

The Game of Non-Formal Pedagogy
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"Play and playfulness" have been "detected" in the activities and attitudes that inform one of the most important characteristics of Non-formal Education. They configure the Non-Formal Pedagogic narrative as a discourse of ambiguity. This presentation, based on a study of the cultural niche enlarged by venues of Informal Learning (e.g., Museums, After-School programs) "stops" at the threshold of the temptation to dive into the relationship between Informal Learning and Digital Media. It assumes that this cultural niche, by its ambiguous, simulative elements, exposes deconstructing dynamics that, even if only at the level of potentiality, allows a kind of denaturalizing gaze at reality and knowledge. Simulation "*outed*" can trace an "*a-venir*" that, according to Derrida (2002), informs the veritable future with an unexpected freshness.

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“How, then, are we to revolutionize an order whose very principle is constant self-revolutionizing? Perhaps, this is the *question* today...”
Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without bodies: On Deleuze and consequences*, 2004, p. 213.

Introduction

This Conference on "Informal Learning and Digital Media: Construction, Structures and Consequences" openly declared in its "Call for Papers" that school no longer holds a monopoly on education; that learning is distributed across a range of sites and settings and that the media as well as ICTs have important stakes in this process of diversification.

This essay's title – "The Game of Non-Formal Pedagogy" – and its contents, to be presented during the above conference, are a kind of "stop" at the threshold of temptations flaunted by Video Game designers and researchers to dive into the seemingly unlimited ocean of possibilities for learning in Multi Media Digital environments. Video and Computer Games, as one of several ICT platforms, indeed play an important role in the increasing recognition of learning's distribution across settings. Stopping to observe informal learning as denominating learning activities taking place in a variety of loci – Museums, After-School programs, the Web and Social/Civic Projects (Bekerman, Burbules and Silberman – Keller, 2006) – is a reminder of the cultural environment and protocols that enable new technologies to increase the variety and modality of learning places. In these Cultural environments, Informal learning definitions variegated by folding and unfolding the contexts where informal learning takes place (Silberman – Keller, 2004; Duesing, 2006) albeit their enfolding of some common characteristics. Among them: self-motivation and intentionality; identity, agency and belonging, participation

encouragement, knowledge and skills acquisition, characteristics found to reward the voluntary joining of educational activities. The range of themes amenable to Informal learning is unlimited, although informal learning has been found to be situational and phenomenological (Lave and Wenger, 1982; Silberman Keller, 2004).

This is so because Informal learning is mediated by objects and instruments, not only by persons, text or oral discourse; it combines practical performance and theoretical knowledge conjugated in collaborative communities of practice. Some researchers even suggest that in the relationship between formal and informal learning, Informal learning offers voluntary learning, a different authority relation between children and adults, fun accompanying work and alternative places for identity formation (Hull & Greeno, 2006).

The Human processing of knowledge has indeed been widely enriched by the practice and research of informal learning. It is in this venue that this paper proposes considering the pedagogical aspects of Informal learning.

My argument assumes that every act of learning is generated by a pedagogical narrative, reflected in its learning practices (Silberman – Keller, 2004). These narratives and practices are subject to transformation and change; they nevertheless leave traces that constitute the cultural niche nurturing these narratives, their very existence and public acceptance (see: Rogoff, 2003; Maynard & Greenfield, 2006). If so, then stopping at the threshold of ITC-generated Informal learning is intended to recompile some of the traces remaining in modern and post-modern informal learning as reminders of veteran human learning modalities. Because standardization is what drives formal education systems, the variety of human learning modalities is usually left behind. Thus, the necessity to remind

us of the variety of human ways of learning is what epistemologically guides the research and inscription of the Non-Formal pedagogy narrative.

Non-Formal Pedagogy is generated and reflected by four main meta-narratives:

1. *Time and Place figures* as "organizing" the learning scene.
2. *Conversing Circles* as constituting the learning setting.
3. *Phenomenological learning* as describing learning contents' "organization".

(Silberman – Keller, 2003; 2006).

4. *Play and Playfulness* as constituting and enveloping the learning activities' cultural location.

The purpose of this essay is to unfold play and playfulness – and thus games – as one meta-narrative of Non-Formal Pedagogy. Playful practices are integrated across the spectrum of non-formal educational activities. They have been found to shape the bond between reality and probability by expanding the notion of what belongs within the bounds of plausible reality.

Through games, play and playfulness, Non-formal pedagogy eradicates its characteristics as overage, as the recognized image of what education is, thus providing a unique definition of the very term *education*. This definition can be linked to traces of the quasi-common source of *play* and *education* that has evolved over time and been partially erased or perhaps reframed – similar to the fate of sports, theater or festivities at school – in mass educational systems.

By driving further the critical and clear differentiation between Formal and Non-formal education in distinctive spaces, times, institutions, contents, staff and so forth, I assume that non-formal pedagogy—and therefore non-formal education—with games, play and

playfulness as its identifiers, has a socio-cultural, political and economic role in configuring a relatively flexible control system. This system disguises and then blurs its educational functions by “freeing” practices that enlarge the possibilities of maintaining socio-cultural-political order, as stipulated by the carnival tradition. The *disorder* embodied by non-formal pedagogy is, then, situated within a distinctive framework of place and time (Silberman-Keller, 2005) that allows just the amount of disorder that societies and cultures can or wish to absorb.

I

Games, Play and Playfulness from within Non-formal Pedagogy

Non-formal Pedagogy is composed of social and cultural practices performed by people; sometimes, by involving artifacts, they are also purposely developed by people to create learning situations such as seen, for instance, in museum visit circuits or popular sporting events. These activities are not always considered to be education or linked to pedagogy in an overt way. Nevertheless, Non-formal Pedagogy guides the educational activities taking place in community centers, youth movements and organizations, museums and science centers, social clubs and nets, advocacy organizations and institutions, training centers, departments of youth, culture and sports in national ministries and local government agencies – in addition to social groups and communities linked to the Web, among others.

Four patterns of play in non-formal educational activities emerged from the study on which this essay is based:

1. *Guided play* from the time the group assembles until the activity begins:
These acts differentiate between ordinary life and the educational activity about to take place.

2. *Triggers* to launch activities: Playful acts-events and objects that invite the broad and all-encompassing openness of circular conversations.
3. *Games as experiential components* of the activity itself: Games serve as a means to demonstrate a condition or to experience the topic of discussion as well as elements in the teaching-learning discourse.
4. *Spontaneous games* external to the planned educational activity: The considerable use of games in educational activities may well inspire a play atmosphere that, in turn, invites spontaneous and undirected games (such as ping pong, soccer, basketball, board games, hopscotch and catch) that are played during recess or before and after an activity.

These modalities generate and are generated by play, games and playfulness as they fold and unfold in the complete educational situation emerging in the passage from work, school or other formal activity to non-formal education. “Free time” and “like home” chronotopes (Silberman-Keller, 2005) create a uniquely permissive atmosphere, making it possible to “wear” the interchangeable identities and roles that enlarge formal behavioral repertoires.

Numerous types of games are proposed in the activity manuals and guidebooks produced by the youth movements, community centers and government agencies offering cultural and sports activities geared to young people. The modularity characteristic of the instructions for these games sets the tone for how to deconstruct and then reconstruct those same games. This practice offers a variety of game prototypes to be applied innovatively in other settings as well. Thus, an extremely broad repertoire of games that operate according to the principles of non-formal pedagogy is available for use by

educational organizations. Usually, supplemental instructions are included in the repertoire to facilitate integrating other games in whole or in part. These instructions also enhance the capacity for ongoing invention and assembly, often referred to as “creativity” in the non-formal ethos.

Following is a partial list of the games mentioned in these manuals: bingo, strategy games, riddles, relay races, dominoes, quiz shows, crossword puzzles, word searches, brain teasers, mosaics, model-building, paper-bag dramatics, grapevine, skits, scavenger hunts, catch, treasure hunts, auctions, role-playing, amusement park games, ball games, board games and even computer games.

This wide assortment of games can be categorized according to the prototypes constructed by Callois (1961): Games of conflict (*agon*), Games of chance (*alea*), Games of mimicry and Games of vertigo (*ilinx*). According to Callois, the shared significance of games of “*agon*” and “*alea*” is complementarity. Both conform to the consistency introduced by creating initially absolutely equal conditions for all players. In real life, equality is usually denied to players because "nothing is clear in life" and everything is "confusing" at the outset, including the taking of chances and trying. Games, whether based on conflict or on chance, therefore represent an attempt to generate the ultimate alternative to the confusion of everyday life by creating an ideal set of circumstances. The shared and intersecting tendencies identified in the games played in the organizations studied, together with the prototypes identified by Callois, represent a list of practices to be classified according to the educational objectives to be achieved by those games. Indeed, the game manuals analyzed in this study explicitly outline each game’s anticipated educational achievements, which are integrated into the entire scope of

educational activities. These achievements include: improving accuracy, reliability, workmanship, creativity, punctuality and obedience; developing individual opinions and formulating them in arguments; creating consensus; improving reading and critical reading skills; enhancing mathematical abilities; developing physical and motor skills; generating identification and empathy; acquiring knowledge and information; orienting the self in space; developing imagination and conversational capacities. These desirable educational outcomes are termed the *game objectives*. Often, games of vertigo and of chance are integrated into educational activities in order to meet these same objectives. In Non-formal Pedagogy, some types of educational games (games of competition and mimicry) may co-exist with their opposite (games of chance and vertigo) (due to, among other reasons, play's dominant role in this pedagogy, a pedagogy that appears to endorse its educational nature while simultaneously repudiating it).

It appears that the political ideology guiding educational organizations permeate play and games, which convey clues to the type of ideology that different ideological-educational institutions apply in their activities. We can accordingly distinguish a continuum of institutional types. At one end of the continuum are educational organizations with a static ideology marked by clear, naturalized and unequivocal beliefs. At the other end are organizations espousing dynamic ideologies and consciousness of their own ideological orientation (Walford, 1991). These organizations tend to be more ideologically diverse and hence more permissive and flexible.

Stasis, when a component of ideologies, is related to the ideology's topical repertoire; static ideologies foster the survival, enhancement and preservation of the group.

Consider, for example, educational organizations that promote the national, ethnic,

religious and cultural views of the social group in which they are embedded. To perfect and preserve the means and resources for implementing group survival and unity, such organizations must distinguish between the pertinent group and other groups in society. They therefore initiate outward, external behaviors aimed at rigid delineation of boundaries.

Dynamic – as opposed to static – ideological content is characterized by a conceptual direction according to which the causes of any injustice that restricts possibilities for group existence are attributed primarily to internal social variables. This approach fosters internal reflection and supports change, whether gradual or radical, in order to expand the group's living space.

Games and play are thus generally subsumed to the ideological aims and objectives of the non-formal educational institution in which they are activated. Group survival and cohesion will be taught and learnt through games and play in educational institutions fostering static ideologies. In contrast, the methodical use of play and games in educational institutions espousing dynamic ideologies will be targeted at arousing the development of critical attitudes.

Most of the non-formal educational activities that involve play and playfulness usually turn to recommendations or previous knowledge, linked to the participant's age. This play and playfulness is commonly linked to the relationship between age and types of play/games conceived by Jean Piaget (1991) and organized into three main groups: exercise, symbolic and rule-directed. This classification, which is assumed to apply into and throughout adulthood, is taken into account primarily when making decisions regarding the choice of games, that is, when considering the client's age, assumed state of

development, the game's educational aims and—of course—institutional ideologies and values. Thus, the organized picture or text received when studying games, play and playfulness in non-formal pedagogy is, at a first glance, a kind of denial of those elements associatively linked to play as free activity.

The definitions of game, play and playfulness found in the work of acted thinkers such as Huizinga, for example, who defined play as a free activity, without reward and objectives can help deepen our understanding of these activities' inclusion in specific pedagogies. Due to the dichotomies inherent in play and game, pedagogies can delimit some play and game characteristics while simultaneously applying them to characterize the very same pedagogy.

II

Game and Play: Their impact on Non-formal Pedagogy

Attitudes toward play and games divide thinkers into those who, like Goffman (1959), totalize the intermitting linkages between human social behavior and individual play, and those who, like Roger Callois (1961), differentiate between play and game as separate activities and characterize their functioning in normative or transgressive modalities. According to Callois, play is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it; alternatively, games proceed within their own proper boundaries of time and space, according to fixed rules and an orderly program. Games promote the formation of social groupings stressing their difference from the common world by disguise or other means.

Gonzalo Frasca, who coined the term *ludology* to represent a theory to guide the research of video games, deals with the differences between the narration and simulation characterizing video games in terms of replicating more than telling stories. According to Frasca, the potential of simulation is not as a conveyor of values but as a method to explore the mechanics of dynamic systems. Simulations also have particularities and referents, but their main characteristic is that they allow the tweaking and changing of the original model. Certainly, a reader can extrapolate the characteristics of a novel's protagonists and settings to model the story's ideological rules. Although this is an option in narrative, reserved for sophisticated readers, it is a requirement in simulations. "Simulation is an ideal medium for exposing rules rather than particular events" (Frasca, 2003).

Callois's definition of play and game, and Frasca's differentiation between narrative and simulation as a central effect caused by games, are useful for understanding play/game as teaching/learning devices that are relatively free, separate, uncertain, unproductive, governed by rules and make-believe on the one hand, and influence these modalities' devices on their performance on the other. That is, the play/game's social roles and functionalities advance simulation more than narrative. Going one step further, we should recall that the etymological intimacy existing between play and education was already stressed in Plato's *Republic*, a work that analyzed the relationship between play and education to help advance deep understanding of these roles and functionalities. Krentz (1998) has reminded us that the well-known relationships between education, culture, and children's play are also quite intimate. *Paideia*, the word for education/culture, *paidia*, the word for play/game/pastime/sport, and *paides*, the word for children, have the same

root; moreover, the three terms often appear in the same context. According to the Platonic tradition, the central aim of pedagogy (*paidagogia*) is to encourage learning as a form of play (*paidia*), the most persuasive and effective approach for free citizens to learn in a society that honors philosophers (Krentz, 2003).

For Socrates (or Plato), play, the best of all methods of instruction, is to be practiced freely but not randomly. While Plato admits the presence of frivolous play or simple amusement, he is a firm advocate of motivated play, geared toward the growth and development of individuals who would subsequently contribute to a just society and to the idea of the Good. Socrates, furthermore, does not view the notions work and play as oppositions. Through playful dialogue, he helps others see the truth. Dialectic, the final stage of a philosopher's education, is also serious play. The very topic of the *Republic* – a just life in a just society – reveals a Socrates addressing a serious issue in a playful frame: He jokes with Adeimantos and Glaucon, he uses allegories, comparisons and irony. He paradoxically points out that the construction of the ideal city is a form of "play" and a game (Livescu, 2003).

Adding to the etymological relationship between play, education and culture, Livescu (2003) stresses that play has fulfilled an important role in the thinking and writing of literary critics, anthropologists, philosophers and cultural theorists who have expressed a deep interest in the ludic aspect of human consciousness. During different periods, the implications of ludic or playful activity took various turns. In effect, the idea of play occupies a central role within the activity of discovering or encountering knowledge (worldly knowledge, extra-sensory knowledge, self-knowledge, etc.). A short journey into various philosophical explorations of the concept leads to the conclusion that this

term is as ultimate in its importance as traditional philosophical concepts, for instance, truth, knowledge, meaning and value. Moreover, contemporary critical attitudes are advancing play/interplay/multiple play as a quintessential dimension of serious action, or as an inherent, necessary, ubiquitous aspect of human artistic as well as non-artistic expression (Livescu, 2003).

Continuing Livescu's line of argument, it seems to me that a cornerstone for our understanding of the relationship between play and Non-formal Pedagogy, as will be discussed further on, is Bakhtin's (1994) definition of *carnival*, meaning play as a practice of disguising and masking identities. In antiquity and the Middle Ages, carnival promoted the profane, vulgar and grotesque, the celebration of wine, dance, and the obscene as expressions of resistance to the official high culture professed by the nobility, the Church and the State.

Gathering some important features from these definitions and attitudes toward games, play and playfulness and what they say or inscribe for non-formal pedagogy, it is possible to identify traces of each of these definitions and attitudes in the practice of Non-formal Pedagogy. Non-formal Pedagogy favors free affiliation and participation in educational activities but delimits behavior according to the ethos of the educational institution in which it is performed. Participants can "wear masks" and fill roles that differ from their roles in everyday life; educational settings sometime embody "alternative" worlds, making simulation the rule of the pedagogical game; aims and objectives are not always achieved and numerical evaluation does not exist. Once inside the educational activity,

participants contribute to the “reality”—not its "serious" facets but the make-believe of the situation.

The majority of participants do not perceive the resemblance of formal to non-formal educational activities; their current attitude is to prefer the latter. Were it in their power, they would annul schools and formal institutions, capturing in this wish a gesture of resistance. Some would prefer concealment of those activities from public knowledge, consciously identifying this resistance as a rarely accepted practice. Considering themselves as different from school teachers, for instance, they could characterize their work as imaginative, creative, original, flexible and playful and, because of that, as better than school educational activities.

I have no doubt about the level of belief and conviction participants in non-formal educational activities have in the game and play ethos that they experience or experienced in the past. However, what is most striking is that instead of finding radical and critical thinkers or activists among the majority of those participants, what customarily characterizes these groups is their exemplary civic behavior. They transfer the ideological values practiced in non-formal educational experiences to their formal functions without recognizing the continuities and exhibit a salient tendency to aspire to leadership or high-ranking administrative positions (Shapira & Adler, 1981). These findings appear to be a univocal approval of the Platonic/Socratic stipulations about play in education and their contribution to the Ideal Republic. Yet, by adapting Foucault’s vision of power, it is possible to conclude that non-formal education is merely a carnival, a parade, a wonderful device where disguised order functions to socialize the majority of

Non-formal Pedagogy's followers for conformity and consensus. Still, it remains worthwhile to closely observe the ambiguity created by the crucial involvement of games and play in non-formal pedagogy as a result of their capacities to create dis-order and their antithetical foment of order and conformity.

III

Non-formal Pedagogy: Ambiguous modalities and their functions

The work of Sutton-Smith (1997) addresses the inherent ambiguity of play and identifies it as a cultural phenomenon. His insights have helped me understand the essential and overriding ambiguity of Non-formal Pedagogy as well. Sutton-Smith bases his work on Empson's typology (1947) of ambiguity, adding the notion of play as representing a variety of game forms and experiences, of players, of play agencies and forums, and of theoretical approaches to play. Sutton-Smith applied all Empson's seven categories to an examination of the ideologies guiding game practice as well as game theory, leading to the conclusion that they are inseparably linked to the game's fundamental meaning.

Sutton-Smith (1997) consequently identified seven types of *play rhetoric*: (1) *play as progress*: advocating the notion that animals and children—but not adults—adapt and develop through play; (2) *play as fate*: applied to gambling and games of chance, this type contrasts totally with the rhetoric of progress; (3) *play as power*: observed as sports, athletics and contests it is—like fate, community identity and frivolity—a rhetoric of ancient hue; (4) *play as identity*: generally applied to traditional celebrations and festivals, the play tradition is seen as a means for confirming, maintaining, or advancing the power and identity of the community of players; (5) *play as imagination*: as improvisation of all kinds found in literature and elsewhere, this rhetoric idealizes the

flexibility, imagination and creativity of the animal and human worlds of play; (6) *play as self*: solitary activities such as hobbies or high-risk behaviors like bungee jumping that, though not necessarily limited to these, idealizes the experiences desired by the players, their fun, relaxation or escape, and the intrinsic or aesthetic satisfactions of the play's performance; and (7) *play as frivolity*: usually applied to idle or foolish activities, frivolity is not solely a puritanic negative but also a term applied to historical tricksters (figures and fools) who were once the central, carnivalesque figures enacting playful protest against the ordained world. According to Sutton-Smith (1997), all these forms of play, together with their rhetorical names, stress—as discourse—that every rhetoric represents ideological values. Those espousing a particular ideology, whether in the form of theories or of games, live accordingly and attempt to convince others to believe in them as well.

The insights found in Sutton-Smith's research help to characterize Non-formal Pedagogy. These same seven *rhetorics* are evident on many occasions and at many levels in the planned educational activities of the non-formal educational organizations examined in my study. Thus, the ambiguity inherent in play as a phenomenon shaped by different and often contradictory rhetorics is also part of Non-formal Pedagogy.

Like other practices in Non-formal Pedagogy (conversation or phenomenological teaching and learning, etc.), not only do play and game project its existence as a routine and frequent practice, it also lends significance to Non-formal Pedagogy as education.

Play and game thus represent a content learned through experience. If so, what is the significance of this essentially ambiguous playfulness as learned content in non-formal pedagogy?

When adding playfulness to typical questions whose answers comprise the narrative of every pedagogy—What is learned? Who does the learning? Who teaches whom? —the results obscure unequivocal responses and project ambivalence with respect to the routine and customary answers typical of contemporary society. The educational activities initiated by non-formal pedagogy take place outside what is defined as the compulsory timetable and in a variety of locations that are not necessarily identified as learning sites. These activities, sometimes guided by certified educators and sometimes by friends and peers, are performed by means of a discourse that obscures the accepted forms of discourse perceived as part of traditional, formal learning. Therefore, if we consider teaching and learning as shaping a way of relating to reality that is in itself learned content, the forms of play in Non-formal Pedagogy also shape the bond between reality and possibility by expanding the notion of what is considered to lie within the bounds of plausible reality.

In this sense, Non-formal Pedagogy is also a simulation of sorts. It appears to be education, for along with motivating and maintaining non-formal education, at the core of its practice it engenders logical contrasts : learning/not learning, serious/not serious, methodical/not methodical, realistic/unrealistic, knowledge/no knowledge, content/no content, place/no place, time/no time, teaching/no teaching. These contrasts simultaneously construct and deconstruct Non-formal Pedagogy. This is a pedagogy that represents what is different as opposed to that which is socially and culturally

unequivocal, specifically, that which is accepted as serious, realistic and systematic learning, taught at specific times and places with understandable contents. Non-formal Pedagogy is therefore assumed to be the antithesis of all that characterizes learning in school.

Social caveats with respect to the essential playfulness of Non-formal Pedagogy are interwoven with attitudes toward play and game themselves, their rhetoric and their ambiguity, thus defining non-formal pedagogy not only as a mechanism for change or as an experimental "arsenal" of repertoires but, rather, as a symbolic system that has instigated a different education, one that is both declarative and performative.

This is not to say that there are no connections between formal and non-formal education; in effect, there are, but in various configurations and quantities. Yet, together or separately, their singularities can only become clear upon realizing that they are, indeed, two separate educations, one providing the conventional and canonical definition of education and related terms; the other serving to interpret the components of education in a distinctive way. It is the very discrepancy between the two that enables each to be a factor in the self-definition of the other.

Conclusion

In his book on board games, David Parlett (1999) expands on Houssaye's statement in *The Playing Man*: "Every game has its own rules." Parlett thus determines that "every game *is* its rules, for they are what define it". This statement is applicable to pedagogies as well in that they are identified, differentiated, and managed according to their content and behavior, which determine their very nature. Thus, Non-formal Pedagogy as well is defined by its practices.

In this essay, I have considered game, play and playfulness as central practices found in most non-formal teaching and learning. Hence, through its practice, Non-formal Pedagogy exhibits a harmony of sorts that amalgamates the goals, means and processes of educational activities. This harmony converts practice into educational content, which benefits from its clearly simulative nature.

The simulative nature of Non-formal Pedagogy can be understood from the fact that it presents itself as an alternative to what has emerged to date as the almost exclusive connotation of education since the nineteenth century, manifested in school and in formal education. This alternative is expressed in the positioning of practices that shape and are shaped by the use of play as one of the central educational practices according to which Non-formal Pedagogy operates. Its functioning engenders numerous similarities and contrasts: between life and learning, between reality and play, between formal knowledge/information and conversation, between spontaneity and structured planning, between compulsory time and leisure time, between formal institutions and “anywhere” as a venue for education, between individual and group, between instructor/teacher and facilitator, between experience and academic studies, between social, cultural and political ideologies and objective information and knowledge. Consistent with non-formal pedagogy, all these contrasts are designed to shape the activities of an education that envisions a specific way of seeing and being in the world. It enables participants—with a generous dose of permissiveness, for this is not ostensibly the “usual place for learning”—to develop and practice unique skills for learning and for decision making and, by so doing, to explore alternative ways to frame their identity, apply their

intellectual and social empowerment and nurture their emerging learning in a variety of fields.

Accordingly, the activities emerging from these comparisons and contrasts appear to cancel the impression of simulation because they are not play-acted but, rather, assume a realism according to which there are no games and no players in the usual sense of these terms. This occurs because such educational activities are not designed merely to elicit pleasure, enjoyment or social strife, but also to offer a different type of practice, experience and training than what is offered by "real life." Hence, non-formal educational workers do not consider themselves to be "actors"/"players" or "simulators." They are distinguished by their seriousness, sense of commitment, outstanding planning and bold implementation.

This seriousness can also be seen among the participants in these activities. Perhaps, at the height of the simulation, as in games of competition and chance, this seriousness contributes to what Callois (1961, p. 63) has referred to as "...the creation for the players of conditions of pure equality denied them in real life. For nothing in life is clear, since everything is confused from the very beginning, luck and merit, too. Play, whether *agon* or *alea*, is thus an attempt to substitute perfect situations for the normal confusion of contemporary life...."

The ambiguity typical of Non-formal Pedagogy is nourished by its practices, just as its practices are fed by this ambiguity. Indeed, it is ambiguity that reinforces the institutionalization of formal in addition to Non-formal Pedagogy. This attribute of non-formal pedagogy grants it its social-cultural significance and enables it to be recognized by those engaged in it as well as by the general public.

Still, the intermitting relationship between play and education, by concealing and revealing significances and functioning, generates and perpetuates a deconstructing dynamics that even if only at the level of potentiality, allows a kind of denaturalizing gaze toward reality. Zizek's (2004) "to be or not to be," the final sentence in his *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences*, taken as this essay's motto, raises the possibility of re-considering games and play functions within and outside pedagogies, perhaps in a direction that will direct their silent functioning toward re-view of their toward exposure of their rules".

This practice of exposing game rules is among the most recent news generated by the electronic games industry. "Modding" (modifying) electronic games, that is, creating new games from existing games, is indeed the name of the game that allows playing with game rules.

Uncovered simulation will probably allow distinctions to be made between the kind and how of educational, social, cultural and political contents that combine into practices in Non-formal Pedagogy. Simulation "outed" could trace an "a-venir" that, according to Derrida, is the veritable future (Derrida, 2002), an unexpected freshness.

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