The Reconstructive and Normative Aspects of Bernard Suits's Utopia

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1. Is Suits's Work More than a Theory of Games?

Since its publication in 1978, Bernard Suits's *The Grasshopper* has become a classic in the philosophy of sport. In the book, Suits aims to provide a traditional definition of games to counter the anti-definitionalist position that Ludwig Wittgenstein proposes in his *Philosophical Investigations.*[1] Given the interest of sport philosophers and kinesiologists in the main features of games, a large debate quickly sprang from Suits's work and it became a seminal book in the discipline. His analysis of the so-called "tricky triad," which refers to the relationship between play, games, and sport, is foundational. The major role Suits's definition has played in the philosophy of sport has a downside.[2] Kinesiologists and sport philosophers have focused on concrete details of games, but neglected other philosophical aspects of Suits's work.

One such neglected aspect is what Doug McLaughlin calls "Suits's Utopian thesis." This thesis suggests that the life most worth living, the life in Utopia, consists in game-playing.[3] On McLaughlin's interpretation of *The Grasshopper,* which remains controversial, the Utopian thesis is central and the definition of games is secondary, for the former serves the larger purpose of fully understanding the good life. If McLaughlin is right, then Suits's primary goal in his magisterial work goes far beyond providing a definition of games or game-playing. Rather, it is aimed at engaging one of the most frequently discussed philosophical topics, namely, the meaning of life.

By drawing on McLaughlin's thesis, I argue that Utopia plays a fundamental role in Suits's definition of games. However, I reject

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[1] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001); see also Colin McGinn, *Truth by Analysis: Games, Names, and Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), chap. 2.

[2] Douglas W. McLaughlin and R. Scott Kretchmar, "Reinventing the Wheel: On Games and the Good Life" (PhD diss., Pennsylvania State University, 2008), p. 11.

[3] Bernard Suits, *The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2005), pp. 1-2.

McLaughlin's claim that Utopia has to do with the best human life possible. Instead, I regard Utopia as a counterfactual regulative ideal, whose functions are: (a) to delineate the defining elements of game-playing, and (b) to provide a normative element by which to criticize instances of game-playing, such as those found in the sports context.

2. Suits's Utopia in the Grasshopper's Dream

One explanation for the neglect of the relevance of Suits's Utopia in his definition of games is the way Utopia is presented. Suits's utopian creation is presented as a riddle in a dream of Grasshopper.[4] In the dream, while believing themselves to be going on with their ordinary affairs by engaging in serious and productive activities, everybody is involved in playing elaborate games. Discovering this has a "terrifying" consequence for people: annihilation. They cease to exist when they find themselves not engaged in serious activities, as they believed, but in playing games.[5] After presenting the dream, the Grasshopper dies and leaves the reader with two of his disciples, Skepticus and Prudence, who try to make sense of the dream by reconstructing their conversations on games with the Grasshopper.

Once they reconstruct the Grasshopper's definition of games, as "the voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles,"[6] but fail to solve the riddle in the dream, the Grasshopper resurrects and formulates the fiction of Utopia to help them:

> I would like to begin by representing the ideal of existence as though it were already instituted as a social reality. We will then be able to talk about a Utopia which embodies that ideal—that is, a state of affairs where people are engaged only in those activities which they value intrinsically. Let us imagine, then, that all of the instrumental activities of human beings have been eliminated. All of the things ordinarily called work are now done by wholly automated machines which are activated solely by mental telepathy, so that not even a minimum staff is necessary for the housekeeping chores of society.[7]

In Utopia, all social, economic, and political needs and desires are satisfied. Utopians have no vital problems with which to deal. Machines do all of their work. They are detached from the so-called "realm of necessity," for

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[4] Avery Kolers, "The Grasshopper's Error: Or, On How Life Is a Game," *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review/Revue Canadienne de Philosophie* 54, no. 4 (December 2015), pp. 727-46.

[5] Suits, *The Grasshopper*, pp. 11-12.

[6] Ibid., p. 43.

[7] Ibid., p. 182.

nothing needs to be done. Such a detachment frees people to spend their time on intrinsically valuable activities, chosen for their own sake, instead of for instrumental or prudential reasons. Utopian life is the one beyond prudential and instrumental thinking. Utopians "always do things because they want to, and never because they must."[8] What kind of activities does Suits include as intrinsically valuable activities? Why are Utopians' lives restricted to such activities? More generally speaking, what role does Utopia play in a book aimed at providing a definition of game-playing?

3. A Reconstruction of the Defining Elements of Game-Playing

Since Thomas More coined the term "utopia,"[9] the concept has had two main functions, which I call "transcendental reconstruction" and "normative evaluation."[10] The first one is where we examine phenomena of interest—say, morality, speech acts, or justice—and uncover what they are and what makes them possible. The second is where we imagine how the world could be so as to have a goal to strive for and by which we critically evaluate how the world is. Both functions are realized in the utopian creations of philosophers like Immanuel Kant, Jürgen Habermas, and John Rawls, among others.

In order to accomplish the first task of "utopian thinking,"[11] Suits builds Utopia around game-playing exclusively and reconstructs the defining elements or conditions of possibility of game-playing. He aims to bring forth what the defining elements of game-playing are "by representing the ideal of [game-playing] as though it were already instituted as a social reality."[12] Suits eliminates from Utopia both extrinsically motivated activities like work and intrinsically valuable activities that are not instances of game-playing:

> [T]here does not appear to be anything to do in Utopia, precisely because all instrumental activities have been eliminated. There is nothing to strive for precisely because everything has already been achieved. What we need, therefore, is some activity in which what is instrumental is inseparably combined with what is intrinsically

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[8] Ibid., p. 191.

[9] Thomas More, *Utopia*, ed. and trans. David Wootton (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1999).

[10] Michael K. Power, "Habermas and the Counterfactual Imagination," *Cardozo Law Review* 17 (1996), p. 1005; Pauline Johnson, "Habermas: A Reasonable Utopian?" *Critical Horizons* 6, no. 1 (February 21, 2005), pp. 101-18.

[11] John Friedmann, "The Good City: In Defense of Utopian Thinking," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24, no. 2 (June 1, 2000), pp. 460-72.

[12] Suits, *The Grasshopper*, p. 182.

valuable, and where the activity is not itself an instrument for some further end. Games meet this requirement perfectly. For in games we must have obstacles which we can strive to overcome just so that we can possess the activity as a whole, namely, playing the game. Game playing makes it possible to retain enough effort in Utopia to make life worth living.[13]

One might ask, "Why must a life freed from the necessity to work be identical with a life dedicated to games?"[14] For Suits, to work is to do things necessary for survival or the sake of something else. Work has an instrumental character and is human beings' main activity as members of the realm of necessity. They must satisfy their basic needs and desires in order to survive. In contrast to this, playing involves doing things for their own sake, just for the fun of doing them. Activities of this type are referred to as belonging to the realm of voluntary choice or leisure. In Utopia, people are freed from the obligations imposed by the realm of necessity; they are constantly involved in intrinsically valuable leisure activities. However, it is worth remembering that *The Grasshopper* is an essay on game-playing, not on play. If, according to my interpretation, Utopia is aimed at providing a transcendental reconstruction of game-playing, then Suits's perfect world must be exclusively based on game-playing. What makes game-playing so different from other intrinsically valuable practices, especially from those included within the broader category of play?

"Autotelicity" (that is, carrying the purpose within itself) is the first necessary condition for play but not a sufficient one.[15] For Suits, activities like Aristotle's contemplating the essence of justice and a cat chasing its tail are autotelic activities but not instances of play. On Suits's account of play, what differentiates playing and game-playing from other autotelic activities is the "temporary relocation to autotelic activities of resources primarily committed to instrumental purposes."[16] Playing and game-playing share the relocation of resources in common. Both are experienced as a voluntarily chosen unnecessary activity.[17] Despite the commonalities between "playing" and "game-playing," Suits distinguishes them sharply:

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[13] Ibid., pp. 188-89.

[14] Ibid., p. 170.

[15] Emily Ryall, "Playing with Words: Further Comment on Suits' Definition," in *The Philosophy of Play*, ed. Emily Ryall, W. Russell, and M. MacLean (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 44-53.

[16] Bernard Suits, "Words on Play," *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 4, no. 1 (January 1, 1977), p. 124.

[17] Chad Carlson, "The 'Playing' Field: Attitudes, Activities, and the Conflation of Play and Games," *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 38, no. 1 (May 1, 2011), pp. 74-87.

In contending that playing and playing games are logically independent, I mean that, even though game-playing very often is playing, one cannot conclude that because x is an instance of playing that x is therefore an instance of game playing, and also that one cannot conclude that because y is an instance of game playing that it is therefore an instance of playing.[18]

Play is a broad concept that includes activities like vacationing, reading a novel, playing chess, or playing the trombone.[19] Game-playing is a sub-class of play activity that is defined as:

[the] attempt to achieve a specific state of affairs [prelusory goal], using only means permitted by rules [lusory means], where the rules prohibit use of more efficient in favour of less efficient means [constitutive rules], and where the rules are accepted just because they make possible such activity [lusory attitude].[20]

The defining element of game-playing, in contrast to other types of playing and, especially, to work, is that players voluntarily choose to overcome unnecessary obstacles to achieve a goal. This turns inefficiency and problem solving into the defining elements of game-playing. Games occur within an artificial world where inefficiency creates a set of challenges for the players to overcome.

As opposed to the instrumental and calculative logic that dominates our society, games are created by voluntarily choosing to use less efficient means over the most efficient ones. While obstacles are natural in everyday life, they are artificial in games. For this reason, the ends in instrumentally valued activities are independent of the means. In games, means and ends are logically connected, so the way to achieve the goal matters more than the goal itself. For example, the main goal of soccer is to get the ball to pass the score-line using any part of the body other than the arms. Participants can employ instrumental reason to plan plays, defend their score-line, improve their training methods and equipment, and so on. This would increase their chances to win by finding the most efficient means allowed by the rules. However, they cannot adopt the tactics of carrying the ball with their hands or of slaughtering any opposing teams that appear on the field.[21] In these two last

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[18] Suits, "Words on Play," p. 120.

[19] Suits, *The Grasshopper*, p. 18.

[20] Ibid., p. 43.

[21] Ibid., p. 22.

cases, by not using the right means, the soccer "players" would not be playing the game of soccer, but doing something else, namely, rugby or murder. Game-players embrace the obstacles posed by the game because overcoming them is what makes the activity intrinsically valuable. Erasing or avoiding the obstacles created by the rules goes against the logic of games. The pivotal roles of obstacles and inefficiency are key differences between game-playing and playing.[22]

Play activities like playing the trombone or vacationing are not based on the inefficient overcoming of obstacles, but on achieving a certain goal, such as mastering the instrument or visiting places. Play activities are not fully engaged in for their own sake, but also for a purpose different from the activity itself. This is not the case of intrinsically motivated game-playing. Only game-playing is the perfect instantiation of autotelic motivation. However, this does not mean that game-playing cannot be beneficial or productive. In fact, in Suits's theory of games, "productivity"[23] seems to be another key difference between playing and game-playing. The different relation they have with instrumentality is clearly illustrated by the fact that play activities that are not games are eliminated from Utopia.

According to Suits, a life of continuous play would lead to "boredom," which would kill Utopia. If Utopians spent their lives on any type of leisure activities, they might soon end up "having nothing to do" or having "nothing to strive for." Everything would eventually be achieved,[24] which would lead to a dystopian life, not a utopian one.[25] In a world where everything can be accomplished easily, activities like reading, vacationing, or playing the trombone become meaningless. The pleasure of traveling around the world wears off as soon as one has visited every place in the world. Likewise, there is no joy in reading books, if one has read them all and knows everything about them. As Scott Kretchmar argues, play activities might be engaging for a while, but they lack the capacity to become meaningful for a long time. Fun wears off easily in play activities.[26] For Suits, the reason for

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[22] Suits distinguishes between primitive play and sophisticated play to refer to play and games, respectively. "Primitive play" is an activity which is "not engaged in any instrumental enterprise," whereas "sophisticated play" is primitive play with the addition of the skill required to overcome the obstacles posed by the constitutive rules.

[23] Deborah P. Vossen, "Utopia Is Intelligible and Game-Playing Is What Makes Utopia Intelligible," *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 43, no. 2 (2016), pp. 251-65.

[24] Suits, *The Grasshopper*, p. 188.

[25] McLaughlin and Kretchmar, "Reinventing the Wheel," p. 47.

[26] R. Scott Kretchmar, *Practical Philosophy of Sport* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1994); R. Scott Kretchmar, "Gaming Up Life: Considerations for Game Expansions," *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 35, no. 2 (October 1, 2008), pp. 142-55.

this is that play activities still have an instrumental character, that is to say, they are aimed at achieving a goal. When such a goal is achieved, the activity is not so engaging anymore. A life exclusively dedicated to play would, at the end of the day, lead to boredom.

The only way to overcome boredom in Utopia is to find an intrinsically valuable activity, where people strive endlessly. For Suits, such activity is game-playing. Not only are games more durable and engaging than mere play activities,[27] they are essentially related to overcoming challenges created by limiting the use of efficient means. Play activities are only incidentally related to problem solving and inefficiency. There are moral or prudential reasons for using less efficient means to achieve a goal. However, only in games is the acceptance of limitation for the sake of the activity itself.[28] Inefficiency makes the experience of overcoming artificial challenges possible. The acceptance of a set of (constitutive) rules is what creates artificial challenges by restricting the use of the most efficient means.

Game-playing is the result of "the acceptance of constitutive rules just so the activity made possible by such acceptance can occur."[29] This is to say, game-playing is impossible without what Suits calls "lusory attitude," which is the "without which not of"[30] game-playing.[31] The lusory attitude is what makes participants forgo efficiency through the creation and acceptance of rules that set artificial obstacles, compelling game players to seek challenges or artificial problems just for the sake of overcoming them, just because the activity as such is meaningful to them. One cannot be playing a game without adopting the lusory attitude.

Games and lusory attitude are logically connected ideally but not *de facto*. Sometimes, people engage in games for extrinsic reasons, just because the game allows them to achieve something else, not autotelically from intrinsic reasons. Playing does not follow from being engaged in games. For instance, the prevalent fitness ideology focuses on the mental and health benefits of engaging in sports, overlooking their intrinsic value. Game-playing, in the case of sports practitioners who seek health benefits, is just a mere means to an extrinsic end.[32]

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[27] Carlson, "The 'Playing' Field," pp. 83-84.

[28] McLaughlin and Kretchmar, "Reinventing the Wheel," p. 106.

[29] Ibid., p. 43.

[30] Ibid., p. 194.

[31] McLaughlin and Kretchmar, "Reinventing the Wheel," p. 35.

[32] Moira Howes, "Challenging Fitness Ideology: Why an Adventurous Approach to Physical Activity Is Better for Well-Being," *Sport, Ethics, and Philosophy* 10, no. 2 (April 2, 2016), pp. 132-47; Brian Pronger, *Body Fascism: Salvation in the Technology*

Sport philosophers refer to Suits as a formalist philosopher because his notion of games is essentially grounded in rules and rule-following. [33] My interpretation of Suits's notion of games presented here—in alignment with that of William Morgan,[34] McLaughlin, and Kretchmar—places less emphasis on the role played by rules and more on the participants' attitude. This takes Suits's notion beyond formalism and shows that identifying Suits as the main proponent of formalism is misguided.[35] It might well be true that the creation of obstacles through rules that prohibit the use of the most efficient means is essential to games, for there would be no obstacle to overcome without such rules. However, the creation of obstacles is the result of an ulterior element: the lusory attitude. Rules are the result of the participants' will to solve problems just for the fun of doing so. The lusory attitude is what defines games:

> One's attitudes might influence one's distaste or enjoyment of solving mathematical problems, but is irrelevant to the fact that it is a math problem. One's attitude might influence how well or how poorly one plays the cello, but does not dictate what it means to play the cello. But in games, the lusory attitude not only makes the activity intelligible, it makes the activity.[36]

4. Utopia: A Counterfactual Assumption

The second function of utopian thinking is normative. From this standpoint, Utopia is, in Kant's terms, a counterfactually[37] grounded *regulative ideal*. To explain what regulative ideals are, Kant opposes them to

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of Physical Fitness (Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

[33] William J. Morgan, "The Logical Incompatibility Thesis and Rules: A Reconsideration of Formalism as an Account of Games," *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 14, no. 1 (May 1, 1987), pp. 1-20; Robert L. Simon, "Internalism and Internal Values in Sport," *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 27, no. 1 (May 1, 2000), pp. 1-16; Francisco Javier Lopez Frias, *La Filosofia Del Deporte Actual. Paradigmas Y Corrientes Principales* (Rome: Quapeg, 2014).

[34] William J. Morgan, "On Suits on the Moral Normativity of Games" (unpublished manuscript), accessed online at: https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/uploaded_files/content/1630/file/Morgan_On_Suits_on_Normativity_of_Games.pdf.

[35] Ibid.; Lopez Frias, *La Filosofia Del Deporte Actual*.

[36] Suits, *The Grasshopper*, p. 32.

[37] M. Andrew Holowchak, "Games as Pastimes in Suits's Utopia: Meaningful Living and the 'Metaphysics of Leisure,'" *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 34, no. 1 (May 1, 2007), pp. 88-96.

constitutive categories.[38] Constitutive categories, such as mathematical and geometrical concepts, are in relation to an object in the world.[39] In contrast, regulative ideals are beyond the possibility of experience.[40] This does not mean that they are useless or mere fantasies. Rather, they are humanly necessary assumptions, whose function is to make comprehensible *actual* notions or practices like motion, human species, scientific knowledge, and morality. The idea of an ordered cosmos, for instance, is a regulative ideal for Kant. For knowledge to be possible, it is necessary to presuppose that natural laws result from an ordered, broader cosmos. However, experiencing the ordered cosmos is impossible for the cosmos is not, argues Kant, an objective reality.

Kant's best known regulative ideal is found in his ethics: the "kingdom of ends." The "kingdom of ends" provides a social realization of his "categorical imperative"[41] that commands us to "act in such a manner as to treat humanity . . . in every case and at all times as an end as well, never as a means only."[42] In the "kingdom of ends," the categorical imperative becomes a social reality. Individuals have created a systematic union by abstracting from the content of private ends and treating themselves as ends, instead of as means to further ends. In this way, people live in harmony, allowed to pursue their life plans with nobody interfering with them. This fiction provides an ideal view of morality that we must strive to approach.

As with any Kantian regulative ideal, the "kingdom of ends" has a dual role. It is used to guide critique by highlighting the possibility conditions of morality and provides a "fertile *ground of transcendental illusion*."[43] On the one hand, in the "kingdom of ends" individuals are fully autonomous. Not only is the capability to make autonomous choices a possibility condition of morality, but autonomy is the source of morality because autonomous beings are valuable in themselves; they have dignity and cannot be valued as means

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[38] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (New York: Penguin, 2007), secs. A643/B671; Jürgen Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion: Philosophical Essays* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2008), p. 30.

[39] Michael Friedman, "Regulative and Constitutive," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 30, no. S1 (March 1, 1992), pp. 73-102.

[40] Michael Bennett McNulty, "Rehabilitating the Regulative Use of Reason: Kant on Empirical and Chemical Laws," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part A* 54 (December 2015), p. 4.

[41] Anton-Hermann Chroust, "About a Fourth Formula of the Categorical Imperative in Kant," *The Philosophical Review* 51, no. 6 (1942), pp. 600-605.

[42] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. and trans. Allen Wood (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 4, sec. 429.

[43] Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion*, p. 24.

to other ends. This eliminates instrumental relationships from "the kingdom of ends." There, everybody is treated as an end, showing that autonomy and dignity are conditions of possibility of morality that must be accepted. On the other hand, Kant's "kingdom of ends" sets an ideal world that human beings can approach. In cases where cooperation is flawed, the fiction of the "kingdom of ends" raises hope and expectations of future coordination with others. The hope that things can always improve is made possible by envisioning a world where human beings are treated as ends in themselves. The kingdom of ends will never be realized fully. However, it is always being realized to some extent and with some intensity.[44]

My contention is that Suits gives Utopia the same dual nature as Kantian regulative ideals. Suits's Utopia, understood as a counterfactual presupposition, is an "imaginable future toward which humans, through technological advances, are actually converging [and] from which we can learn something about ourselves today."[45] Aligned with Kant's elimination of instrumental relationships from the "kingdom of ends," Suits, through counterfactual imagination, creates a fictional world in which game-playing is pivotal and instrumental actions are eliminated. In Utopia, as Suits argues, "there is no need for . . . instrumental actions—that is, actions whose value lies not in themselves but solely in their further purposes."[46] Everybody is engaged in game-playing. The ideal type of life that Suits portrays in *The Grasshopper* is neither a life devoted to playing nor one dedicated to engaging in what we call games. A Utopian existence is "not a life of frolic, leisure, and sensuosity."[47] Utopia is a place where human beings face freely chosen problems:

> All kinds of activities . . . can be valued for themselves, even those normally *regarded* as instrumental. . . . Does this destroy the Grasshopper's game-playing Utopia? Not at all . . . for all such activities, if they were to exist in Utopia, would be games . . . . [A]ny effort a Utopian put into the production of those commodities would be unnecessary. And so Utopians who *worked* at producing such things would be engaged in the voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles; that is, they would be playing games.[48]

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[44] Julio De Zan, "La Utopía Kantiana de la Comunidad Etica.," *Isegoria* 33 (2005), p. 157.

[45] Holowchak, "Games as Pastimes in Suits's Utopia," p. 93.

[46] Bernard Suits, "Games and Utopia Posthumous Reflections," *Simulation & Gaming* 15, no. 1 (March 1, 1984), p. 8.

[47] McLaughlin and Kretchmar, "Reinventing the Wheel," p. 85.

[48] Suits, "Games and Utopia Posthumous Reflections," p. 11.

Utopians are constantly involved in the voluntary attempt to overcome (natural or artificial) obstacles, that is to say, playing games. In Utopia, where all basic human needs are already satisfied, every problem is freely chosen. Autotelic activities are intrinsically valuable; they cannot be produced, just experienced. This is one of the main lessons of Suits's Utopia. A carpenter, like John Striver, who chooses to build a house, would be playing a game. As there is no need for houses in Utopia, Striver's decision voluntarily to attempt overcoming the *unnecessary* challenge of building a house should be regarded as a game.[49] Likewise, a Utopian, like William Seeker, who wants to know the explanation of planetary motion only needs to ask for the truth, and computers would reveal it to him.[50] If he *unnecessarily* were to attempt to arrive at an explanation of planetary motion, then he would be playing a game.

The lusory attitude is key, here. It predisposes players to find challenging situations.[51] Any activity can be turned into a game by adopting a lusory attitude toward it. The lusory attitude makes game-players focus less on the result of their activity and more on the activity itself. A game-player would not reduce the experience of enjoying carpentry to the ends produced. The lusory attitude points to something that cannot be reduced to utility, just as Kant's "kingdom of ends" is grounded in human beings' dignity—both are intrinsically valuable. Game-players truly play when they play for the sake of doing it, just for the unique experience resulting from it.

This aspect of Utopia is not merely descriptive, but normative—or "stipulative," in Suits's terms. It tells us the right way to engage in games: by adopting the lusory attitude. Leaving room open to game-playing motivated for extrinsic reasons destroys the essential experience and function of the activity: experiencing the attempt to overcome an obstacle. Engaging in games with a utilitarian attitude is a performative contradiction, for trying to do so implies the *elimination* of obstacles to achieve the lusory goal. However, instrumental motivation and lusory attitude are *logically incompatible*.[52] Based on this point, and drawing on the second formulation of Kant's Categorical Imperative, we could formulate a "Suitsian" categorical imperative of game-playing: "Engage in the game in such a way that you treat the game never merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end in itself." As with the Kantian "kingdom of ends," Suits's utopian creation serves to project an ideal situation where all players engage in games

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[49] Suits, *The Grasshopper*, pp. 191-92.

[50] Ibid., p. 193.

[51] McLaughlin and Kretchmar, "Reinventing the Wheel," p. 45.

[52] Morgan, "The Logical Incompatibility Thesis and Rules."

essentially for intrinsic reasons. This ideal world will never be possible, but it can be approached.

5. The Anthropological Assumption Underlying Utopia

The affirmation that the life most worth living consists in game-playing assumes that game-playing is the main and most essential dimension of human nature. This negates the principles upon which modernity is built. In modern societies, as analyzed by thinkers of the Frankfurt School of Social Thought, human beings are viewed as rational, utility-maximizing animals. As such, humans use instrumental reason, based on scientific knowledge and technical progress, to master and bend nature so as to satisfy all human needs. This is precisely what has been achieved in Suits's Utopia. Human beings need only to think about something to have it, since computers provide them with all they need and want.

In this sense, it could be argued that, in claiming that the life most worth living consists in game-playing, Suits is making a postmodern claim.[53] Perhaps the prevalence of instrumental reason in modern society must be criticized and rejected in order to search for a more free and ludic world, where human beings get to realize their inner lusory attitude toward life. Suits might thus be regarded as a social theorist, but my contention is that he is not. Suits is essentially a theorist of games, and *The Grasshopper* is essentially a book on game-playing. The normative ideal situation that Utopia proposes has to do with *the way* participants engage in games. Game players *must* engage in games *because* they want to overcome artificial problems, that is to say, by adopting the lusory attitude. The lusory attitude is more than a descriptive element of game-playing. It is a normative component. Adopting it "is not a choice, but a *must*."[54] In order to further this idea, Suits explains:

> A game Utopia is a logical inevitability. [The] argument that it might be better for us to accept a non-Utopian over a Utopian existence rests upon a false premise, namely, that we have a choice in the matter. The Utopia I envisage is not a state of affairs that is *ideally desirable*; it is simply a state of affairs that is *logically inevitable*.[55]

Utopia is a "logical inevitability" in two senses. First, game players must presuppose Utopia for their game-playing to be possible and make sense. When they engage in a game, they must respect the "integrity of the game"[56]

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[53] Allan Bäck, "The Paper World of Bernard Suits," *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 35, no. 2 (October 1, 2008), pp. 156-74.

[54] Suits, *The Grasshopper*, p. 11.

[55] Suits, "Games and Utopia Posthumous Reflections," pp. 19 and 15.

[56] John Gleaves, "Exploring New Avenues to the Doping Debate in Sports: A Test-Relevant Approach," *FairPlay, Revista de Filosofia, Ética y Derecho del Deporte* 1,

by accepting the obstacles and challenges and trying to overcome rather than eliminate them. Without this expectation, the game would be either very fragile or untenable since participants would constantly need to pay attention to whether the other participants are trying to face the same obstacle or just want to eliminate them through the use of more efficient means. A necessary assumption for the game to be possible is that participants will cooperate instead of defect by cheating.

In a second sense, the logical inevitability of Suits's Utopia relates to a sociological and anthropological assumption, namely, that modern human beings' nature is based on maximizing efficiency. Utopia is the realization of the dreams and potentials of modern human beings' calculative, instrumental reason. However, for *modern* game players, autotelic reasons might not be the only reason they have. Such motives are necessary to engage in a game, but they do not exhaust the array of reasons that might motivate game players. The lusory attitude is not contradictory with a productive attitude,[57] but with exclusively instrumental attitudes: to say that "Utopians only do those things which they value intrinsically is to say that they always do things because they want to, and never because they must."[58]

Utopian or ideal game players must engage in activities for intrinsic reasons mainly because they want those activities to occur. They are trying to approach an ideal game situation where nobody is engaged in the game just for extrinsic reasons.[59] This is the normative component of *The Grasshopper* and what Utopia realizes fully as a social reality. Although Utopia will never be achieved, it provides guidance (and hope) to approach Suits's ideal world, where perfect cooperation among game players is a reality. In Utopia, Suits portrays an alternate reality, where the lusory attitude has already been instituted as a social reality. Utopians engage only in activities which they value intrinsically, thus eliminating instrumental motives. Utopia is, paraphrasing Kant, a "kingdom of game-players with a lusory attitude." My interpretation of Utopia does not exclude the possibility of using Suits's ideas to provide a "ludic" interpretation of human nature and the life most worth living. However, it focuses on Utopia as a fictional creation that (a) reconstructs the possibility conditions of game-playing to demarcate it from other autotelic activities, and (b) provides a normative criterion by which critically to evaluate instances of game-playing. Such a critical criterion

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no. 2 (2013), pp. 39-63; Robert Butcher and Angela Schneider, "Fair Play as Respect for the Game," *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 25, no. 1 (May 1, 1998), pp. 1-22.

[57] Suits, *The Grasshopper*, p. 190.

[58] Ibid., p. 191.

[59] McLaughlin and Kretchmar, "Reinventing the Wheel," p. 45.

depends on whether the participants embody the lusory attitude that motivates them to create unnecessary, artificial obstacles to overcome.[60]