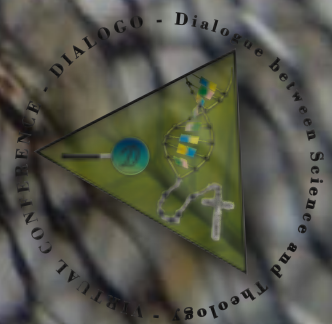


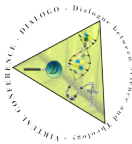
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*„SEE THE UNSEEN”*





# ***Ludic role of religious rituals***

## ***The use of play for religious ceremony***

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**Abstract:** This paper was made as part of a wider research I made about rituals and their meaning and roles they are playing in the religious system of thinking. The way they are thought, displayed, precisely followed as instructed and believed, makes them a powerful social act that has been always provided by any religion, and also a tool for religion to make the human society what it is today. After I speak about what is a ritual and its religious content in general, I am enumerating roles and functions of play and theatre in particular have, both for profane and religious purpose.

Do we still use play/games as adults because they are rewarding, they give us pleasure? They are used as means of relaxation, or for continuing the age of childhood; or it is in our nature to play games in everything we do? In this paper I have emphasized play as adaptive potentiation or adaptive variability useful both in therapy, as in religious ceremony. The relation and comparison of rituals with play is due to the fact that playing is the most engaging behavior performed by man and animals, and it can be found as foundation of almost any ritualist activity.

**Keywords:** *play, games, function, education, healing, role-play, ceremony, therapy, misconceptions,*

### *childhood*

#### I. INTRODUCTION: PLAY AND RITUAL AS MEANS OF ALTERING REALITY

Role play and religion have many things in common – both build on reinterpreting reality with clear rules and rituals with the same effect on people, to make them believe reality can be changed through inner vision.

I cannot help myself noticing that very often the religious ceremony is compared with a (theatrical) play, and that, in many cases, is said in a pejorative way. And since I must give an answer to these “challenges” without abdicate from my role as religious minister, I had to wonder myself whether these claims are somewhat true without necessarily having something bad, dishonorable in them, and so I have got making up the material presented here in full.

What are the implications of the ludic, especially in relation to ritual? The parallel between these two methods of putting reality in role, allows for simultaneity when people are dealing with several ways of classifying reality, which demands comparison of those alternatives. The ritual itself must be understood

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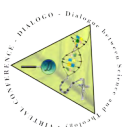
in its double perspective with normal reality. Why is that? First of all, because ritualistic actors act inside “this world”, but speak as they descend from “another” one. “As soon as people start playing schemes, developing another reality, as happens in ritual, the aptitude for simultaneity is indispensable” [1].

Nowadays, under the pressure of globalization and secularism, people are impelled to recognize as “real” only what can be experimented, therefore religious rituals had to deal with this challenge and stress on its experimental function, and play role can be one of the main means of doing it. Seeing the specific pattern every religious ritual has, some scholars consider it as rigid and inappropriate to experiment; “the ritual schemes are usually applied in a routine manner, which might give the impression that nobody is aware of the meaning of the symbols used and that they are reduced to their schematic minimal skeleton” [2]. In the same time any game, beyond its seen aspect of entertainment, has the same scheme/routine as ritual, with rules and applicability as ritual has, and this gave us one more justification to reconsider the relationship between them. Because “the minimal nature of schemes allows for their creative application” [3], ritual can serve all kind of functions, but “people repeat rituals because they offer diversion and satisfaction through the playful creation of a relevant alternative reality” [4]. Victor Turner consider that the human ludic capacity is a modus “to catch symbols in their movement, so to speak, and to play with their possibilities of form and meaning” [5]. As a first conclusion, taking a look on the ludic qualities and functions, it may help us understand how ritual works, beyond its sacramental aspect.

Players in live-action-role-games decide that the stage where their role-playing-games takes place is a kingdom. Likewise the church’s parishioners share an acceptance that the bread and wine of the Holy Communion are the body and blood of Jesus [6]. But the similarities are also extended to the audience, for they choose to believe in a certain constructed reality, taking position against the ‘reality’ as we see, and trying somehow to alter it accordingly. There are several articles mentioning the similarity between role-play and rituals, more since the business of e-games is rising; they ‘felt’ somehow

that people, especially youth, have the urge to be led by unknown forces and become a character among others sharing mutual rituals and aims. I have even saw an interesting article [7] where the authors place particular emphasis on the similarity between social information phenomena present in both ritual and pretence (delusion), and the way those affect cognition – the seemingly “magical” interface that makes shared experiences possible. This kind of studies were made from a cognitive study of religion showing that certain key phenomena in games can be modeled as patterns of information and thus examined to a deeper level than before and make this intel useful in order to create more addictive games for youth. Both, in case of play as in that of ritual, the temporary creation and enactment of an alternative reality in which they both create, by particular means and the permanent reference to elements of physical reality as their counterpoint of networking, “suggest that people temporarily turn the established repertoires of normal reality upside down or inside out, or exaggerate them” [8].

In myths, religion, and play, man “creates a second, poetic world alongside the world of nature”. The process is more elaborate and distinctive and ornate than in the case of outer world. Because of the imagination of any mythology, man comes to perform sacred rite, sacrifices, consecrations and mysteries, all of which serve to guarantee the well-being of the world, in a spirit of pure play truly understood” [9]. Mostly any religion states that their rituals have effect exclusively on those who “believe” in the power (reality) of them (the positive explanation) and (negatively) tell that no curse can harm you if you do not believe in it also. That’s why the changing to well-being of the world – as adherents imagine – takes place for real and effect humans not only spiritual, but also literally changing them, bodily speaking. Not seldom we heard about people that were miraculously healed just by attending a religious ritual or get bodily-seen new aspects (e.g. brightening, stigmata, levitation, and fragrant bones). The same principle works in case of play as ludic therapy. The therapist reconstruct the world outer reality into a fiction role and put people became actors in their lives in order to handle situations and resolve problems.



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### II. THE MEANING OF RITUAL

First of all we have to understand the meaning of ritual in order to comprise its roles among which I pick up here for special debates the role of play or ludic roles of religious rituals. The meaning of ritual is deep indeed. *He who tries to enter it with the kind of perception that distinguishes hard and white, same and different, will drown there* – Xunzi (third century B.C.E.). *The great instinctive forces of civilized life have their origin in ritual. All are rooted in the primeval soil of play* [10].

So, what is a ritual? According to the Oxford Dictionary of World Religions [11] any ritual, either for religious or secular, profane context, is defined as “actions repeated in regular and predictable ways, both in religious and secular contexts, serving so many purposes that summary is impossible” [12]. At a first sight rituals have several elements that recurring every time, making them the core principles of them. “Religious rituals is usually thought to comprise repetition, commitment, intention, pattern (especially of movements), tradition (often by linkage with myth is regarded by some as supplying the meaning of the ritual), purpose, and performance” [13]. Not seldom public ritual was associated with social drama, which lead unsurprisingly to the origin of theatre in religious rituals. The association of religious ritual with civil, secular human activities leads to restauration of the former and it’s origination in the later. Thus, rituals were thought as emerging from play [14] and from theatre, or from other activities that imply repetition and pattern (e.g. ploughing and sowing – J. Frazer; expressing collective consciousness – E. Durkheim). For those activities that cover strange, unknown or shadowed area of life, a need to construct surface-level meaning by the procedures of an internally coherent life-world makes ritual a step of adapting to this ‘walk in shadow’ condition (P. Ricoeur) [15]. That significance makes rituals a normal human behavior of adaptation for religion is an adaptive, spiritual response and the solution to mortality and social existence [16], first constructing an image upon what we intend to solve, than act accordingly and develop a solution that can be implemented outside the ritualistic stage.

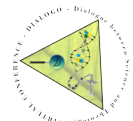
Whether we are talking about pilgrimage,

ancestor worship – as the ritualized commemoration of, communication with, and sacrifice to one’s deceased relations [17] –, death and dying, fasting or feasting, or about celebrating something or receiving new adepts into the community, all of these rituals’ themes and many others have the same elements getting the rituals done as appointed above. Rites of feasting and fasting are those through which a community publicly expresses an adherence to basic, shared religious values, rather than to the overt presence of deities as is found in rites of affliction [18] where feasting or fasting may also take place. It encompasses a range of performances such as communal fasting during Ramadan by Muslims; the slaughter of pigs in New Guinea; Carnival festivities; or penitential processions in Catholicism. Everything takes place in an atmosphere of ceremonial through a social agreement of the whole community to which it refers, and the actions and gestures that, from the outside, pass for unacceptable or sometimes abominable, in the social context mentioned they are more than natural, with defined roles and irreplaceable functions.

Not infrequently public rituals were associated with social drama, which unsurprisingly put the origin of theatre in religious ritual, for example in Greece, India and Japan. Along with other motifs of social drama, religious rituals played an important role in ancient theatre. But the use of rituals for public display in the theatre is not the issue for the present paper, although it is an important subject for any other debate. Instead we are interested here only on the single-sided relationship between religion and theatre, namely that the former uses all the means the later provides for religion to express itself as adequate as possible.

### III. THE ROLE OF PLAY IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Is play so important for human (to) function? Cannot it be replaced with anything else, something more rational and logical? We usually are inclined to consider ‘play’ as childish and superfluous, related only to the age of childhood and also a ‘thing’ we have to give up in order to evolve, to grow up and become more ‘adult’. But, is it so? Do we need to remove ‘play’ from our life/thinking in order to become more



human?

Because most societies have this kind of misconceptions about 'play', they think that it should be done exclusively for/by children and they tend to create a lot around it with activities and behavior that are labeled as childish. "We are accustomed to think of play and seriousness as an absolute antithesis" [19]. That's why we always define people with these kind of activities as behaving in a silly way that makes you seem much younger than you really are - used to show disapproval [= immature] [20]. Whoever behaving so is treated as alienated from humanity pattern of being and impelled to behave, i.e. to act according to their age and give up childhood mode. "Men do not quit playing because they grow old; they grow old because they quit playing." (Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr.) Facing these misconceptions sometimes we hear that the only (categories of) persons that can be happy (as finding happiness) are crazy-people and children. We raise our children in this belief and inoculate them the fear of gaming, the presupposition that play/games are somehow bad, inadequate for a grown up and that they should give it all up in order to step up into the human society. "From the earliest years, children rehearsed the productive roles they would play as adults... Most adolescents followed the path their parents did. The transition from childhood play to adult work did not require any change in attitudes, values, or knowledge" [21]. Childish activities must be replaced with work and, since play is presented as opposite to work, soon (even 'under-aged' persons, depending from one culture to another) every child forgets his childhood and, in many societies, they will learn how to control themselves, to seek harder for career and work, to develop into a more serious young man. 'Joking and playing won't pay your bills', would be a universal language spoken affectively in this regard.

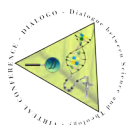
Still, due to the instability of the job market, "young people no longer live in a world where adult productive roles are predictable. They have little idea of what they will actually do when they grow up, and they do not know which role models, if any, are valid. They do not know what expectations are realistic, what skills are useful, or what values are relevant to their future" [22] and usually a job for people who can entertain

other easily, play more often or take all as a game, can be as easy to find as other 'serious' ones. For we also believe that, hiding deep inside us the moments of childhood play, we always came up with plans for other games; Life is a game with permanent consequences.

Why there are still games/play in the list of adults' activities? Does they have the same purpose as for children? Some may say it doesn't matter as long as they are present and bring the same outcome. The point is that at every age games are changing, get different look, but the target seems to be always the same: self-entertainment. However, M. Csikszentmihalyi think that this involvement of play in most adults' activities have a different angle and it is strict related to work as a valve. Considering that "the survival needs and self-respect dictate that they (adults, n. n.) must invest the most substantial portion of their energy in productive activities... , "Thank God It's Friday!" has become a mantra for workers in all classes who can hardly wait for the weekend to begin" [23]. So, the main point is that, while for children play is the main activity involving all their energies, reasons, goals, learning means - in a word, almost everything - , for an adult this is only used because "They give us a sense of control together with a chance to forget ourselves temporarily" [24] and only as long they are related somehow to the work we are doing. Same authors imply that, again, we dedicate ourselves to work, sometimes excessively dedicated to one's job, and we have many other feeling related to work than exclusively payment. The very fact that we are paid is considered to come from the meaning of play. "The reason work is intrinsically rewarding is that jobs are like games" [25]. In conclusion we will find opinions that make play last over the ages of human development, sometimes making the performance of a grown-up in a play even better and more profound, more organized and determined than a child's play.

#### IV. PLAY AND PRAY

There are several methods by which we can transmit our knowledge to other people. The characteristics of 'teacher' and 'learner' are also important for choosing the right and most operative technic, along with the relation built among them. The depositing of religious vision



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in people's mind can be easily done if: people are eager to be thought, the leader is charismatic, and the information is S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Approachable, Relevant, and Time-friendly). The simple is the way of transmitting the necessary information, the faster will be assimilated and the longer it will stick in their mind and habits. This is a very summary way of describing the basic principles upon a teacher should choose his methods of teaching and carry on his vision.

It is well-known that, besides learning – that usually can become very rigid and sterile if it is not doubled with a relaxing interruption – people, from childhood to late adulthood, need to be involved into different acts of play, just for fun. It was Friedrich Fröbel's [26] merit to combine these two 'different' types of activities into a single, more productive, more enjoyable one. According to proponents of the concept, play enables children to make sense of their world. "The game is a mirror of life, their own and of another's, of inner life and that surrounding" [27].

### A. Functions of Play

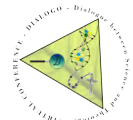
Play is often defined as activity done for its own sake, characterized by means rather than ends (the process is more important than any end point or goal), flexibility (objects are put in new combinations or roles are acted out in new ways), and positive affect (children often smile, laugh, and say they enjoy it). The goal of 'play' is often thought to be exclusively done for amusement rather than for work. These criteria contrast play with exploration (focused investigation as a child gets more familiar with a new toy or environment, that may then lead into play), work (which has a definite goal), and games (more organized activities in which there is some goal, typically winning the game). [28] But play is likely to be multifunctional. That is, it may have more than one adaptive benefit, and any given species may evidence some, all, or none of the benefits. This being the case, cross-species comparisons can be troublesome. What may appear a promising explanation in one species may not be replicable in another. Even if Burghardt's [29] psychological theory (Surplus Resource Theory, SRT) presents negatively some of the functions that play have over the

personality of any child involved in such kind of activities, I still want to emphasize them here, considering that the negative perspective is not so 'negative' after all, at least concerning its applicability on religious ritual.

### B. A better way of transmitting information

The game is a voluntary activity that produces joy and satisfaction of participants. By extension, the game is a parallel world, fantastic (not necessarily unreal [30]), in which the participant can interpret any desired role, in a story imagined by himself or by the group of participants. If in physical life we cannot detach ourselves from the limits and restrictions of the environment and our own, in the game – in the psychological, mental world – we can imagine the that we have any skill we want, can become any character we want and try any approach suits us – this is the fundamental approach of psychoanalysis entrusted to playful therapy. "In the plan of religious experience sacred indicates the real, but a real compelling us to come out of contingencies and our particularism towards paradigmatic" [31]. In a pragmatic approach of life, the reality of the game, and consequently one of sacred, are designed to absorb inaccuracies and deficiencies of physical reality, to solve them and to provide appropriate solutions in favor of both realities, without compromise and the neuralgias that would occur when the solution came directly, in the physical world, often accompanied by failures.

At the same time play has considerable advantages over those involved in the game against the systematic teaching method. It is interactive so that without knowing from the beginning all the information boring the game relies on, participants can start to play and, as they grow and accumulate new information, they develop and play better on, developing even their own episodes / upper levels of the game when they master the rules and can juggle with them doing all sorts of variations on the same theme by combining and recombination sequence without departing from the idea of the game. There are games that have these effects on participants and that captivates so hard that sometimes participants become impatient to evolve to the next level. Another advantage game has to the systematic learning is that



through game, participants better aware of what they do, understand easier and better how the game works and they contribute to complete it or carry it forward. The game is important part of the child's intellectual development, but also for the proper development of the adult. Johan Huizinga titled his book *Homo Ludens* [32] and argued that play was a defining human characteristic. Play, he contended, is the driving force in the evolution of civilization; he introduces the game as cultural phenomenon and not - or not primarily - as a biological function. Also for Friedrich Schiller 1967, play is the activity that allows humans to realize their highest aspirations and ideals [33].

For his portrayal in a game the participant appeals to figurative - imaginary or physical - representations that play different roles and functions in the management of the game. These objects / characters can be evoked even mentally, in their physical absence. As he plays, the participant accumulates lots of new knowledge and he diversify his mental actions. He develop his imagination; each participant understands different the game and the role he plays along with the other in ludic framework.

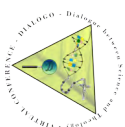
### C. Ludic Therapy - Healing role of ritual

Emotional involvement is another feature of any game; each participant feels the urge to satisfy his need for competition and he throws into the game more and more of his resources, intellectual, emotional, physical or of other nature. This way the outcome of the game became his own result, bringing satisfaction or disappointment to the participants as the result should be real (no less real than the in physical life). Attachment to a game or a role in the game will come along with its attributes to be challenging, but also with partial positive gains / results.

Play is an effective method, along with drama, to solve real problems, either by finding solutions applicable to physical life, or even by psychological, virtual resolutions; both bring wellbeing of participants, comfort required to overcoming emotional blockages encountered in life or in the game. It also helps to increase the adaptability in the facing emerging new circumstances. Through play, many participants learn and develop collective sentiments that

otherwise would not have how to gain; they learn respect for neighbors, learn to be grateful and also responsible the relation with others. I have met at some point a situation linked to art area that could give us a comparative idea of how people choose their religion as well as how religion may be lead to failure. Generally, people tend to approach with a critical, disapproving attitude other religions when they considered themselves "clarified" through their own experience, and so they say that the appointed religious vision does not work for them, even if they haven't try it at all. This opinion, entirely subjective, it is normal and justified up to a point. Looking at a time for an instructor of guitar for my son, I wanted - as any other parent would do - what's best for him, so I turned - as it was "normal" - to the experiences of others and we have reached to a famous instructor with many results and performing students. But, to our great disappointment, his teaching methods were unable to persuade the boy to make any progress, not to mention to excel in the field. We continued for some time thinking logically that if the praised instructor had so many great results, we should insist and maybe finally he will succeed with our son too. But unfortunately, this logic was not applicable because the method did not work out, on the contrary, it brings him more close to reluctance for the instrument than to results or satisfaction. Accidentally, the child was enthralled into a camp by an older boy who knew how to play the guitar and he taught in a few days everything that he knew, not much, but enough to build his confidence and passion playing the guitar.

This experience came into my mind when trying to fit some facts that were opposing one to another, although they were all valid: on the one hand, there are plenty of diverse religions, each with visible results on spiritual improving on some of their adherents, and on the other hand things that do not work as that for many others so, disappointed with the failure that a particular religion had over their lives, they slander it calling it sterile and untrue. The answer may lie precisely in a pluralist approach of the earlier example: perhaps there isn't only one instructor with one valid method for everyone and that, what had really good results for some, will fail on the spirit of others who, rather than abandon the project, should search for another instructor (religion).



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There are several reasons for play is the best method of learning. Age young, inexperienced, abstract knowledge, vocabulary cumbersome... these are just some of the reasons why many educators prefer this method to direct learning. In many of these cases learning is done only if dressed in a playful form. Participants can easier store knowledge and concepts that otherwise would not be fixed; they will start to imitate behaviors and will gain faster psychological experiences as skills, that normally would require a longer time for fixing. Interaction with other partners during play produce, in addition to entertainment and comfort, also social abilities, of communication, feeling of belonging to the group involved directly or indirectly. Greater cohesion among group members, developed during a game or of mounting a theater play, is often used as target in circumstances of conflict of some social categories (schools, prisons, companies, etc.). By using these playful methods the conflicting parties are posted in direct contact and made to manage new situations, different from the reason of their conflict, in order to create a state of dependency between partners. We will be amazed to see what unexpected changes are made role during play compared to the social roles (statuses) possessed in fact by the participants.

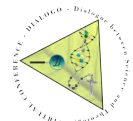
Both play and theatre have been used in therapy as we have already mentioned about psychodrama, for healing is forever regarded in the recognition of mind/body/spirit connection, therefore healing should be first done at spiritual level, so that healing in spirit would take effect healing the body. "Primitive peoples evolved rituals to express the fundamentals of human life, following the cycles that are intrinsic within life forms, in order to bring about resolution and thus healing - this may be a healing of tribe, healing of a family, healing of a disease or resolving of threats to the tribe's survival. Theatre expressed through a dramatic form themes that were pertinent to each era. The audience is carried on an emotional journey, and given the opportunity to experience many things, and comes away feeling they have lived through these events vicariously and thus experienced the effects of the catharsis, with a sense of being uplifted or liberated." [34]

For the purpose of understanding why

theatre and ritual are used for healing, we have to see what healing is in the first place. Healing is a process of slowly coming back into alignment with the innate and unifying wisdom of a cosmic evolutionary plan, and ritual has its role to play in this process. Spiritual healing involves a dialog between unconscious part of the patient with his consciousness, a kind of conversation in which he acknowledge the regressed state of 'wealth' he is in and the need for a cure. In short, in any case of healing it is a base rule, a sine-qua-non condition for the patient to acknowledge his illness and to look for a cure. "When a person successfully participates in sacred ritual, she promotes healing by requesting and drawing down sufficient light energy from her higher self (the numinous self) and/or her superconscious (the psychological respond) to illuminate those negative energetic patterns which are the focus of desired change" [35]. The process of healing is difficult and time-consuming, but when we cannot appeal to something else, play / ritual is the best chance we have to overcome the situations from physical life. How play help alter reality in the benefit of participants? Placed firmly in the ritual's interval discourse and seen through the participants' 'inner eye', this reality becomes shared through religious actors' performances and, most important, through narratives of the journeys that transpose participants into different reality and transform them from simple, passive spectators, into active witnesses and participants, translated by the transformations their bodies, minds and lives suffer insofar through the changes of their consciousness.

### CONCLUSION: LUDIC ROLE OF RELIGIOUS RITUALS

It is easy to see that almost all religious manifestations use pictures and visual representations of their faith or something related to it. However, alongside this universal imagining, any religion contains ceremonies structured so that they contain essential elements of religious belief - among other elements. Inside the game of ritual, participants change their social roles and become something else. The new role they gain is also implied by the healing aim of ritual. For example, in the case of St. John the Baptist and the governor



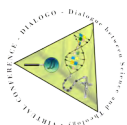


Herod Antipater that led to the executions of the former. In their worldly life, the master was the governor, but beginning their religious play-role, the one that scold and rebuke was St. John, however the governor has not accepted permanently the game and his leaving the game led subsequently to John's death.

The parallel approach of these two ways of interpreting the reality help us rehabilitate the use and importance of the contested term of ritual, because the ludic represents a way in which ritual acts beyond those aspects it is normally reduced to (e.g. societal or cultural causes or functions, subjecting the masses through the power of influence, 'opium to the people', etc.). We saw that, by far, the most relevant aspect of this relationship, play and pray, that should be accepted even in the secular world, is the healing role of ritual. As play is frequently used in therapy, so should ritual be 'used' with the same goal, as it is for other purposes. We can research for this role in the incipient birth of any ritual, for they have this ontology of 'soul retrieval', "blurring the line between spirituality and psychotherapy and perceiving the quest towards the divine as indistinguishable form of self-development" [36]. Compared to the reality of everyday life, other realities provided by rituals and play appear as endless deposits of meaning and vast ways of experience without the danger lived in the unknown course of physical life, and consciousness always returns to the paramount reality as from a dream. The symbolic universe of ritual/play establishes a different hierarchy from the everyday life that "the individual can live in society with some assurance that he really is what he considers himself to be as he plays his routine social roles, in broad daylight and under the eyes of significant others" [37].

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- [21] Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Barbara Schneider. *Becoming adult: how teenagers prepare for the world of work*. New York: Basic Books, 2000, p.



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- 23.
- [22] Ibid, p. 24.
- [23] Ibid, p. 34.
- [24] Ibid, p. 32.
- [25] Ibid.
- [26] Friedrich Wilhelm August Fröbel (1782-1852) cf. Constantin Cuceș, *Istoria pedagogiei, Iași: Editura Polirom, 2001.*
- [27] Stoian Stanciu (edit.), *Din istoria gândirii pedagogiei universale, București: Editura de Stat Didactică și Pedagogică, 1959, p. 298.*
- [28] Anthony Pellegrini & Peter K. Smith, *Learning Through Play*. In "Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development", june 2013. Online source: <http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/Pages/PDF/Smith-PellegriniANGxp2.pdf> (accessed 8/31/2015).
- [29] Gordon M. Burghardt, *The genesis of animal play: Testing the limits*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005, p. 165-8 et al.
- [30] We do not use here the word unreal because we would have to define what is real, or, in the words of Plato and Cartesian cogito, real is everything that exists in one form or another, and thus those in our minds too. With modernity the philosophy discovers that what is real is relative to what can be known and psychological sciences prints the character of this "real" to all human feelings and imagination, showing once again that the philosophy centered on the activity of the subject, not upon the object (as was the case empiricists Bacon, Hobbes, Locke or Hume) is entitled to assert the realism of what is thought not only what falls under contingency of senses.
- [31] Aurel Codoban, *Introducere în Filosofie*, ed. a III-a, nepublicată. <http://comunicare.codoban.ro/if.pdf>, p. 82.
- [32] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens. A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.
- [33] Online resource:
- [34] Claire Schrader (edit.), *Ritual Theatre: The Power of Dramatic Ritual in Personal Development Groups and Clinical Practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2012, p. 33.
- [35] Ibid, p. 73.
- [36] Don Handelman, *Ritual in its own right...*, 2005, p. 153.
- [37] Berger Peter L. & Luckmann Thomas. *The Social Construction of Reality; a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991, p. 118.

BIOGRAPHY

Ciocan Tudor Cosmin, born in Constanta/ Romania in 1977, I have attended several theological and psychological schools (BA, MB, PhD), obtained my PhD in Missiology and Doctrinal Theology in 2010. I was ordained as orthodox priest in 2002. High-school teacher from 1998, then Professor assistant and Lecturer from 2012, I have written more than 30 papers on theology and psychology, along with 4 single author books in the past two decades.

In 2013 started a multidisciplinary program aiming to engage scholars from different files into friendly and academic debates with theology and in the same year a Research Center was founded in Ovidius University with researchers from 11 fields. In less than 1 year I manage to gather people from around the globe around this idea and so we have started Dialogo Conferences project. In 2014 I received a Fulbright scholarship and I spent the summer California and 4 other States in USA, gathering data and understanding how *religious pluralism* is possible at a high level of involvement; in the same time I made friends from many different countries and religions that are now involved in this project or another, helping in his endeavor.

