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Lessons in Playing: A Current Work of Art as a Biopolitical Milieu

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Lessons in Playing: A Current Work of Art as a Biopolitical *Milieu*

Philosophy at Play, University of Gloucestershire

Wednesday 10th April, Parallel C, Room TC018, 11.05 – 12.40

Questions:

- i. How can we think the correlation of play and governance in a way other than that of opposition?
- ii. How do certain current works of art (especially those that construct the space of exhibition as a playground and provide ‘lessons in playing’) organise and govern play, and so allow us to study this correlation?
- iii. What happens to our understanding of aesthetic play (*viz.* play that is particular to the encounter/experience of works of art) when a work of art is organised and governed thus?

Claims:

- (a) A biopolitical analysis of the work of art as playground allows us to address question *i.* because such an analysis studies *productive, non-coercive* and *environmental governance* that seeks to allow players to be free to play (therefore play and governance are not in opposition).¹
- (b) Robert Morris’ *Bodyspacemotionthings* is such a playground and allows us to study biopolitical governance in operation. It is a *biopolitical milieu*.
- (c) If our understanding of aesthetic play takes into account the organising function of constraints and rules in this case, we see that these can be both governmental and *ludigenic* (*viz.* productive of play)—hence, answers *i.*

(a)

Governance, or what Foucault calls the conduct of conduct,² faces a compelling problem in the organisation of a playground, because play is, intuitively and by most definitions, a volitional activity. It is something a player must choose to do. The problem for governance, then, is how to conduct those whose conduct is necessarily contingent—those who are (and, arguably, must

¹ Foucault’s thesis on biopolitics and its correlate biopower is first published in volume one of *Histoire de la sexualité* of 1976, but is developed concurrently through three courses given at the Collège de France between 1975 and 1979. Roughly, Foucault claims that the regime of power specific to modernity is to be distinguished from previous regimes insofar as its central problems are the biological life of subjects and the government of populations (or, the biological life of individuals and the species). *Biopolitics* describes

‘the attempt, starting from the eighteenth century, to rationalize the problems posed to governmental practice by phenomena characteristic of a set of living beings forming a population: health, hygiene, birth-rate, life expectancy, race. ... How can the phenomena of “population,” with its specific effects and problems, be taken into account in a system [liberalism] concerned about respect for legal subjects and individual free enterprise? In the name of what and according to what rules can it be managed?’ (*Naissance de la biopolitique : Cours au Collège de France, 1978-1979*, edited by F. Gros, [Paris: Seuil/Gallimard, 2004], 323)

This problem of population implies technologies of power different (but still complementary) to those of disciplinary apparatuses. Firstly, this is an *administrative* and *managerial* problem (e.g. the physiocratic response to grain scarcity analysed by Foucault in Lecture Two of *Sécurité, territoire, population : Cours au Collège de France, 1977-1978* (2004); and secondly, it involves the production of *productive, speaking* bodies that are able to act freely, rather than the *docile* and therefore *useful* bodies of disciplinary power. Advanced liberal governance consists of ‘stimulating others to act i.e. not preventing or restricting certain forms of action that much, but rather promoting or even demanding them’ (Thomas Lemke, ‘Participation,’ in *Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft im Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie*, [Berlin: Ars Viva 10/02 Kunst und Design, 2001],

<[http://www.thomaslemkeweb.de/engl.%20texte/Participation%20\(engl.%20Version\).pdf](http://www.thomaslemkeweb.de/engl.%20texte/Participation%20(engl.%20Version).pdf)> (accessed 4th December 2008)).

² Michel Foucault, *Naissance de la biopolitique*, 192.

remain) capable of doing otherwise, those who can, as Michel de Montaigne famously wrote of his cat at play, “begin or refuse.”³ Put simply, the problem is *how to govern, but not too much*.⁴ This is what Foucault called “the game of liberalism,” letting things take their natural course,⁴ but then also knowing when to intervene in order to secure against disorder and to reproduce the freedoms that liberalism demands and consumes. As Foucault writes:

The new governmental reason ... needs freedom, the new art of government consumes freedom. It consumes freedom, which means that it must produce it. It must produce it, it must organize it.⁵

In its organisation of freedom, this is governance that, ideally, *lets things happen*; it is *environmental*, working to construct a *milieu* that allows players the freedom to play freely.⁶

With his analysis of biopolitical governance, Foucault moves from a critique of discipline and subjectivation (e.g. *Discipline and Punish*) to a critique of the production and exercise of freedoms.⁷ As Miller and Rose argue, the problem is now how it is possible for subjects to be governed by means of their freedom to choose (to begin or refuse).⁸

In manuscript notes (which were not used) to the lecture of 21st March 1979 at the Collège de France, Foucault explicitly connects playgrounds with this governance, this new governmental reason that produces and organises freedoms. The principal aspects of the latter are:

The definition around the individual of a framework loose enough for him to be able to play; The possibility for the individual to regulate effects [in order] to define his own framework; The regulation of environmental effects [especially with regard to] non-injury [and] non-absorption [i.e. playing too seriously]; “the autonomy of these environmental spaces.”⁹

This is governance that invests through and through in the production of natural play,¹⁰ but also takes this latter to be that which limits governance, and which might even amend the operations

³ Michel de Montaigne, ‘Apology for Raymond Sebond’ (1575-1580), *The Complete Works: essays, travel journals, letters*, translated by D. M. Frame, (London: Everyman’s Library, 2003), 401.

⁴ As Foucault claims:

‘The game of liberalism—not interfering, allowing free movement, letting things follow their course; *laissez faire, passer et aller*—basically and fundamentally means acting so that reality develops, goes its way, and follows its own course according to the laws, principles, and mechanisms of reality itself.’ (*Sécurité, territoire, population*, 50)

⁵ Foucault, *Naissance de la biopolitique*, 65.

⁶ ‘... in which there would be action not upon the players of the game but upon the rules of the game.’ *Ibid.* 265.

⁷ I do not assess here Foucault’s late work on the care of the self developed principally in the second and third volumes of *Histoire de la sexualité* (1984a, 1984b) and in his courses at the Collège de France from 1979 to 1984. In these works, Foucault addresses how a subject might work upon itself and care for itself in such a way that it develops the art of not being governed quite so much, or not being governed ‘like that and at that cost’ (1978c, p. 384). Foucault claims that the anxiety with regard to the problem of how to govern is not the question: ‘how not to be governed?’ Rather, it is the question:

How not to be governed *like that*, by that, in the name of these principles, in view of such objectives and by the means of such methods, not like that, not for that, not by them? (*Ibid.*)

⁸ Peter Miller and Nicolas Rose, ‘Political Power beyond the State: Problematics of Government,’ *British Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 2, June (1992), 201.

⁹ *Ibid.* 266. Foucault continues:

‘Not a uniform individualisation, identificatory and hierarchical, but an environmentality open to chance occurrences (*aléa*) and transversal phenomena. Laterality.

Technology of the environment, of chance occurrences, of freedoms of (play?) between demands and offers.’

¹⁰ Kozlovsky marks playgrounds as an object of advanced liberal governance when he identifies an ‘irresolvable contradiction’ at their heart (‘Adventure Playgrounds and Post-war Reconstruction,’ in Gutman, M. and de Coninck-Smith, N. eds. *Designing Modern Childhoods: History, Space, and the Material Culture of Children; An International Reader*, [New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 2007], 171). The modern understanding of play as the more or less spontaneous and voluntary expression of a subject comes into contradiction with the recruitment of play, especially the play of children, to advance social and educational policy and the regulation of play according to normative social demands. This translates into an understanding of their being an obligation on the part of society and various

of governance. To think these two together is the problem at the core of this paper.¹¹ In accordance with Foucault's analysis, what the player *must want to do* in order to play does not contradict the governance of that playground in which this play occurs.¹²

More precisely, our question becomes, How can we think the *constitutive* rules and constraints of play (again, those that the player *must want to follow*) as both governmental and *ludigenic*, rather than thinking of play principally as a naturally occurring activity upon which *regulatory* or *disciplinary* rules and constraints are then imposed?¹³

Morris' *Bodyspacemotionthings* interests us here because (1) it consists of a governed *milieu* in which play is, to some extent, *unruled* but still under constraint;¹⁴ and (2), the constitutive rules of play and what players must want to do in order to play are not entirely clear. If there are constitutive rules to play, they are *still to be arrived at* (through play). For those in pursuit of these rules, perhaps we can begin to speak of *aesthetic play* – play in which “[the] objects and sensuous stuff of the world are ... actively felt for, celebrated and elaborated upon.”¹⁵

public, civic or government authorities to facilitate play (play understood here as a natural right and entitlement). This has often resulted in no more than the provision of standardised playgrounds and normative play activities for children designed in alignment with policy directives. Significantly, however, Kozlovksy notes that the adventure playground movement, which by allowing children to play in the absence of external constraints and in the absence of a predetermined playground architecture and agenda sought to avoid the instrumentalisation of play by social policy, nevertheless by this very means made the latter more effective (*ibid.*). It appears that governance is effective more by allowing play to happen, by allowing for adventure, than by imposing regulation and compelling discipline.

¹¹ It should be remembered that ‘advanced liberal’ governance, as Rose describes it, is not bleakly effective upon the conduct of those governed. It does not impose an ‘idealised schema’ by an act of sovereign will (‘Governing “Advanced” Liberal Democracies,’ 42). Power relations are reversible in an open game of strategic connections. As Gordon points out, it is perhaps this aspect of liberal governmentality—‘the idea of a kind of power which takes freedom itself and the ‘soul of the citizen’, the life and life-conduct of the ethically free subject, as in some sense the correlative object of its own suasive capacity’ (‘Governmental Rationality: An Introduction,’ in Burchell, G., Gordon, C. and Miller, P. eds. *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, [Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991], 5)—that most fascinates Foucault. To liberalism there is a peculiar mix of permissiveness and manipulation. It presents an ‘enduring puzzle’ (*ibid.* 18), constituting the world as open and problematic, with regards to which it must constantly reinvent and reapply itself. As a political doctrine, liberalism does not seek the imagined stability of total effectuation but instead constantly reconfigures the world as an object of partial knowledge and a problem that might require intervention.

¹² Even when play is ruled, those rules are something that the player ‘must *want to do* to accomplish the practice constituted by the rule’ (Stéphane Chauvier, *Qu'est-ce qu'un jeu?* [Paris : Vrin, 2007], 35; on ‘constitutive rules’, see 24-36). Play is not necessarily, or not only, accomplished by the imposition of extrinsic and normative rules upon a natural or already existing practice. In this case, rules summarise from particular cases that precede them (John Rawls, ‘Two Concepts of Rules,’ *The Philosophical Review* 64, no.1, January [1955], 23). Nor is it necessarily the elaboration of a set of optimising rules that would have an internal relation to such a practice. If the rules operative in play are to remain *constitutive* rules (rather than regulatory or optimising), then they can neither impose a supplemental nor interfering condition upon the will of a player.

¹³ E.g. ‘play is what children do when no-one else is telling them what to do’ (National Children’s Office, *Ready, Steady, Play! A National Play Policy*, [Dublin: The Stationery Office, 2004], <http://www.omc.gov.ie/documents/publications/NCOPPlayPolicySUMM_eng.pdf> Accessed 10th June 2008, 11).

¹⁴ What Morris calls, many years later, ‘an interrogative space’ (‘Professional Rules,’ *Critical Inquiry* 23, Winter [1997]).

¹⁵ Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), 14. For this play to take place in the museum indicates a departure from the more conventional organisation of the museum, which, Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel argue, came to resemble that of the church: the encouragement of a *silent* state, ready to receive grace; conspicuous display of valuable, ‘sacred’ objects; openness to all; security against violence, raucousness, etc.; the belief that material objects (works of art) can be the occasion for enlightenment and an experience of the immaterial. (*The Love of Art: European Art Museums and their Public*, translated by C. Beattie and N. Merriman, [Cambridge: Polity, 1990])

With a work such as *Bodyspacemotionthings*, aesthetic play no longer has this quasi-religious character. There is still a distribution of function and value and governance of conduct, but security operates now in conjunction with raucousness and play. Activity organises by means of quite different modes of encounter with objects and constraints.

With *Bodyspacemotionthings*, participants necessarily engage *through play*. We can call this aesthetic in the sense that it requires players *to feel for rules and constraints*.¹⁶ I will return to this in conclusion.

(b)

The 2009 exhibition of *Bodyspacemotionthings* at Tate Modern restages part of a 1971 exhibition (at the Tate Gallery). Morris invited the public to engage with a number of movable structures (ledges, see-saws, tightropes, ‘climbing chimneys,’ balance beams, a large wooden sphere, a hollow ‘granite column,’ a steel ramp, and steel wedges tied to ropes) and to test their balance, strength, effort, luck, and cooperation by clambering, wobbling, climbing, crawling, pushing, rolling, teetering, dragging, and, no doubt, various, tricky combinations of these. In a way largely unprecedented at the time, these structures invited “the physical participation of the public” in the pursuit of new perceptual experiences.¹⁷

Prior to the 1971 exhibition, Morris had developed a principle of *anti-form* in sculptural construction.¹⁸ This principle engaged aleatory and indeterminate processes to undo conventions of sculptural form and, importantly for us, allowed Morris to arrive at form unexpectedly through exploration of the constraints and consistencies of particular materials.¹⁹ Art had become, for Morris, a form of making wherein order was sought “in the “tendencies” inherent in a materials/process interaction.”²⁰ The structures of *Bodyspacemotionthings* were supposed to expand these “lessons about making,” to adopt David Sylvester’s phrase, to include unknown others in lessons about playing.²¹

¹⁶ Perhaps we can make a stronger claim, that *Bodyspacemotionthings* affords an experience that we might call aesthetic. Following Monroe Beardsley (*Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*, [New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1958]), this experience would consist of fixed attention to sensuous features of objects, intensity or ‘concentration of experience,’ and it would ‘hang together’ or have a unity that kept it distinct from other experiences. In more detail, aesthetic experience is:

(1) ‘one in which attention is firmly fixed upon heterogeneous but interrelated components of a phenomenally objective field’;

(2) ‘It is an experience of some intensity ... a concentration of experience’;

(3) ‘It is an experience that hangs together, or is coherent, to an unusually high degree’;

(4) ‘It is an experience that is unusually complete in itself’ ... ‘The experience detaches itself, and even insulates itself, from the intrusion of alien elements’;

(5) Aesthetic objects are ‘objects *manqués*,’ i.e. no quite real: ‘They are complexes of qualities, surfaces’ (ibid. 527-529) NB. Certain of these elements of aesthetic experience occur elsewhere, such as in play, but, Beardsley claims, most play is not sufficiently unified to allow for it. Some experiences of play, however, have these characteristics and are therefore aesthetic (530).

¹⁷ Michael Compton and David Sylvester, *Robert Morris*, (London: Tate Gallery, 1971), unpaginated.

¹⁸ Robert Morris, ‘Anti-Form,’ *Artforum*, VI, April (1968): 33-35; ‘Notes on Sculpture 4: Beyond Objects,’ *Artforum*, April (1969): 50-54.

¹⁹ Morris describes anti-form in the following way:

‘Random piling, loose stacking, hanging, give passing form to the material. Chance is accepted and indeterminacy is implied since replacing will result in another configuration. Disengagement with preconceived enduring forms and order for things is a positive assertion. It is part of the work’s refusal to continue aestheticising form by dealing with it as a prescribed end.’ (‘Anti-Form,’ 33)

However, Sylvester writes:

‘But [the felt sculptures] are also a denial of anti-form. For all the wide range of variation, for all the frustration endured in trying unsuccessfully to re-create some past configuration whose impact has become fixed in the memory, repeated experience of arranging one of the felt pieces leads to consciousness not of its variability but of the constancy with which it insists on falling in some ways rather than others. The felts impose firm restrictions on what one can do with them. ... And it is as if the form were indeterminate in order to enhance awareness of the inevitability with which a given material determines what can be done with it. The felts are a lesson about making.’ (‘Box with the Sound of Its Own Making,’ in Compton and Sylvester, *Robert Morris*, 11)

²⁰ Robert Morris, ‘Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making: The Search for the Motivated,’ in *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 77.

²¹ As Morris wrote to the Tate curator Michael Compton:

However, as critic Guy Brett described it, “An orderly participation was expected, but pandemonium broke out.”²²

Another critic, Reyner Banham, was more colourful in his description:

By the end of the private viewing, the place was a bedlam in which all rules of decorum had been abandoned as liberated aesthetes leaped and teetered and heaved and clambered and shouted and joined hands with total strangers.²³

After five days, a catalogue of injuries, and a great deal of institutional anxiety, the exhibition was closed.

The only explicit directions given to participants were a series of photographs beside each structure (see slides). Morris anticipated that the particular constraints of the structures would make “specific demands” on players and would provide clear lessons in playing, limiting arbitrariness in participation. As Morris wrote a year before this exhibition:

Objects project possibilities for action as much as they project that they themselves are acted upon.²⁴

These ‘specific demands’ were detailed by Morris in the exhibition catalogue and in the plan that you see here. He described three groups of structures.

The first were relatively passive objects to be acted upon by participants;

The second could be moved by participants but could also affect or choreograph their behaviour in some way;

The third consisted of fixed structures that would clearly determine and constrain participation.

From indeterminacies and contingencies encountered in play, participants were to explore the constraints of these structures. Having been *felt for* in play, these constraints would furnish constitutive rules for future play. Being constitutive, these rules would institute new behavioural and perceptual possibilities, Morris hoped. Evidently, this did not occur quite as planned.

With the 2009 restaging of *Bodyspacemotionthings*, it is clear that people have learnt how to behave in large public exhibitions.²⁵ They take turns and queue.²⁶ They are discrete and orderly in their play. Each participant has learnt more or less to regulate his play in relation to himself and to

²² ‘Time to press up against things, squeeze around, crawl over – not so much out of a childish naïveté to return to the playground, but more to acknowledge that the world begins to exist at the limits of our skin and what goes on at that interface between the physical self and external conditions doesn’t detach us like the detached glance.’

(Letter to Michael Compton, 19 January 1971, quoted in John Bird, ‘Minding the Body: Robert Morris’s 1971 Tate Gallery Retrospective,’ in *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, edited by Michael Newman and John Bird, [London: Reaktion Books, 1999], 95-96.)

²³ Guy Brett, ‘Review of Robert Morris at The Tate,’ *The Times*, Monday 11th of May (1971).

²⁴ Reyner Banham, ‘It was SRO—And a Disaster,’ *New York Times*, 23rd May 1971; cited in Dorothea Von Hantelmann, ‘On the Socio-Economic Role of the Art Exhibition,’ in Juan Gaitán, Nicolaus Schafhausen, and Monika Szewczyk, eds., *Cornerstones*, (Rotterdam: Witte de With Centre for Contemporary Art and Sternberg Press, 2011), 274.

²⁵ ‘Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making,’ 90.

²⁶ This observation is made by Tate curator Jessica Morgan during ‘Fun and Games: The Gallery as Adult Play Centre,’ panel discussion held on Friday 29th of February 2008 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London <<http://www.ica.org.uk/16819/60-Years-of-Curating-the-podcast/Fun-and-Games-The-Gallery-as-Adult-Play-Centre.html>> (accessed 18th September 2008)

²⁷ Hudson writes disapprovingly of this self-regulation by participants.

‘[Anyone] expecting a repeat of the wild scenes of 1971 was in for a disappointment. As a couple tried to balance themselves on a giant plywood seesaw, a young man in a baseball cap leapt on to help out, only to be met by an indignant outcry from several dozen onlookers: “The back of the queue’s over there!”’ (‘Works of Art You Can Get Stuck Into,’ *Daily Telegraph*, Tuesday 26th of May 2009)

others.²⁷ But various precautionary measures have also been taken to secure a *milieu* in which self-regulation can occur unimpeded but without catastrophic consequence.²⁸ These measures were:

- i. the provision of a greater number of sandbags to guide the movements of the sphere and the cylinder;
- ii. the placement of either rubber mats or cushions under those structures from which a player might fall;
- iii. the use of a mesh to close in the climbing ramps;
- iv. the use of stop blocks to prevent either end of the see-saw from touching the ground;
- v. the decommissioning of a rope for swinging—to be retained as a sculpture, but not as an object of play;
- vi. the widespread use of plywood rather than scrap metal and rough timber (originally used by Morris);
- vii. supervision by Gallery Assistants;
- viii. the disclaimer (shifts responsibility on to player).

There was enough contingency and indeterminacy for scrapes, bumps, and fun, of course. Play was not disallowed (except with those objects/structures, such as the rope, that were deemed too risky). It was governed. So, by what types of rules and constraints did this governance operate?

(c)

As noted, there are no constitutive rules for *Bodyspacemotionthings*: initially at least, there is no *instituted* play—there is no game. To clarify, constitutive rules, or what Rawls terms “rules of practice,” do not guide a practice such as play. They define it. If a player does not follow them,

²⁷ Von Hantelmann argues that the structures of *Bodyspacemotionthings* were always supposed to function more like props for ‘a moment that is all about one’s relation to oneself and to others,’ rather than according to the more familiar conventions of exhibition which organise around an individual’s encounter with a material object (‘On the Socio-Economic Role of the Art Exhibition,’ Gaitán, J. A., Schafhausen, N. and Szewczyk, M. eds. *Cornerstones*, [Rotterdam: Witte de With and Sternberg Press, 2011]). This may be true, but it overlooks what must take place in order for the exploratory question of what does an object *do*, to become the question of what a player or players can do with this object. According to what rules and constraints is the player now identified by and subject to the object of its play?

²⁸ To adapt Foucault’s characterisation of a secured *milieu*, first of all security operates with *material givens* such as assumed capacities of players, the properties of materials, and so on, not in order to perfect these (as would be the case for disciplinary techniques) but to maximise the positive elements and to minimise the negative consequences of risk, knowing that this latter cannot and should not be entirely suppressed. Therefore, secondly, security assesses *probabilities*: what are the probable outcomes of different risks and should an activity be prohibited as ‘too risky’. Also, there will be uncertainties. Security must assess the probability that these uncertainties will be negotiated in play, without *catastrophic* consequences, such as injury, over-absorption, and so on. It must therefore make certain as to whether or not a player will be capable of risk-assessment, adaptation, creativity and self-governance in the face of uncertainty. Thirdly, security organises the playground as a *poly-functional* domain. As is evident from the 1971 exhibition, there are a number of ways in which Morris’ structures can be played with. Those such as the large sphere, in particular, provide a number of ‘lessons in playing’, which cannot be fully anticipated. Fourthly, then, security ‘works on the future.’²⁸ It anticipates an ‘open series [of variables]... controlled by an estimate of probabilities’:²⁸ variables such as the number of visitors, the number of players, their level of excitement and involvement, possible itineraries through the milieu, possible events of play (based upon the available knowledge of material givens). Michel Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population : Cours au Collège de France, 1977-1978*, edited by F. Gros, (Paris: Seuil/Gallimard, 2004), 21.

Foucault explains the difference of such a domain to those of sovereign and disciplinary power:

‘To summarize all this, let’s say then that sovereignty capitalizes a territory, raising the major problem of the seat of government, whereas discipline structures a space and addresses the essential problem of a hierarchical and functional distribution of elements, and security will try to plan a milieu in terms of events or series of events or possible elements, of series that will have to be regulated within a multivalent and transformable framework. The specific space of security refers then to a series of possible events; it refers to the temporal and the uncertain, which have to be inserted within a given space. The space in which a series of uncertain elements unfold is, I think, roughly what one can call the milieu.’ (*Sécurité, territoire, population*, 22)

he does not play.²⁹ Again, these are rules not for something a player *must* do, but could do otherwise. They are for something he *must want to do*. We often expect governance to operate by means of the former, to be regulatory and authoritative and therefore external to a practice of play. The disclaimer of *Bodyspacemotionthings* is of this type ('Sensible footwear *must* be worn,' 'Please *do not* run inside the installation,' and so on), as is the supervision by the Gallery Assistants and the delimitations made by the line dividers. We find here examples of the regulation of environmental effects described above by Foucault, especially with regard to "non-injury" and "non-absorption."

Where they are regulatory in this way, rules summarise from particular cases that precede them.³⁰ They can provide the basis for appraisals of play, but not for new forms of play. As well as regulatory rules that are external to play, there are also optimising constraints, which have an *internal* relation to the play that follows them. For example, the use of plywood and the increased provision of sandbags. These interventions seek to produce optimal or 'best' play; play that is, again, discrete and contained, without (serious) injury, but also play in which the optimal function of each structure is guaranteed (e.g. the ball rolls evenly along a certain path, the chimneys are fit for climbing...). The player must ask himself: Given these constraints, how can I/we best play? And so these constraints guide a player toward certain objectives in a non-arbitrary manner; again, internal to play. As Stéphane Chauvier writes, we can formulate on the basis of these constraints rules which suppose "some kind of science of the materials of the practice, or even some kind of reflection upon the happy and unhappy experiences that occur in this domain of practice."³¹

These would not be rigid, normative rules, but would remain open to further happy or unhappy experiences, and therefore to modifications and to the variety and contingency of players' conduct. They would allow for adventure, one might say, and for *stylisations* (play and stylisation... that is a problem for another day).

So we should pay close attention (as Morris intended) to the sensuous features that constrain in this case. As *objects of aesthetic play*, the climbing chimneys, ramps, see-saw, and so on are complexes of surfaces and qualities that are governed at precisely the level at which they are *felt for*. Because constitutive rules are to be *felt for*, the amendments made to materials are highly significant, for two reasons.

(1) As this is *aesthetic* play, we would expect it to consist of an unusually concentrated and focussed attention. If this is the case, then the fact that an object is made from plywood rather than timber has a consequence greater than the decreased likelihood of splinters.

(2) It is on the basis of these materials that players might institute new perceptual and behavioural forms. We might remember that the question of what an object does tends to precede the question of what a player can do with it.

In conclusion, *Bodyspacemotionthings* encourages a player to pursue constitutive rules, to take certain lessons in playing based upon the perceptual and behavioural capacities of movable structures and to institute new possibilities for these. Foucault's analysis of biopolitical/advanced

²⁹ John Rawls, 'Two Concepts of Rules,' *The Philosophical Review* 64, no.1, January (1955). John Searle also distinguishes between regulatory and constitutive rules:

'We might say that regulative rules regulate antecedently or independently existing forms of behaviour. ... But constitutive rules do not merely regulate, they create or define new forms of behaviour. The rules of football or chess, for example, do not merely regulate playing football or chess but as it were they create the very possibility of playing such games. ... Constitutive rules constitute (and also regulate) an activity the existence of which is logically dependent on the rules.' (*Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969], 33-34)

³⁰ Rawls, 'Two Concepts of Rules,' 23.

³¹ Chauvier, *op. cit.* 28-29.

liberal governance allows us to study how in this case governance operates by securing a milieu (through both regulations and optimising constraints) in which this pursuit can occur and not by providing those constitutive rules that a player must follow in order to play. To some degree (to a negotiable degree?) players are free to *feel for* and institute their own forms of play. But, again, we must remember that through amendments to material constraints, governance has an internal, and not only external, relation to play in this milieu.

In this way, those rules and constraints that are ludigenic can be also governmental. In such a case, we can no longer think of the relation of play and governance as one of opposition, but should think of them instead as correlates, the one in close reciprocation (and even mutual implication) with the other.

The players of *Bodyspacemotionthings* are also players of the game of liberalism as it engages in the production and organisation of freedoms.³²

³² NB. In later work, Foucault elaborates a response to this type of governance. There is no space here to assess work on the care of the self developed principally in the second and third volumes of *Histoire de la sexualité* and in his courses at the Collège de France from 1979 to 1984. In these works, Foucault addresses how a subject might work upon itself and care for itself in such a way that it develops the art of not being governed quite so much, or not being governed “like that and at that cost.” Foucault claims that the anxiety with regard to the problem of how to govern is not the question: “how not to be governed?” Rather, it is the question:

“How not to be governed *like that*, by that, in the name of these principles, in view of such objectives and by the means of such methods, not like that, not for that, not by them?” (“What is Critique?” lecture given at the Sorbonne on 27th May 1978 and published as ‘Qu’est-ce que la critique? [Critique et *Aufklärung*]’, *Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie* 84, [1990], translated by K. P. Geiman in Schmidt, J. ed., *What is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers to Twentieth-Century Questions*, [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996], 384.)