

The Ludic Exception and the Permanent Emergency: Understanding the Emergency Regimes with the Concept of Play

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Abstract : In contemporary politics, the state of emergency has become a permanent and salient feature of politics. This study aims to clarify the anthropological and ontological dimensions of the permanent state of emergency. It pays special attention to the structural relation between the exception and play. Focusing on the play in the context of emergency and exception enables the recognition of the difference and sometimes the discrepancy between the exception and emergency, which has passed into oblivion because of the frequency and normalization of emergency situations. This study coins the term “ludic exception” in order to highlight the difference between the exceptions in which exuberance and paroxysm rule over the socio-political life and the permanent emergency that protects the authority with a sort of extra-legality. The main thesis of the study is that the ludic elements such as risk, conspicuous consumption, sacrificial gestures, agonism, etc. circumscribe the exceptional moments temporarily, preventing them from being routine and normal. The study also emphasizes the decline of ludic elements in modernity as the main factor in the transformation of the exceptions into permanent emergency situations. In the introduction, the relationship between play and exception is taken into consideration. In the second part, the study elucidates the concept of ludic exceptions and dwells on the anthropological examples of the ludic exceptions. In the last part, the decline of ludic elements in modernity is addressed as the main factor for the permanent emergency.

Keywords : emergency, exception, ludic exception, play, sovereignty

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