147 - THE GAME OF SURFING ON THE IMAGINARY OF SURFER

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The game in its concept makes reference to toys, amusement, exercise or pastime which are under certain rules or combinations, it means, something where people get together to spend time in a pleasant way, without any commitment whatsoever. The game is connected to playfulness and this playfulness makes reference to the game itself as something amusing, something where you have fun.

This game involves sliding and having balance on the wave over a surfboard is connected to the view of Costa (1999), to the catalysis of the energetic force that comes from the elements of nature (winds, waves, currents), using it as a power plant to the slide of a surfboard over waves bringing pleasure to the practitioner.

Huizinga (2004) says that the game is a voluntary activity where you participate as an own option and this becomes necessary due to the pleasure it brings to the ones involved. It ends up being transformed into an indispensable activity. Moreover, the author suggests that within the circle of the game, the laws and habits of the daily life lose stamina.

Heráclito cited by Retondar (2004) says that playfulness is a movement of construction and deconstruction of our reality that it is carried through without any external need to the movement itself. The game happens inside each individual and it does not have any obligations for its accomplishment, the man plays the game for pleasure.

"On a perfect definition, to play the game is the best shared thing in the world. You can play the game anywhere and it does not matter with what. Everything, an object, a word or even your own body can become into an improvised or habitual support to the playful activity."

The objective of this article is to analyze a possible existing game between the surfer, nature, surfboard and the body movement that this practice involves. To accomplish this, we adopted as reference some authors who comment on the game regarding its several different aspects. Thus, we look for this relationship, surf and game, in the eyes of the surfer.

In this research together with seven informers the half-structuralized interview was adopted as a methodological strategy to collect data, which will supply information to understanding the social imaginary involving this activity looking for a relationship to the game. The interpretation method used on the discourse was based on the analysis of the discourse of Orlandi (2003).

The surfer observes the waves to surf them, enter the sea in the search for them and slide in a balance game. They also dispute the preference to catch the waves with other surfers. Moreover, they seem to be constantly examining the weather conditions of nature, the wind directions and swells, conditions which also seem to be essential to find the best beaches for surfing.

In the beginning, the game looks like to be with nature, bringing demands to the surfer perception and interacting intensely with the forces of nature, checking what happens to the forces of the universe what seems to be important to the practice of surfing.

With the evolution of the media, we have now specialized programs on the radio, on TV and on the Internet that display detailed surf forecasts to these actors, facilitating and stimulating the surfers to know where and when the waves will be ideal for practice. The forecast sometimes cannot be confirmed because you have to pay special attention to the changes in nature so that you can find the best place to surf.

The essence of the game according to Huizinga (2004) is in its intensity, its glamour, in its ability to excite people that are the main characteristic of the game, where men have joy and tension that result in amusement. And according to the author above the game has two basic aspects: the fight for conquering something and the representation of this thing to the game. Surfers are fascinated by waves, they want to reach them, to be close to them and to slide on them. They seem to be excited by the waves, but they must look for where they are and conquer that space. They have to find this place where the challenge of the search and discovery exists, the surprise of the new, where uncertainty and fate are present and perhaps luck is another factor in this environment.

Gadamer (1985) mentions that in the game it is implicit the come and go of a movement that it is repeated constantly, he means, the playful swing. And the special aspect of this game is that it can include reason, a personal characteristic of mankind. We have to set objectives and try to reach them consciously as well as to invalidate the distinctive characteristic of the human reason and simply be taken by the game without thinking too much about it. This is the essence of the game. For this author the playful swing is not tied to any purpose as certain sayings: the game of light, the game of the waves. Self moving is the basic characteristic of anything alive, it means, if it is alive it has the impulse for a movement in itself, it is self-moving.

When the man is really playing, Retondar (2004) says that the subject lives that moment vigorously, or better, it puts his body and soul into the game transferring himself or herself to a playful state, where reason has no place; only pleasure, distraction, fantasy, where the man surrenders to the game.

The idea of Retondar agrees with the one by Duvignaud (1982) that mentions playfulness as a manifestation of the subjectivity to the power to produce fantasy and this fantasy modifies roles and things, even a laugh or poetical surrealism. Playfulness presents a deep ambivalence, he explain, it is free but necessary, futile but serious, full of rules but not ruled and around two poles: subversion and integration. The author also says that to play the game is at first to play with the body.

The playfulness on surfing can be disclosed as free because you practice whenever you want but it becomes necessary as soon as it brings pleasure and it makes you feel like doing it again. It may also be futile but when engaged in its accomplishment it can be serious, so at the moment of playing the game, it must be played in its best way. Even if it is free and because on this freedom it seems to be the best way of playing the game whereas in competitions the obligation of doing it makes this activity not so pleasant anymore.

The surfer enters the game with nature now looking for a wave to surf. The waves come in his or her direction and he/she does not know the exact moment they will break. The surfer needs paddling from one place to another looking for the best place to drop that wave and slide on its wall for all its extension. This discernment to find the best place to enter the wave and enjoy it the best possible way presents a challenge, an internal dispute to dominate it, in a game of search, balance, overcoming and pleasure.

1- Barreau, Jean-Jaques; Morne, Jean-Jaques. Epistemologia Y Antropologia del deporte. Madrid: Alianza Editorial S.A., 1991.
2- The sites www.surfguru.com.br, www.waves.com.br, are the most used ones to verify the forecast to the practice of surfing.
3- First slide on the wave.
4- Also called Poseidon the God of the seas, oceans, rivers, fountains, lakes. The domain of waters belongs to Him as well as hell belongs to Hade, the sky to Zeus, and the Land to the three brothers. Its attribute, the trident, or the three tips harpoon, analogous to the ray of Zeus, could originally represent gushing out of the waves and lightning. As Poseidon is a feared God: it is the God of the stormed sea that brings peace (Chevalier, J; Gheerbrant, A. 1994).
5- The inside section of a wave that breaks in a cylindrical form. Surfers love to go through the barrels. And this is one of the most desired maneuvers in surfing. In Souza, 2004. p. 151.
6- Many times when a surfer successfully carries through a maneuver he might say: - This maneuver was Kelly Slater style. Kelly Slater is a great surfer who is a six-time world champion of the World Championship Tour and his maneuvers are imitated by other surfers that can see him surfing at a beach or watch videos of his performances. The same happens to some waves - This wave was like a wave from Indonesia. Some films show the best waves in the world and these images stay on the unconscious mind of the surfers. Another possibility is when the surfers have already been to the place before and imagine themselves at this place again comparing the wave they have just surfed to the ones they could surf when at the place of comparison. The pleasure of the present moment is extended to the past.

Callois (1990), after examining the different possibilities of the game, divides it in four main headings: the role of competition, luck, imitation and vertigo and he nominated them as Agôn, Alea, Mimicry and Ilinx. However, according to the author, these nominations do not entirely enclose the universe of the game.

What we can perhaps compare in this game of surfing is the search for the wave, it might represent the "alea", because the surfer might count on his/her intuition and also has to count on luck to find a good wave. Luck plays an important role in the activity, what makes it even more exciting due to the fact that this uncertainty generates stimulation so that the surfer gets involved and really enters the game.

According to Caillois (1990), in this type of game the player must take fate into account probably the only artifice for the victory that means that the winning player was bluffed better by luck. He or she limits himself/herself to wait it, expectant and distrustful, for the impositions of luck. The sea can or can not send good waves to them, therefore the surfer prays for Neptune in order to be successful in his sea adventure.

Once at top of the surfboard the game is set with the wave, the game of balance, to shared through the maneuvers, to catch a barrel. The wave is something that is formed, gets high, breaks and moves in its extension and the surfer tries to get the most of it. Waves are unique and one wave is never like another one. Consequently, you can not predict how they will break and you will find out about this as you surf it taking necessary decisions to surf it in the best possible way. It is a game of improvising, of malicious skills involving astuteness an others, it means, a game of action.

For Gadamer (1999), the swing movement is so central to determine the nature of the game that it becomes indifferent who or what executes this movement. The movement of the game as such has, at the same time, a lack of substratum.

Yet in the game with the wave the surfers, in this movement of coming and going, carrying through the maneuvers, always seem to look for something similar to some another surfer that surfs with flow, style, or either with good characteristics that are admired. He tries to imitate them when surfing as a way of identification, therefore giving some movement in the imaginable activity of the surfer.

When Callois (1990) talks about the classification of the games, mimicry appears as any game that supposes the temporary acceptance or of an illusion or, at least, of a closed universe, conventional and imaginary under some aspects. Not only can the game consist of the accomplishment of an activity or of the installation of a destination in a fictitious place but also on the incarnation of an illusionary character and in the adoption of the respective behavior. It seems that many surfers, when practicing surfing, make comments to one another as if they had made a maneuver in a similar way of their idols and also making comparisons with the best waves in the world.

Still according to Callois, they face a series of manifestations that have similar characteristics as basing on the fact that the surfer plays to believe, to make himself believe or even to make other people believe that he or she is another person.

This can be a way of looking for the ones involved in surfing as they seem to be comparing to each other all the time, trying to overcome limits among themselves and this results in imitation. But you also have creativity when they try to make something different that they always do. I mean, they are able of doing what other guys do and now they will try to make something different, something new that nobody has made yet, generating conditions for overcoming limits already reached by somebody else. This generates a kind of competition among the practitioners as a healthy contest that stimulates the game, the fun. One tries something different, the other tries to imitate that successfully or not, it really depends on the moment.

In Callois (1990), in his classification of games, the “agôn” term deals with competitions, where the combat with equal chances is created. The dispute to catch the wave and the accomplishment of the best maneuvers on the wave can be the generating reason of the dispute among them.

Surfers get together in predetermined places where they know they will find a good wave but some will search for them in isolated places. But when they are together even taking into account their friendship, they enter the game and want to show the best maneuvers they can make to the others, in an attempt to overcome their limits and the limits of a friend that can be real or imaginary. Many times this motivation can only come from the fact that there are people watching their practice. But when they are reunited for surfing, surfers create their own rules of playing the game on the sea, rules that are not familiar to the watchers on the beach, because what happens on the very moment before a surfer starts surfing a wave is only understood by a person who surfs.

The waves can break in two directions, to the right and to the left. Usually, the surfer that is in the peak of the wave will have the preference of dropping on it and slide for all its extension. For example, if a surfer goes for a wave to the left and another surfer is in the most critical part of this wave, this other surfer may have the right of surfing it. These are rules created by the surfers themselves, conventions that have been adapted in accordance with the necessities they had; perhaps for respect or even to avoid accidents but that is the way it is established. So, every one tries to place himself in the best possible place on the sea when the wave breaks and consequently have the right of surfing that chosen wave.

Callois says (1990) that no matter how equal the rules are for each one, an absolute equality is never entirely achievable due to certain factors involved in each type of sport. We can make a comparison with the rules for the practice of surfing.

"The game is a free activity, consciously taken as non-serious and outside from the usual routine life, but at the same time it is capable of absorbing the player in an intense and complete manner. It is an activity away from any material gain with no profits involved practiced within space and time according to certain rules and order. It promotes the formation of social groups that tend to be surrounded by secrets and that underline its differences in relation to the rest of the world by some disguises or other tricks "(Huizinga, 2004)

Callois (1990) says that the game is not simply an individual distraction; he explains that even if it is an individual game of maneuvering a toy and talking about surfing, the toy is the surfboard, it would not be interesting if there were no competitors, viewers, even virtual ones. The owners of the same toys get together in a known place and there they evaluate their skills and many times this is the essence of their pleasure. Maybe when surfers get reunited each one tries to show the new maneuvers they can do with their surfboards.

In the classification of Callois (1990), it seems that surfing also is included in the vertigo game, because at the moment of sliding on the wave, or either, dropping on the wave from the top of the wave to its base as well as the balance on top of its surfboard, where the game is a constant loss and gain of this balance, in the attempt of the accomplishment of maneuvers. The surfer constantly loses and gains balance in nanoseconds, perhaps provoking an intense corporal vertigo.

Ilinx is a term used by Callois (1990) and it is a kind of game where it associates the ones in the search for the vertigo, and they consist of an attempt to destroy, for a few seconds, the stability of the perception and impose to the conscience a kind of voluptuous panic. Reaching a type of spasm, trance or dizziness that vanishes any sense of reality with great abruptness.

Callois (1990) still describes that these assignments do not entirely enclose all the universe of the game. He says that the games can be hierarchical in two distinct poles: one he calls "paidia", where fun, turbulence, improvisation and an abandoned side where fantasy rules are the most important elements. And the other pole called "ludus", that opposes to some aspects of paidia but not many and it needs to subordinate to conventional rules, imperative and bothering rules, making it difficult to the achievement of a desired objective.

Making an association to the leisure sports practiced in contact with the nature, Costa (2000) talks about mountaineers, but we can also talk of the paidia for surfers that, such as the mountaineers cited for the author, get excited, face and overcome obstacles, carry through feats; and tend to ludus, the regular and integration pole, when they metamorphose into a self regulating

7- It is the most critical part of the wave where the surfer initiates the drop.

8- A state of mind and body that a person is involved in which the surfer feels a lack of balance sensation and where all objects around him or her seem to go around (Quinodoz, 1995).

9- Highest part of the wave in opposition to the bottom.

10- Bottom part of the wave in opposition to the top.

11- Sports that have their space already determined or tamed (courts, fields, swimming pools)

paidia, disciplining themselves in the training for the adaptation to the environment. This is the case for mountaineers and the same happens to surfers as you have the variations of temperature in the water, the size of the waves where adaptation is necessary and also for meditation, in a form of symbiosis with nature, adopting a state of calmness and tranquility to face the challenges that the game imposes to them.

Entering in this game with the nature these sportsmen are in direct contact with the contemplative beauties of the universe, perhaps something that motivates them to remain in this kind of activity. A surfer can spend hours admiring waves, the landscapes that surround the activity of surfing such as mountaineers when conquering a mountain they climbed. Perhaps these activities when mixed with the modern man are a way to get back to freedom. It seems that men want to come back to its deeper origins because we are somehow distant from our naturalness.

To Schiller (1995) men always contemplate the beauty of an object, a landscape, a place. Men are symbolically projecting their freedom on this certain object admired. On this perspective, the playful man not only searches for an escape from this morality prison but also fights for giving life to things around him, giving freedom to objects around.

We come to the conclusion that the surfer, in this culture, enters in harmony with the nature, I mean, everything on his or her side; the sea, the waves, the sun, the sky, the people, and mainly with himself, entering in this perfect state of balance with the universe.

As surf is not a crystallized sport, it demands from the practitioner an intense contact with nature, the surfer needs to observe the weather conditions, to choose the best place, the best time of the day to make his practice safer. Through these observations, the surfer gets close to Mother Nature always paying attention to its changes. Thus, the surfer is creating harmony with nature rather than confronting it. Through this view the surfer depends on the elements of the nature as he or she enters in the game with nature, observes it, analyzes it and goes to the sea in search of the desired wave.

As an adventure, the practice of surfing excites the playful practitioners, playful sensations that facilitate the living with the dreams and the inner heroes. This adventure in the sea represents a rupture with the interdicts and the engaging with the unknown going from a familiar world to a strange one, taking the agents to the confrontation of uncertainties, to the unpredictability of what can happen. And this is what seems to seduce and involve them.

The game is part of the human nature, and in the waves the surfers have found a type of very healthy game due to the fact that they are in contact with the nature all the time where there is an interaction with the natural beauties and where they can feel and play with one of the purest forms of the universe, the phenomenon of the waves.

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THE GAME OF SURFING ON THE IMAGINARY OF SURFER

ABSTRACT: This article had the purpose of analyzing the surfing practice taking into account the perspective of the game. A half-structuralized interview was used on it and it was identified the imaginary of surfers and their relationship with nature, looking for answers revealed during its practice as well as before and after its accomplishment. The surfer enters the game in this contact with nature, observing it, when connecting to the sea searching for the wave and contemplating it, always looking for harmony rather than confronting it. **Key-words:** game, imaginary, surf.

LE JEU DE SURFE DANS L'IMAGINAIRE DU SURFER

RÈSUMÉ: Cet article a eu l'objectif de faire une analyse de la pratique de surfe en ayant un regard dans la perspective du jeu. A été utilisée une entrevue de non standardisée, où s'est cherché identifier dans la imaginaire des surfers relation de celui-ci avec la nature, en extrayant des réponses comme est faite cette connexion au moment de la pratique, ainsi qu'avant et après sa réalisation. Le surfer entre dans jeu dans le contact avec la nature, l'observant, si en lançant à la mer dans la recherche de la vague et de la comtemplando elle, toujours en cherchant à être en harmonie dont proprement lui affrontera.
Mots-clés: jeu, imaginaire, surf.

EL JUEGO DEL SURF EN EL IMAGINARIO DEL SURFISTA

RESUMEN: Este artículo tuvo el objetivo de hacer um análisis de la práctica del surf tiendo una mirada en la perspectica del juego. Fue utilizada una entrevista no estandarinada, donde se recogió identificar en el imaginario de los surfistas la relación de este con la naturaleza, extrayendo de lãs respuestas como es hecha esta conexión en el momento de la práctica, así como antes y después de su realización. El surfista entra en juego en el contacto con la naturaleza, observándola, lanzándo se al mar em la búsqueda de la onda y comtemplando-a, siempre buscando estar en armonía de lo propiamente enfrentarla. **Palabras-clave:** juego, imaginario, surf.

O JOGO DO SURFE NO IMAGINÁRIO DO SURFISTA

RESUMO: Este artigo teve o objetivo de fazer uma análise da prática do surfe tendo um olhar na perspectiva do jogo. Foi utilizada uma entrevista semi-estruturada, onde se buscou identificar no imaginário dos surfistas a relação deste com a natureza, extraindo das respostas como é feita esta conexão no momento da prática, bem como antes e após sua realização. O surfista entra em jogo no contato com a natureza, observando-a, se lançando ao mar na busca da onda e comtemplando-a, sempre procurando estar em harmonia do que propriamente enfrentá-la. **Palavras-chave:** jogo, imaginário, surfe.