to aim for... What was our guideline? One minute? Okay, one minute, so Robbie

Schneider: Okay, so just to rectify: the suppression of time, what I am hearing, is that It's both in and out of time because the awareness of being out of time is part of being aware of being in time. It's also the anticipation; it seems to me that play implies the anticipation of play as well as the nostalgia of having played. So while I think the point is brilliant about being out of time, it also involves a kind of awareness of the boundaries of time in every sense.

Chaouli: Rebecca?

Spang: Moment has passed.

Chaouli: Okay, so can I jump in because my understanding is very different of this, of this passage and it may have something to do with the verb *aufheben*.

Schneider: Okay, the Schiller text?

Chaouli: Right, and it's not 'extinguish' or—what is it?—'suppress,' but it's this magical word that does all of these things.

Elmer: *Aufheben* is the word?

Chaouli: Right.

Codr: Is where... Where is that?

Chaouli: So that's the 'suppress'... *Aufheben* is to preserve it within itself, while overcoming it. 'Sublate' is the Hegelian translation, the term used for the Hegelian *aufheben*. So I read this not at all phenomenologically but this has everything to do with the interplay—I think what you were saying, Jesse—of norms and change over time and material presence. So it's not that you're *aware* of being out of time but you are aware *in* time, or something like that; it's not a question of *awareness* here. Simply that the category of something being fixed, namely let's say a law or a set of rules, is *in play itself*, is there, is being enacted. And that's not an awareness of something being out of time, we're not aware of a law being out of time, we just sort of know that that's true when we think about it. When we analyze the concept of a rule we say "well no, that's not something that's in time." That's how I, that's what it seems to me at least... Again, an internal, an immanent reading of it; I'm not forbidding anybody from thinking phenomenologically about play but I don't think that that's what he's getting at, that kind of experience.

Codr: So could you just say that again? So what do you think he is sort of arguing is happening here when he says "to keep the category of time in time"?

Chaouli: So the way that he sets it up is actually, he's a very schematic thinker; it's quite simple really. So he says, "Look, when we are dealing with material things -and we ourselves are of course a material thing- the only thing that is true is that there's change." That's all that happens on a material level; there is nothing that you can point to and say "well, this is fixed" because in order to do that, you need something like a concept. You need something that's precisely itself not material, right? "Look at this body, it's doing this." Well the body, of course the concept of the body is not itself the body. So the problem is that on the one hand we have this material change but on the other hand we have the realm of concepts, ultimately of laws, and that realm is completely immaterial in his reading of it. The problem that he needs to figure out is that there doesn't seem to be—I put it in terms of gears—there doesn't seem to be a way that these two hook into one another, right? Because either you subjugate the material to the law, in which case you have something totalitarian and draconian; he calls it the barbaric state. Or you have something savage in the sense that all lawfulness is subjected to... Subservient to, sorry, subservient to sensory material and empirical change and that's the, the savage state. So the way that the aesthetic experience, as I understand it, unfolds is that in the experience of the beautiful—which happens in time and that's absolutely right because it is a material, sensory experience, it's not just a concept; it has to happen *in* this world—something like a lawfulness comes into being. And this lawfulness is fully in the grip of this sensory experience, the two are really not distinguishable from one another. So only ideally do we distinguish and say "well that part of it seems to be outside of time, namely that is the lawfulness part, and this part seems to be in time." But they are really only one thing and we are, or he is, analytically pulling them apart. So it's not a phenomenological account, it's a logical account.

Elmer: I agree in that he's a system *macher*... He wants these things to go and that's the battle of the sentences and all the rest of it.

Chaouli: Yes.

Elmer: But that description makes no sense if a phenomenological dimension isn't somehow available as testimony to its correctness. In other words, what you just very elegantly and clearly re-described hinged on the very concept of an aesthetic *experience*. The fusion of the two poles of change and timelessness is something that has no force, even within the terms of the system, outside of the experiential realm.

Chaouli: That's right. And so, Schiller doesn't actually spell this out but the Kantian way of doing this is to say... I mean, that's exactly right. How do I know that this is the case, that this just happened? Well I know because of a particular kind of pleasure that I have. *That* is the index. So I'm not sure if that's the same thing as fun, but it is a bodily experience. It's not that somebody taps me on the shoulder and says, "What just happened?" and I say, "Oh, I think I just had an aesthetic experience because such and such..." [laughter] and I could unfold it. But I *feel* it, in a very particular way that is itself no longer explicable (it seems to me). Or... The quality of that experience could not be listed, features of it could not be taken apart: "it has to be this kind," or whatever. But Schiller never actually says, never speaks about that pleasure. I think he... Well, I don't know why not, I don't know what happens there.

Elmer: Well he certainly, as you pointed out earlier, he doesn't want to talk about in part because all the actual instances he might point to are all imperfect.

Chaouli: Well, yeah... Yes?

Schneider: Where do we get to education, then? I mean, how do you... Because that seems to be operationalized, how do you get from something so ephemeral and ineffable to the project of education?

Chaouli: Well that's a great question because that's completely missing. That is, the operational part of it; the idea of an education is there but the operationalizing awaits basically pedagogical thinkers. But there is no account in here of *how* that scene of education is supposed to take place. Again, in Kant, it's one of infection; which is you see something great and it, it infects you. That's how you learn. But he doesn't really spell that out. Yeah, Johannes... Oh sorry...

Türk: Was Fritz first?

Breithaupt: You can go first.

Türk: Okay, I think part of the problem that comes with interpretation of Schiller...

Chaouli: Wait; this is a little comment, yes?

Türk: It's small. [laughter]

Chaouli: Okay.

Türk: Part of the problem that comes with Schiller is that he actually doesn't claim to *know* the historic state to which the transition is made. In other words he analyzes, you know, alienation—it's the first analysis of alienation that he gives in these letters—and then he says, "Look there's this fear in which, because of human nature, a transition becomes possible." But he doesn't know where to. Therefore part of what can be read as normativity is also simply the difficulties that come with the description of the future, which is not clear. But I, I hope it's clear what I mean by that: it's simply that he says, "All the really existing games point to the possibility of real play, but it hasn't manifested itself." And that's why it's actually a more intricate text than I think it's often read to be.

Chaouli: Fritz.

Breithaupt: I have the opposing view here. [laughter] I think, and I will try to make this in one minute, what Michel was doing is reading it [Schiller's text] via the Kantian avenue to say there's a thought between these two extremes—I mean an experience, an aesthetic experience—and you were very fairly marked that Schiller, of course, doesn't spell this out. And I think he doesn't because it's really much more schematic, he doesn't have this middle ground. If it is something, I think it's actually—that's why I'm not agreeing with Johannes either here—I think it's for him the logic of dis-play. The stage: that's all that Schiller has to offer for this middle ground; it's not experience, not something as sensation or something... Just dis-play which is something you can display in extreme opposite. It is the *Schaubühne*, it is the moment of—not "play" in that sense—but really just "display," showing something. Which also has a pedagogical side to it, that's the link to pedagogy for us, the display: put it, make it visible, even in the contradiction, and that's as if it were to suddenly come together somehow. But it's a trick and I think it doesn't work. But it has (last five seconds, then) it also is interesting, it brings me back to... Is your name Anne? [murmurs of agreement] I wasn't sure... The question of narrative which is completely different we haven't really come to *spiel* and narrative distinctions yet; I'm sure we'll do it in the next couple days. Schiller is the wrong way, there's something else there we have yet to discuss, but...

Chaouli: Richard, I have you down for a big comment which I think we have time for. Please.

Nash: When I raised my hand, I wanted to come in on the little interplay between Johannes and Jonathan via Huizinga, and I thought at the time it was to talk about something that I have a feeling we haven't really been paying attention to. That is, I've been sitting here waiting to figure out how to say this, and I've begun to wonder: Is it that we haven't been paying attention to it or is it all that we've been paying attention to in ways that I can't quite follow (which may be the case). But we've not spent a lot of time talking directly about what it means to play well, about being good at play. We've tended to talk about play as though play is just something we do, and that we all do it and that there's no real qualitative difference in play. I don't believe in that sort of thing. [laughter] In the passage on page 11 of Huizinga that Jonathan pointed to as being about tension, a passage that is itself an interruption of the description of the spoilsport, so that it's worth thinking about where that functions. He writes:

The element of tension in play to which we have just referred plays a particularly important part. Tension means uncertainty, chanciness; a striving to decide the is-

sue and so end it. The player wants something to ‘go,’ to ‘come off’; he wants to ‘succeed’ by his own exertions. Baby reaching for a toy, pussy patting a bobbin, a little girl playing ball—all want to achieve something difficult, to succeed, to end a tension.

A *better* theorist of play, the Grandmaster Max Euwe, said: “Amateurs dissipate tension, masters sustain it.” He was talking about chess, but he could have been talking about foreplay; he certainly could have been talking about fun. [laughter] And it seems to me that I just wanted to bring into this particular moment that question about there’s more to tension than trying to get rid of it and that that’s an important part of playing well. [murmurs of agreement]

Spang: I had said on the program that we would end at 5:45 (PM), and it seems as if we have come to a logical concluding point.

Nash: Foreplay’s always a good place to stop. [extensive laughter]

Spang: Right, where we’re all so tense thinking what somebody could say that would be better than that. So, let me just make a few announcements. The most important: is if you want to *vote* tomorrow in the debate, blue sticks are two dollars. That’s the most important announcement. Other announcements... [it was arranged that Jonathan Elmer and Richard Nash would drive visitors to Rob Schneider’s house for the potluck dinner in the evening] Jesse, if you want to send along some red pencils? ...Richard may not let people into his car unless they take a green one. ... [remember] you don’t get in the room for the debate tomorrow without a stick. If you want to be here, you need a stick.

Nash: And the price is going up!