The Game Game

Mary Midgley

> Some people talk about football as if it were life or death itself, but it is much more serious than that.
>
> Bill Shankly, Manager of Liverpool Football Club.

Some time ago, an Innocent Bystander, after glancing through a copy of *Mind*, asked me, 'Why do philosophers talk so much about Games? Do they play them a lot or something?'

Well, why do they? Broadly, because they are often discussing situations where there are rules, but where we are not now sure why the rules have to be obeyed. Treating them as Rules of a Game fends off this problem for the time. And should it turn out that the reasons for playing games are in fact perfectly simple, it might even solve it completely. This hope shines through such discussions as Hare's on *The Promising Game*,[1] which suggested that our duty to keep promises was simply part of the Game or Institution of Promising, and if we decided *not* to play that game, the duty would vanish. That suggestion is the starting-point of this paper. It has made me ask, all right, what sort of need *is* the need to obey the rules of games? Why start? Why not cheat? What is the sanction? And again, how would things go if we decided tomorrow *not* to play the Promising Game, or the Marriage Game or the Property Game?[2] What is gained by calling them games? What, in fact, *is* a Game?

Problems about Definition and Generality come up here. Can such general questions be asked at all? They come up with special force, because of two diverging elements in the philosophic talk of Games. On my right, apparently, games are things we can say very little about; on my left, they are things we can talk of boldly. On my right, that is, Wittgenstein uses Games as the prime example of something which we cannot define—a set of things so various as to have no element in common, linked only by a meandering string of Family Resemblances with no underlying unity at all.[3] As Bambrough[4] says (interpreting Wittgenstein), all that games

[1] *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, no. 70 (1964). Reprinted in *Theories of Ethics*, ed. P. Foot, O.U.P., 1967. I shall call it henceforth PG, with pages as in *Theories of Ethics*. My objections obviously extend to the rather more subtle uses of 'game' by writers like Winch, and in part also to Phillips and Mounce's notion of a 'Moral Practice'.

[2] See the closing pages of Searle's 'How to Derive Ought from Is' for the assimilation of Marriage and Property to Promising. Hare seems to accept this (*Philosophical Review*, **73** (1964), *Theories of Ethics*, p. 112).

[3] *Philosophical Investigations*, §67.

[4] 'Universals and Family Resemblances', *PAS*, **LXI** (1960–61).

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have in common is that they are games. On my left we have a number of people (including Wittgenstein) who suggest that we do have a clear grasp of the underlying unity, by using metaphorical phrases like 'language game'. Now Metaphor is hardly possible where we don't have a pretty clear, positive idea of the root notion. To give a parallel, when the early Church spoke of Christ as the Light of the World, the metaphor succeeded because people knew very well what lights had in common (namely a certain relation to the things and people lit) although if you think about the differences between lights you might find they varied as much in detail as Games do. Or again, to pick up the point about Family Resemblances, it is possible to use the term Borgia as a metaphor because we take the Borgias to have had something in common apart from being linked by their family resemblances. If I say 'for goodness' sake don't go to supper with him: he's a sort of a Borgia', my metaphor works, but if I substitute Jones or any other surname where we know only a string of family resemblances, it won't work. In the same way, philosophers must know what the underlying unity between things called 'games' is if their constant use of this metaphor is to be justified. When Wittgenstein considered the problem of finding 'one thing in common' between all the various games, he noted the shifting network of surface similarities, and said:

> I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than 'family resemblances'; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc., etc., overlap and criss-cross in the same way.—And I shall say: 'games' form a family (*Philosophical Investigations*, §67; cf. *Blue Book* pp. 17–18).

But to *form a family* is quite a different thing from *having a family resemblance*. Elliots need not have the Elliot Countenance at all; they may be quite untypical, and plausible looking Tichborne Claimants need not be Tichbornes. A family is a functional group with a concentric structure, a centre, and well understood rules governing the claims of outlying members. This difference becomes still clearer with Wittgenstein's next simile of the Thread:

> And we extend our concept [of number] as in spinning a thread we twist fibre on fibre. And the strength of the thread does not reside in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres.

But threads must end somewhere; how do we know when to cut them off? This argument proves too much. As Kovesi remarks:

> I do not see any foundation for a claim that we call both football and chess 'games' because football is played with a ball, and so is tennis, while tennis is played by two people, and so is chess. Not only is this

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> insufficient to explain that connection between football and chess which makes both of them games, but this way we could connect everything to everything else. We could turn off at a tangent at every similarity and what we would get in the end would not be a rope but a mesh. Balls, cannonballs, were used to bombard cities, and duelling is a matter for two people. What we need in order to understand the notion of a game or the notion of murder is what I call the formal element. This is what enables us to follow a rule (Kovesi, *Moral Notions*, p. 22).

If we could not follow the rule, we would never know where to draw the line. But this is just the kind of concept where drawing the line is most crucial. Is this oppression? Is it exploitation? Is it murder? This type of question is what brings 'common elements' and 'underlying unities' into the limelight. We need them. '*Is this a game?*' asks the anxious mother listening to the yells upstairs, the eager anthropologist watching the feathered figures round the fire, the hopeful child or dog watching the surveyors place their chains, the puzzled reader of *Games People Play*. They can all *use* the concept, because it does have some principle of unity, because it is not infinitely elastic. They all take their stand, not on the same point, but on the same small island of meaning—a firm island with a definite shape. By contrast, anyone asking today, 'Is this a work of art?' may simply find himself floundering over ankles in water, because that island has been shovelled off in all directions into the sea, in a set of deliberate attempts to extend it for propaganda purposes.[5] 'Don't think, but look!' says Wittgenstein. But we need to think first or we shall not know what to look for.

I am not now going to take on the whole enormous subject of Wittgenstein's general attack on generality, nor even the reasons for speaking of a 'craving for generality' as something morbid, when one does not so speak of a craving for fragmentation. Here, as always, Wittgenstein's actual position would certainly turn out much more subtle and interesting than what other people have made of it. I merely want to illuminate a corner of it, by examining this single concept of a Game. I want to talk about the sense in which we *do* know what is in common between games, the sense in which there *is* an underlying unity. I hope both that this may be a helpful example when we wonder about other examples of seeing something in common, and that the concept itself may be a more important one than it seems, and may cast some light on the Serious.

[5] See, e.g. Clive Bell: 'I have no right to consider anything a work of art to which I cannot react emotionally. . . . Before the late noon of the Renaissance, Art was almost extinct' (*Art*, pp. 18 and 36); Collingwood: 'Palaeolithic paintings are not works of art, however much they may resemble them; the resemblance is superficial; what matters is the purpose, and the purpose is different' (*Principles of Art*, p. 10).

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What, then, is meant by such moves as calling Promising a 'Game'? I shall follow up Hare's example of the Promising Game because I think it is typical. Hare was answering Searle's suggestion that the duty of keeping promises might simply follow from the fact of having made them. Hare replied 'that depends on whether you have agreed to play the Promising Game or not'. He wanted to treat Promising as one of the many dispensable Games or Institutions which people could adopt or not as they chose. Only our narrow-mindedness, said Hare, made us assume that Promising or any other particular Institution is particularly basic; people with different views might choose different ones, just as they might prefer poker to bezique.

Obviously, the Game parallel is very useful to Hare here, because it makes it easy to treat promising as optional. Of course, we think, a Game is a self-contained system, an enclave which can be dropped without upsetting the surrounding scenery, an activity discontinuous with the life around it. It wouldn't matter whether we played baseball or cricket, poker or scrabble: it wouldn't matter if we invented a new game or didn't play any of them at all. That, we reflect, is part of the meaning of Game. We really seem to have that rare thing, so precious to Hare, a pure Decision without reasons. Games, in fact, never matter.

Now this is a distinctly queer account of promising. First, if there were no promising,[6] could there be games? (As many of us have found, consenting to play cricket usually turns out to have involved promising not to go to sleep while fielding deep, or stomp off in a fury if one is bowled, etc.) In this way, rejecting the 'promising game' might make all other games and institutions impossible as well. (Other examples given are Marriage and Property, which do involve Promising, and Speech, which seems involved in the whole lot.) We may be no better off than those who derived that duty of keeping promises from the Social Contract—no promising, no contract, and in the same way, no promising, no game.

Second, and converging; Hare doesn't say anything about what the promiseless world would be like. Philosophers are rather prone to throw out claims like 'I can imagine a tribe which . . . ' without going to the trouble of actually doing it.[7] Some of Hare's casual remarks suggest that this has happened here:

[6] I assume throughout that Hare is not making the trivial verbal point that the *word* 'promise', might be changed, but is talking about the general practice of promising, however carried on. The Promising Game, in fact, extends into the Undertaking Business.

[7] Cf. Phillips and Mounce's similar (though converse) suggestion, 'Let us consider a people who have the practice of promise keeping, *and let us suppose that it is their sole moral practice*' (*Moral Practices*, p. 10, my italics). Just so a botanist might ask us to consider a plant which has fruit, and to suppose that that is all it has—no roots, stem, leaf or flower. What follows? Until you give us a context, anything you please.

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> Suppose that nobody thought that one ought to keep promises. It would then be impossible to make a promise; the word 'promise' would become a mere noise, except . . . *for anthropologists.*

When nobody keeps promises any more, how will there be any anthropologists? Who is paying them? What does he use for money? (Note the wording on a pound note.) What ship did they travel out on? What cultures are left for them to study? To make this possibility clear to us, we would need a full description of how life is or could be successfully lived in this way, and further argument would still be needed to show that such life was possible outside the conditions of the particular case described.

Anthropology will not get us out of our difficulties in this way. What it actually tells us is that promising is everywhere a kingpin of human culture, and that when the great day does come to lay it aside, anthropologists, just like the rest of us, are going to find their lives nasty, poor, solitary, brutish and short.

Nietzsche, no great enthusiast for moral dogmatism, gave a better account of the position of Promising at the head of his essay on *Guilt, Bad Conscience and the Like*:[8]

> The breeding of an animal that *can promise*—is not this just that very paradox of a task which nature has set itself with regard to man? Is not this the very problem of man? . . . This is simply the long history of the origin of *responsibility* . . . The immense work of what I have called 'morality of custom', the actual work of man on himself during the longest period of the human race, his whole prehistoric work, finds its meaning, its great justification (in spite of all its innate hardness, despotism, stupidity and idiocy) in this fact; man, with the help of the morality of customs and social strait-waistcoats, was *made* genuinely calculable . . . At the end of this colossal process . . . we find . . . the man of the personal, long and independent will, *competent to promise.*

Taking this with the importance given to Commitment in existentialist thinking, we can see that not everyone who treats the Morality of Custom lightly thinks that promising is part of it.

Perhaps then, promising is not very like a game. It may be more like the institution of playing games in general, if by chance there is such a thing. In fact it is not *an* institution at all; it is a condition of having institutions. And this point would have been much more obvious, were it not for the plausible parallel of The Game.

I do not want here to pursue the question about the basis of promising,[9] so much as to investigate the notion of Games as a Closed System. This,

[8] Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, Essay 2.

[9] Though I shall return to it briefly on p. 249.

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I suggested, means that they are discontinuous with the life around them. That seems to be how the term is used in mathematics; the Theory of Games deals with a certain set of closed systems. In this use, no question arises about the reasons or motives for playing; there is no suggestion of playfulness or jollity in the ordinary sense. But when you bring the term into moral philosophy and apply it to people's *actual* activities, the reasons and motives begin to matter. Any actual activity has motives, and it won't be a closed system, optional and removable, unless the motives are of a special kind. They must not be very strong, or it will begin to matter whether we play or not; they must not be very specific, or it will begin to matter *which* game we play.

I want to suggest that some quite complex points about motives and reasons for playing are part of the ordinary meaning of Game; that the philosopher's use to denote simply a closed system (abstracting from these) is most misleading. Both Manser[10] and Khatchadourian[11] have brought this up, and so far as they go I agree with them. But each of them stresses just one point about games (Khatchadourian pleasure, Manser the separation from common life) and not even the two together are enough to distinguish games from the surrounding scenery. (For instance, both these points apply also to art, telly-watching, wine-fancying or the miser's delight in his gold, and none of these are games.) We know a lot more about games than this, and there is nothing to be said for affecting ignorance.

I should like to examine the concept further, and see how complete the separation of games from common life is.

First, then I want to say that *actual* games, normally classed as such, do not keep themselves to themselves in this way but flow over in a perfectly recognized way into the rest of life. Secondly, I want to mention some extended, but still perfectly proper, uses of 'game' and related concepts, like *playing*. These uses may be metaphorical, but they are quite natural and familiar and tell us a lot about why people play. (If Hare's notion of the Promising Game has a place it is among these extended uses, so they are relevant.) Until we understand the reasons for playing, I do not think we understand the bindingness of the rules.

I turn, then, to actual existing games, called so without metaphor. How far is it true that they are closed systems, discontinuous with the rest of life?

In a simple way, this looks obvious; in fact it looks like *the* characteristic point about a Game. You buy little books of the rules for a given game, and they will not contain rules for stopping and starting playing. What happens in a game can be contrasted with what happens in (as we

[10] A. R. Manser, 'Games and Family Resemblances', *Philosophy*, **42**, 1967.

[11] H. Khatchadourian, 'Common Names and Family Resemblances', in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, **XVIII** (1957–58).

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say) 'real' life, and a person taking his game animosity too strongly may be checked with the reminder, 'Relax man, calm down, remember it's only a game'. This is true where the motives for playing are weak and largely negative, which they often are: we want the simple rewards of play as a change from the strains of serious life. But often there are positive motives. If you say to Bobby Fischer, 'Calm down, chess is only a game' your point will be obscure. Chess *is* the business of his life; he has no other; his only outside interest is in seeing the other fellow's nerve crack. This may also be true of children. Similarly, when Rangers play Celtic, not only may people get killed, but the event is central to the lives of many people present. (See the report of the *Observer* man interviewing boys from the Gorbals, who asked them, 'Which is the best of these four things: Drink, Sex, Fighting and Celtic?' and got the answer, 'Celtic every time'. Should we say that this concern attached to a game is accidental; that it just happens to have become hitched on to it? But Russian roulette is a game, and death is an essential part of it, and the same is true of many forms of gambling ('it isn't poker if you play for love') and indeed of cheating.

In the case of football or chess, to treat the traditional concern as accidental would mean that it could just as well be attached to something else; that the pattern of life surrounding them demands *some* game, but is quite indifferent what game it is. Well then, we will try substituting halma for chess and lawn tennis for football. Will there be any difficulties? There will. These rituals *will not be suitable forms for the conflicts they are designed to ritualize.* Halma cannot stand in for chess because it is too simple; were the change imposed by law, the result would be an inconceivable complication of the rules of halma. Lawn tennis will not do instead of football for some quite interesting reasons. It is not a team game; it involves no physical contact and does not make the players dirty. Moreover there are rackets, which, if used in the spirit of football, might kill people. Any attempt to substitute it would result, either in changing lawn tennis past recognition, or (more likely) in the public's abandoning tennis and inventing instead some much more primitive ritualized contest of the kind from which football originally sprang.

These games are continuous with the life around them, and their selection is not at all optional or arbitrary. The Rule Book is misleading; or rather, it misleads those few unhappy people who expect to see the whole truth about anything written down in a book. Books take obvious points for granted. For instance, the book does not mention spectators, nor the reasons for playing and the kind and degree of friendliness called for between players: nor do they mention the choice of teams and opponents, but every game makes quite complicated demands here. Nor does it mention how you give up playing, but that doesn't show there are no proper or improper ways of doing it. (Anyone giving up chess in

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Russia or football in Glasgow would soon find out about that.) It is just these unwritten parts of a game which are distorted when games are played in schools under compulsion. Compulsion can kill the game stone dead, which shows how much they matter.

Games, in fact, spring from the life around them, because games are, among other things, *ritualized conflict*, and the type of ritual is by no means arbitrary, but must fit the kind of conflict which is already going forward. Such ritual proceedings are not at all an optional extra, a froth on human life, peculiar to advanced and leisurely cultures. They are extremely widespread, if not universal, throughout the human race, and are also found in a wide variety of animals. The lower the animal, the more standardized the proceedings; higher mammals and particularly primates have a much richer repertoire. But throughout the animal kingdom quite elaborate rituals surround a fight, as well as other social occasions, entirely discrediting the traditional notion of formless and uncontrolled savagery in Nature.

> Among fallow deer ... the highly ritualized antler fight, in which the crowns are swung into collision, locked together, and then swung to and fro in a special manner, is preceded by a broadside display in which both animals goose-step beside each other, at the same time nodding their heads to make the great antlers wave up and down ... One of the fighters sometimes wants to proceed in advance of the other, to the second stage of the fight, and thus finds his weapon aimed at the unprotected flank of his rival—a highly alarming spectacle. But ... the deer stops the movement, raises his head, and ... seeing that his unwitting, still goose-stepping enemy is already several yards ahead, breaks into a trot till he has caught up with him and walks calmly, antlers nodding, in goose-step beside him, till the next thrust of the antlers leads, in better synchronization, to the ring fight (K. Lorenz, *On Aggression*, p. 98).

Actual Games, then, are not closed systems in the sense of being arbitrary, optional and discontinuous with the life around them. They are systems, but not closed ones.

What about metaphorical games?

Moralists have used the metaphor of a Game rather widely, which is not surprising since it is widely used in common life ('So that's your game?', 'The game's up', 'Playing a waiting game', 'A deep game', etc.). I want to look at some of these uses, along with those of related ideas like 'sport' and 'play', so as to throw some light on what we are doing when we say that something is or is not a game.

One notable and familiar use is the one in which the Sour Fatalist calls All Life a Game, or something like it, in the sense that it is futile, pointless or absurd. Thus in Hardy,

> The President of the Immortals had ended his sport with Tess.

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Or Gloucester in *King Lear*,

> As flies to wanton boys are we to the Gods.
> They kill us for their sport.

Or Omar Khayyam,

> 'Tis all a chequer-board of Nights and Days,
> Where Destiny with men for pieces plays.
> Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,
> And one by one back in the closet lays.

Now, this does come close to the notion of a closed and arbitrary system. But then it is a use you cannot rest in if you think beyond your first hasty comment, because games are *not* arbitrary in this way. Someone plays them; he has a purpose in playing whether the pawns understand it or not. Thus Hardy would have done better not to turn our attention from Tess to the President of the Immortals, a subject on which he is much less convincing. (Perhaps for this reason the really thorough-going Sour Fatalist does not use the figure so much; there are no games in Housman, who was only once careless enough to refer to 'Whatever brute or blackguard made the world'.)

Fitzgerald, on the other hand, in translating Omar Khayyam, gets so interested in the player's purpose that he starts an argument with Destiny—a ploy which he seems to have added over the head of his less reflective Persian original:

> O Thou who didst with Pitfall and with Gin
> Beset the Road I was to wander in,
> Thou wilt not with Predestination round
> Enmesh me, and impute my fall to Sin?

This use of the concept, then, may be meant in the first place to stress the arbitrariness and disconnexion of our life, but if we put any weight on it, it will do something quite different and give them a context; pointing to a purpose beyond our ordinary aims and possibly much more important than they are.

There are other ways in which the notion of Games can be used to enforce seriousness, and that even without the thought of a divine Player or Spectator. Such a figure is common in Stoic morality. Epictetus uses it when he finds a difficulty in explaining his concept of seriousness. He wants us to be detached from ordinary life so far as to despise its rewards, but does not want us to drop back with a sigh of relief into the Cynic's barrel or the Epicurean's garden seat. He wants us to be strenuous yet not anxious, committed yet free. It seems impossible, but by using the metaphor of Playing the Game he manages to do it.[12]

Or again to our surprise, we find that very serious character Plato

[12] Epictetus, *Dissertations*, II, v. 1–20.

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telling us that 'human affairs are not worth much serious attention', but that since we have unfortunately got to consider them, the only important question is, what sort of play are we to spend our time on?[13]

We ask: what is Plato doing here? Has he stretched his concept so far as to lose its meaning? If even the service of God is Play, what is serious? Does anything remain Outside the Game?

His main aim obviously is to divide Ends from Means. Play, unlike work, must have its pay-off within it, and what we are looking for is the pay-off in life. The great thing excluded by calling it Play is practical provision in the narrow sense; the point of life cannot be just more life.

Play is self-contained in the sense that it has its value within it, but it can also add to the value of something wider. This is like the case of works of art; a statue and an altar-piece have their point or value in themselves, and must be balanced wholes, but this does not stop them forming part of a larger whole, such as a church or temple, or indeed the religious life. When all the elements are put together a greater value emerges, but the relation of the parts to this is not that of means to end (or that of raw stone to the completed statue). People who want to isolate altar-pieces antiseptically in museums have missed something here, and so have people who think games are closed systems. These things need their context. Plato has used the Play analogy because it was a clear and forcible way of saying that our highest activities must be ends rather than means, and that their value might lie simply in what the ordered and harmonious exercise of our faculties adds to the universe. By using it, talking of play, he can make a fairly deep moral point, namely, that the value of life is in activity now, not later, and is even in some sense here and not in Heaven. He has got rid of the element of pie in the sky which spoiled the *Phaedo*. By talking of play, he has managed to state at least one part of that difficult doctrine called the Autonomy of Morals. In one way play does not matter, in another it can matter very much, and it is because people already understand this point about play that Plato can use the metaphor to make it about morals. That autonomy is not so much compromised as it might seem by Plato's God. This God is no arbitrary President of the Immortals or Wanton Boy. He is a God who has good reason for all he does and to some extent reveals it to men; he has adapted us to share his taste in play. The activities Plato says please him are those of worship: sacrificing, singing and dancing, the sort of festal celebration which the Greeks themselves enjoyed so much that they always took their gods to enjoy it too. It would include the whole business of the fine arts, so far as Plato approved of them. It would also include philosophical discussion. This Plato often does describe as play, thereby confusing solemn persons who suppose he must mean that it is a waste of time. What he is really saying is that this totally serious business

[13] *Laws*, 803b–d.

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is also a sublime form of fun, whose point depends on its being conducted by its own strict laws and not for any outside advantage, and which must therefore not be deflected by any practical considerations whatever.

I have tried to show that games for Epictetus and play for Plato are not in the end closed circles, arbitrary patterns detached from specific motives; the complex motive for playing is the most interesting point about them. I turn now to two modern writers who are still more interested in such motives, and who throw a lot of light on them—Jan Huizinga (*Homo Ludens*) and Erik Berne (*Games People Play*). Huizinga's book concerns Play in general, but including Games, and his point is that Play is an essential element in all highly regarded human activities, and may in some sense be called the basis of all of them. Stylized patterns akin to play are found in the rituals of religion, in lawsuits and court ceremonial, in the formal feuds of politics, in family life and in the play of lovers, and above all in Art. All these activities have rules which matter greatly and yet do not really matter at all, in much the same paradoxical manner as the rules of a Game:

> Let us consider for a moment the following argument. The child plays in complete . . . earnest. But it plays, and knows that it plays. The sportsman, too, plays with all the fervour of a man enraptured, but he still knows that he is playing. The actor on the stage is wholly absorbed in his playing, but is all the time conscious of 'the play'. The same holds good of the violinist, though he may soar to realms beyond this world. The play-character, therefore, may attach to the sublimest forms of action. Can we now extend the line to ritual and say that the priest performing the rites of sacrifice is only playing? (*Homo Ludens*, p. 47).

On the whole, Huizinga thinks so, and believes the 'only' to be out of place. The relation between play and seriousness is, he points out, not at all simple:

> The consciousness of play being 'only a pretend' does not by any means prevent it from proceeding with the utmost seriousness, with an absorption, a devotion, that passes into rapture and, temporarily at least, abolishes that troublesome 'only' feeling. *Any game can at any time wholly run away with the players.* The contrast between play and seriousness is always fluid. *The inferiority of play is constantly being offset by the superiority of its seriousness* (p. 27). (My italics.)

This paradox seems quite justified, though of course it needs much fuller discussion than I can give it now. I would like just to mention the related difficulty of classifying neatly as 'comic' or 'serious' certain very great works of art, such as Mozart's operas, *The Tempest*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Persuasian*, *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*.

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Both Play in general, and Games in particular, can be very serious; what then is the difference between them? Chiefly that Games involve Conflict—either against opponents, or, as in Patience, against carefully designed odds.

One of the most interesting of Huizinga's marks, and the hardest to pin down, is the *tension* which surrounds conflict and marks off the intenser forms of play, including games proper, from mere Pastime or pottering. I cannot do better here than quote one of A. E. Housman's friendly remarks about a fellow-scholar:[14]

> Conjectural emendation, as practised by X, is not a game, an exercise requiring skill and heed, like marbles, or skittles, or cat's cradle, but a pastime, like leaning against a wall and spitting.

Skill and heed it is, and, as Huizinga points out, this element, arising out of the very nature of play itself, is bound to make it serious, so that the contrast between play and earnest is certainly incomplete and superficial. All play that deserves one's attention involves difficulties, rising to a fight. What people take seriously, that they ritualize. Religion is surrounded by ritual, not because it is ossified and cast aside from real life, but because it is so important that it demands perfection of form. And justice demands ritual, although ritual can distort justice. Play is for Huizinga still a set of enclosed systems, only they enclose within them all the most central human activities, and do so because those activities themselves require it.

What then is left *outside* play?

For Huizinga, as for Plato, the most obvious contrast to play lies below it, in what are tendentiously called the Practical Affairs of Life: namely, for a start, such things as food, drink, shelter, protection and other means to survival. Here matter does prevail over form—not completely, because, as Huizinga points out, form is still demanded, but in the main. The Practical in this sense is a much narrower field than the Serious, and is inclined to shrink further each time you look at it. For instance, are the activities of the Stock Exchange on this view part of practical affairs, or a sport of some kind? And what about business management? Huizinga quotes from a speech by an eminent Dutch industrialist:

> Ever since I first entered the business, it has been a race between the technicians and the sales department. One tried to produce so much that the sales department would never be able to sell it, while the other tried to sell so much that the technicians would never be able to keep pace. This race has always continued; sometimes one is ahead, sometimes the other. Neither my brother nor myself has ever regarded the business as a task, always as a game, the spirit of which

[14] See his brother Laurence's memoir, *A.E.H.*, pp. 89–90.

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> it has been our constant endeavour always to implant in the younger staff (*Homo Ludens*, p. 227).

And what about much of law, much of scientific dispute, what about moon rockets, motorway behaviour, certain aspects of trade union activities and the conduct of committees? What about religious processions in Belfast? *What about war?*

> War may be, as it was among the Aztecs, a way of getting captives for the religious sacrifices. Since the Spaniards fought to kill, according to Aztec standards they broke the rules of the game. The Aztecs fell back in dismay and Cortez walked as victor into the capital (Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, p. 22).

None of these things would be as they are without the taste for certain definite kinds of *ritualized conflict*.

It does not follow that this taste is perverted or frivolous. It is a mistake to think that what is regulated must be trivial, that the needs involved must be weak or they would be stronger than the rule. Blake made this mistake when he said 'those who restrain desire do so because theirs are weak enough to be restrained, and the restrainer, or Reason, usurps its place and governs the unwilling'.[15] The restraining rules are not something foreign to the needs or emotions involved, they are simply the shape which the desired activity takes. The Chess Player's desire is not a desire for general abstract intellectual activity, curbed and frustrated by a particular set of rules. It is a desire for a particular kind of intellectual activity, whose channel is the rules of chess. (Similarly human love is not a general need, curbed and frustrated by the particular forms offered to it. It is a need for a specific kind of relation—say a permanent one—with a particular person, and for this purpose only some kinds of behaviour will do.) The Football Player does not just want to rush about kicking things. He wants to do so in a special context of ordered competition with companions: he needs to know what sort of response he will get and who has won. Similarly, as Huizinga points out, rituals like court ceremonial are not arbitrary restrictions clogging personal intercourse. In their origin, when courts mean something, they are forms, and suitable forms, by which subjects can express their loyalty and kings their kingliness. Forms can die, but formality is not deadness. Blake missed this point because he, like Rousseau, thought of *all* form as something imposed on human nature from without, whereas in fact it is clearly demanded from within. Primitive people and animals are quite as formal, quite as ceremonious as civilized people and often more so. For all our activities we have a choice of forms; we do not have the choice of no form at all. To stop playing the game of Sober Citizen and yet be effective, we must

[15] *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.*

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start to play Revolutionary, with demonstrations, secret societies, passwords, disguises, manifestoes and ritual insults to the authorities. Whatever our substantial projects, ritual will surround them and determine their form.

Huizinga, then, shows how the formality of play does not make it trivial or arbitrary, a set of closed systems which do not matter. He has shown similar formality in activities which are agreed to be very important. Like play, these activities show paradoxical signs of being cut off from real life and yet holding something essential to it. Huizinga knows he is extending the concept of play far beyond its normal limits, but he can do this quite intelligibly, and, to my mind, usefully, which could hardly happen if play were something arbitrary: if the *motive* for it were not peculiar and characteristic. Again, I want to plug the point about metaphors. If square things had nothing in common except being square, no extended or metaphorical use of the term would be possible—it is only because square things luckily also have in common a certain smug and dependable appearance that we are able to say that Allworthy is an old square, but will probably do the square thing or give us a square meal. And things which are not literally *play* can only be usefully called play if we know what the point of play is: if the concept *does* have an underlying unity. Huizinga's remarks stress the *value* of play in human life, the profound and complex need there is for it. Because this need is complex, the things which satisfy it will not share any obvious simple characteristic, like being painted green, but because it is strong and universal, they will share structural characteristics which are easily and widely recognized. Ethologists have noticed that play in animals is in fact remarkably easily recognized, not only by others of their own species but even by outsiders. (This successful signalling can be studied for instance in the dealings of people with dogs, and in the pleasing situation where zoo visitors, observing the animals, are themselves observed by keepers and ethologists.)[16] *Where a need is shared, we know what marks to look for*. The parallel of furniture[17] is helpful here. Something can be accepted as a chair provided it is properly made for sitting on, whether it consists of a plastic balloon, a large blob of foam, or a basket slung from the ceiling. Provided you understand the need you can see whether it has the right characteristics, and aptness for that need *is* what chairs have in common. Here a note is needed to Wittgenstein's advice. He is in a way right to say, 'Don't think—look!'[18] But *before* we could usefully look at these candidates for chairhood, we had to do some sort of thinking. Maybe we thought with the seat of our

[16] See an excellent paper by C. Loizos on 'Play Behaviour in Higher Primates', in *Primate Ethology*, ed. D. Morris, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967.

[17] See Khatchadourian, op. cit. Also Kovesi, *Moral Notions*, ch. 1, for a most interesting development of the point.

[18] *Philosophical Investigations*, §66.

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pants. In general, provided you understand the need, you know what characteristics to look for. To know what a chair is just *is* to understand that need.

The need for chairs is simple: the need for play is subtle and complex. We do not very well understand it, which is what makes Wittgenstein's point attractive. Huizinga exalts play by stressing the links between this need and what are generally supposed to be man's most important activities. Erik Berne, on the other hand, points out its strength and thereby something rather more sinister about it, namely its obsessiveness, the way in which a taste for play can get the better of us, entangling us and frustrating our other needs. But both points of course suggest that the need is no trivial one, and both equally, if accepted, tell against the suggestion that games as such do not matter.

For Berne, Games are ploys in personal relations, patterns which we cling to and repeat for their own sake and into which we try to draw the people round us. For instance, we may like to play *Wooden Leg*, which means exploiting one's handicaps as hobbies and all-purpose excuses. The slogan of this game is 'What do you expect of me?' (What do you expect of a man with a wooden leg? What do you expect of a man with a personality defect? What do you expect of a man living in a corrupt society?) This secures us sympathy and even admiration while saving us the trouble of exerting ourselves. Or there is the game of *Why Don't You? Yes, But*, which involves asking people for advice on our difficulties, and, when they give it, pointing out how useless it is, thereby remaining always one up. Or (perhaps the most pervasive game of all), there is *If it Weren't For You*, in which we hold the people around us responsible for our failures, and forget how far we ourselves are responsible for choosing, moulding and staying with those people. This game is chiefly played in marriage, but comes in handy also with one's employers, colleagues, parents, children and political opponents. It is the game played by Sartre's man[19] who describes himself as a Writer, though it is ten years since he wrote anything, because the claims of his family and his job prevent him. (If only it weren't for them . . .) Other interesting Berne games are *Let's You and Him Fight*, *I'm Only Trying to Help You*, and *Uproar*. Up to a certain point this use of 'game' is natural and traditional enough; compare for instance Oliver Wendell Holmes:

> Sweet is the scene where genial friendship plays
> The pleasing game of interchanging praise—

(or, as Berne has it, 'Gee, You're Wonderful, Mr. Murgatroyd'). Or this from Meredith:

[19] *Existentialism and Humanism*, p. 41.

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> It is in truth a most contagious game;
> HIDING THE SKELETON shall be its name.

If Berne causes alarm, it is by extending it so widely; a man's games, he says, determine quite generally the use he will make of his opportunities (a point near to that of the Stoics), and will therefore have a crucial part in shaping his life. But my first question is not, of course, how prevalent this kind of thing is in human life, but what is meant by calling it a Game. Some find this a useful and appealing title, others an exasperating one, but nobody thinks it meaningless. What job then does it do? To take the exasperating element first, what is being suggested is, again, not *triviality*:

> To say that the bulk of social activity consists of playing games does not necessarily mean that it is mostly 'fun' or that the parties are not seriously engaged in the relationship. On the one hand, 'playing' football and other athletic 'games' may not be fun at all, and the players may be intensely grim, and such games share with other forms of 'play' the potentiality for being very serious indeed, sometimes fatal. On the other hand, some authors, for instance Huizinga, include under 'play' such serious things as cannibal feasts. Hence, calling such tragic behavior as suicide, alcohol and drug addiction, criminality or schizophrenia 'playing games' is not irresponsible, facetious or barbaric. *The essential characteristic of human play is not that the emotions are spurious, but that they are regulated*... Pastimes and games are substitutes for the real living of real intimacy (*Games People Play*, pp. 17–18). (My italics.)

Repeat, 'The essential characteristic of human play is not that the emotions are spurious but that they are regulated...' This is very near to Huizinga's point. We are inclined to think that a regulated emotion must be a weak emotion, because it is weaker than the rules. But if the rules *are* the form it takes, this need not be so. When someone persistently quarrels with everybody who tries to help him, like Corvo, or Strindberg, his feelings are strong enough, it is just that they are the kind of feelings which demand a quarrel. The rules here in fact are constitutive; they settle what things are to count as; e.g. everything said by the partner, whatever its apparent meaning, shall count as an insult or an obstruction. Others rule certain responses offside because they would lead out of the game, and these will be ignored or resented. The rules here do not operate as restrictions on the quarrelsome feelings; they are devices for giving them appropriate play. It is just because the need to quarrel has become a serious and central one that it takes this stylized form. The upshot only looks artificial or trivial from the angle of those who can think of better things to do than quarrelling. (For genuinely trivial transactions,

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Berne, like Housman, prefers the term Pastime, covering such matters as mild showing off and conversations grousing about third parties—as opposed to the serious second-person grievance in *If It Weren't For You.*) Games, he thinks, do indeed occupy a serious part of our lives. What is wrong with them is not that they can't be serious, but that they crowd out other and better serious occupations. We act like highly serious cogs when we might be free people. The antithesis to Games for Berne is Autonomy, marked by what he calls Awareness, Spontaneity, and Unscripted Intimacy, which rank *above* games. But these things, however splendid, cannot fill anybody's life.

> Because there is so little opportunity for intimacy in daily life, and because some forms of intimacy (especially if intense) are impossible for most people, the bulk of the time in serious social life is taken up with playing games. Hence games are both necessary and desirable, and the only problem at issue is whether the games played by an individual offer the best yield for him (p. 55).

Berne is much more realistic than Sartre. He doesn't dismiss everything that isn't completely spontaneous as Bad Faith. He sees that Games do give people some personal contact, however limited, some kind of intimacy, however incomplete. As he says, they 'structure time' giving us that framework of predictability without which we could hardly set about the business of being spontaneous. What is wrong with them is the 'element of exploitation'. A game, even when pursued vigorously by both parties, is not really a shared activity. It is a Hobbesian bargain; each pursues his own advantage, using the other to bounce it back to him. In extreme cases, like Corvo's, or the characters in Strindberg, they care about as much for each other's feelings as tick-bird and crocodile. The term 'game' conveys this point very well, because the hostile, competitive element is strong in colloquial uses like 'Oh, so that's your game?' or 'The game's up', 'On the game', or 'The con game'. Games, says Berne, are basically dishonest. In a game, someone has got to lose, and since no one wants to there will have to be trickery of some kind. The game-playing quarreller does not admit that he quarrels for the hell of it; he claims that you have really treated him badly; otherwise he could not get his favoured type of grievance and its pay-off, round which his life has become more or less centred. 'Game' is the *mot juste* for suggesting the peculiar addictiveness of some emotional habits, the way they can become indispensable though they have no discernible outside point and many drawbacks. Berne points here to the game of Alcoholic: the suggestion is not that all alcoholism is a game, but that a habit-forming game can grow up round the scenes of remorse, recrimination and condolence between the alcoholic and his various rescuers, persecutors and barmen (finally outdoing in attraction the actual drinking). This, he says, explains the success

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of Alcoholics Anonymous, which allows the subject to continue his game, but shifts him to a different role within it. Cases have been reported (says Berne) of a chapter of A.A. running out of alcoholics to work on, whereupon the members resumed drinking, since there was no other way to continue the game in the absence of people to rescue. Their problem is, as he remarks, that

> ... it is a difficult task to find something else as interesting to the Alcoholic as continuing his game. Since he is classically afraid of intimacy, the substitute may have to be another game rather than a game-free relationship (p. 67).

Games, here once again, do not seem to be so arbitrary, marginal, unserious and non-mattering as a tidy person might have hoped. It should be clear how Berne's point converges with Huizinga's. Play is found pervading our most important concerns; play insists on being taken seriously. We need it. Can we say why? Huizinga is right to connect this issue with the equally mysterious question of the purpose or value of Art. Whatever that purpose or purposes may be, Art does share with Play the paradoxical property of being somehow set aside from the prodding practical purposes of life, and yet asserting at times a mysterious right to predominate over them. If one says that Art cannot affect Life, one is liable to be jogged by the thought of someone who has jumped off the Clapham Omnibus and gone away to devote his life to art, or by the reflection that nobody's life will be quite the same again after he has read the *Agamemnon* properly. Apart from that, the activities used in art—singing, dancing, drawing, etc.—do not belong to a select minority; they are all prominent in the play of children, and a taste for them can be detected in young apes as well. One could look here towards the peculiar biological characteristic of man called Neoteny,[20] that is, the extension of infantile characteristics into adult life. This is a device by which a species often exploits a possibility already present in its genetic make-up, but previously limited to an early phase, by prolonging that phase. People resemble baby apes, and even embryo apes, much more strongly than they resemble adult apes, on a number of points of physical development, but of course most notably in their large and quick-growing brain. An ape or monkey brain completes its growth in 6–12 months from birth; a human brain goes on growing for about 23 years. And a related pattern can be seen in the development of behaviour. Playing at all is behaviour confined to relatively intelligent, active, big-brained, non-specialist animals, and where it occurs, it occurs mostly in the young. Now the free, enquiring use of the intellect belongs, originally, in this context of play. Nearly all the experiments on primate learning and intelligence are

[20] See D. Morris, *The Naked Ape*, p. 32; C. Loizos, op. cit., pp. 185, 214.

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done with ape babies and children; once an ape is adult he gets above such things, loses interest and refuses to co-operate—he may even turn nasty. But in man, it is just this use of the intellect which is prolonged into adult life. Does it carry play patterns with it? Is the taste for problem-solving, for ritual, for formalizing disputes and taking sides a relic of the matrix within which exploratory thought emerged? and is the aesthetic approach another? (Apes show the rudiments of dance forms, continuing even into adult life,[21] and have in childhood a pronounced taste for painting.)[22] This seems to me a real and perplexing issue. Perhaps a *mature* pattern of behaviour, suitable for a creature possessing a mature human brain, is something that has not yet been invented. That might explain more than one of our difficulties.

I return now to Hare's suggestion about the Promising Game. My point in surveying the extended uses of Game has been to draw out the meanings that emerge from it when you use it metaphorically. Metaphor, I suggested, is an epidiascope projecting enlarged images of a word's meaning; turn the word round and you get different pictures, but where we don't grasp an underlying unity we can get no metaphor at all, and where the meaning isn't what we hope, the metaphor will fail. Now if anyone thinks that all the people I have quoted fail in their metaphors—that they are simply misusing 'game' and 'play', he will of course reject my argument. My own impression about this is that Plato and Huizinga *are* somewhat paradoxical; they do make a rather startling use of the word 'play' but justify it by the clearness and fertility of their point; they make us see after a moment's thought that *play* might really not be a bad word for the things they apply it to, and they thereby throw a new light on the notion of seriousness. Berne and the Stoics on the other hand don't seem to me to use the word *game* surprisingly at all, only to extend and enlarge perfectly normal uses along the line already laid down. The Stoic notion about *playing the game* has been good common morality down to our own day, and until the public schools got hold of it there was nothing ridiculous about it at all. And what Berne says about chronic quarrelling or scenes of remorse might well occur to any experienced stander-by; calling these a game is hardly a metaphor, it is one in a vigorous series of extremely common uses—he's taken up the con game, honesty's his game at present, daughters of the game. These uses are hardly more metaphorical than 'seeing' or 'grasping' a point in argument. There is really no more literal phrase available. And as all these uses stress in the end the *importance* of games, not-mattering cannot be the central point about them. But there is of course a sense in which games do not matter, in which they

[21] See G. Schaller, *The Year of the Gorilla*, p. 210, and W. Köhler, *The Mentality of Apes*, p. 266.
[22] See D. Morris, *The Biology of Art*, *passim*.

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are considered as cut off from other activities, and there would be nothing to stop Hare making successful use of the concept from this angle—it is the beauty of a rich concept like this that you *can* get a lot of metaphors out of it. Has he done so?

If we examine *that* sense, we are struck at once by its failure to fit Hare's point. Games, for instance, are shut off from *each other*, far more sharply than they are shut off from the rest of life—you really cannot play cricket and football at the same time. But these metaphorical games are closely interwoven. Marriage cannot be played without other games like promising, and can generate an indefinite number of further games, all in definite relations to it. A married, religious, liberal, promise-keeping physicist plays his five games, not only simultaneously but in a pretty closely ordered structure because—a point which seems to have been overlooked—he has only got one life to live, and he needs to make sense of it. So he has to try all the time to fit them together and work out his priorities. He will often fail and get confused, which is what makes the suggestion of separating them seem plausible. *But if he gave up the attempt entirely, he would be making it his policy to let his personality disintegrate.* This cannot be treated as an optional further game, because it is negative and rule-less; moreover, it means losing the capacity for any further human enterprise whatsoever. To press the point; *has this man now one game or five games?* And could these games possibly fail to involve others?—teacher, truth-teller, pupil, citizen, property-owner, colleague, friend, voter, customer, Jew—you name it. And the involvement is deep. This man's marriage will be a *different kind of marriage* from that of a man without religion, and his religion a different kind of religion from that of a man with no knowledge of science. This is *not* just an external relation, like that between Bobby Fischer's chess and the football he may play to keep in training. It is more like that between marriage and parenthood, or between my political views and my view of history. They *must* be congruent to work at all, and where they change, they must change together. Certainly we often fail to relate the parts of our lives; we become dishonest, hypocritical and confused. But these are the names of faults, not of the norm. Where we do this (to repeat the obvious) we pay for it in confusion of life, in ineffectiveness and disintegration of the personality. We do not actually have the option of splitting ourselves into a viable batch of coral polyps. And as it is just in the necessary business of relating aspects that most of our moral problems arise, a philosopher who rules that nothing can be said about it has shown his uselessness pretty thoroughly. Thus the *game* metaphor dissolves in confusion.

We see this again if we try to imagine the transaction of 'stopping playing'. Unless we can point to some kind of possible world without say, promising, calling it 'just an institution' will be rather like calling the world we actually live in 'just a dream'. (It might have a meaning,

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but not for us.) Hare describes the *invention* of promising[23] as taking place among a people whose language is already so far advanced in abstraction as to include the word 'obligation' in its modern general sense (a sense which has only emerged in European thought in the last two centuries[24]), and describes promising as consisting in linking *that* idea with a speech ritual. *But how did they get this far without any promising?*

Is their language supposed to have contained no performative words before? If it did, are they supposed not to have minded when people using them then went on to act as if they had not done so? The resulting confusion and difficulty must be at least as great as that where people constantly tell lies; is the objection to *that* supposed to be also an optional institution? This need is at least as old as the need for speech itself; it is the first condition of co-operation. Animals like wolves have other ways of holding a dialogue like: 'I'll go around and drive the antelope into the valley', 'Right, I'll wait for them under this tree'. Men, developing speech, could not fail to use it for this very important purpose. How could it *not matter*, not be objected to, if one of the speakers then went off to sleep instead? How could this fail to be a concern for morality as it develops?

To give some positive evidence: Ruth Benedict,[25] emphasizing the very wide variations there can be in human habits, remarks that there are 'very few traits that are universal or near-universal in human society. There are several that are well known. Of these, everyone agrees on . . . the exogamous restrictions upon marriage.' But marriage after all means promising. Actually, the most hopeful example I know of an almost non-promising society is Ruth Benedict's Dobu, who, she says, 'put a premium on ill-will and treachery and made of them the recognized virtues of their society'. '*Behind a show of friendship, behind the evidence of co-operation*, in every field of life, the Dobu believes he has only treachery.' But (as the italicized words make clear) this happy state of things is, of course, parasitical on Promising. The show of friendship, the evidences of co-operation, must be there and must still largely be believed in, for treachery to flourish. '*Only treachery*' has to be a gross exaggeration, like 'a world consisting only of exceptions'. That Dobu culture-hero, the successful con-man, is doomed to defeat himself unless he remembers this. As one of them sadly says: 'I cannot [double-cross] for too long, or my exchanges will never be trusted by anyone again. I am honest in the final issue.' In effect, both he and the 'Machiavellian politician'[26] mentioned by

[23] Hare, PG, p. 120.

[24] The Shorter Oxford Dictionary gives as the *first* meaning of *obligation*, 'The action of binding oneself by oath, promise or contract . . . also that to which one binds oneself, a formal promise'.

[25] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, pp. 95, 123, 115 (my italics).

[26] PG, p. 125.

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Hare are small-time operators, tinkering within an established pattern, not Nietzschean supermen who have invented something quite different. They differ from ordinary promisers only in the relative importance they give to the obligation of promising as against other obligations, like promoting one's country's glory or becoming a great man. On top of this the Dobu is of course operating at a very primitive level, in a shame-culture which could make nothing of Hare's abstract notion of 'obligation', and the Machiavellian politician may be doing that too. But whatever sense they do give to obligation, promising has to carry it.

Thus it is hard to see what a promiseless society would be like, and the burden of argument seems to lie on those who claim that the thing is possible. If it is not, it is misleading to call Promising (or any other very general moral form) a game or an institution, assimilating it to particular local forms like Freemasonry or driving on the left of the road. What misleads us here is that *a* game, and *an* institution, are terms used for systems of varying sizes (often for concentric ones, such as speech, promising and trial by jury), and Hare has assumed that because you can readily change the smallest examples of each you can change all the others in the same way. Thus, your picking up a rock proves that you could pick up the Bass Rock, and your taking off your coat and jacket proves you can take off your skin as well. Speech is not really an institution at all, nor is sex (though I once saw an article in *New Society* which said it was), nor is playing games, nor walking upright, nor weeping nor laughing, nor loving one's children, nor marriage nor property, nor promising, though the forms all these things take in different societies will of course be so. The word 'institution' would be best saved for things which were once instituted and could at a pinch be disinstituted again without taking the entire human race with them.

So much for the philosopher's misuse of this particular concept, *game*. I return to the wider point about definition, of which I have suggested this case is an instance—the need to look for 'underlying unities'.

Why does this matter? Because, as I have suggested, a great number of the concepts that actually do the work in moral discussion today are general ones which are in the same sort of trouble as 'game'. Since they do a lot of work we *must* try to define them and look for underlying unities (here they are unlike 'family resemblance', an idle concept if ever there was one), and yet we shall certainly not be able to give a single plain litmus-paper test for them because their point is structural, and not at all like that of colour-words. Such concepts are: exploitation, oppression, sanity, disease, pollution, fulfilment, justice, freedom, art form, escapism, obscurity, sexual, serious, normal. Suppose we applied Bambrough's formula to one of these—suppose we said for instance that the only thing all cases of exploitation had in common was that they were cases of exploitation—should we be better off or worse next time we had to decide

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whether something was a case of exploitation or not, than we are now when we constantly look for an underlying unity? As things are we may indeed employ a number of different marks, but only on the assumption that they have some sort of connection with one another and are aspects of an underlying structure. Otherwise the concept falls to pieces, as, indeed, the concept of Art has already done. We do assume a unity in such concepts, and we are not silly to do so, because they all deal with human needs, which certainly do have a structure. Man is an animal given to exploitation, and he is also a game-playing animal. The business of moral philosophy starts with the analysis of such concepts. If all we had to do in moral philosophy was to wait for people to pronounce moral judgments like '*x* is good', life might perhaps be simpler, but far less interesting. And we would certainly be members of another species, not *homo sapiens.*

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