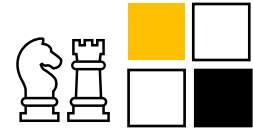




**UNIVERSITY  
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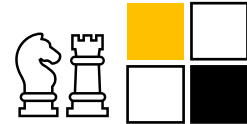
Doctoral conference  
University of Udine - University of Trieste  
Udine, March 22-24, 2023



Photo: Antonio Di Vilio

***Faites vos jeux:***  
**game and space *in* texts and *of* texts**

*To speak seriously about play is a terrible corruption of play.*  
(Fink, *Oasis of Happiness*, p. 15)



## CALL FOR PAPERS

The XXXVI PhD cycle of the course in Language and Literary Studies of the University of Udine and University of Trieste is pleased to announce the doctoral conference “*Faites vos jeux: game and space in texts and of texts*”, which will take place on **March 22-24, 2023** in Udine.

The theoretical debate revolving around the topic of game is deeply rooted and took different shapes according to space and time. However, it goes without saying that the 20<sup>th</sup> century gave a new impulse to these studies, as game started to be theorized from several disciplinary perspectives (psychology, sociology, anthropology, esthetics, philosophy, literature, and linguistics). Regardless of the adopted approach, in most cases it is the limitedness of game, also in terms of spatiality, that is theorized preliminarily.

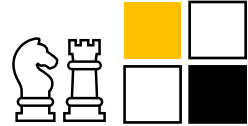
In the first seminal work of this field, *Homo ludens* (1949) by Johan Huizinga, the connection between play and space in different cultures is analyzed from a primarily anthropological perspective. According to this author, the playground is an inherently different space from that of ordinary life: “the arena, the card-table, the magic circle, the temple, the stage, the screen, the tennis court, the court of justice, etc., are all in form and function play-grounds, i.e. forbidden spots, isolated, hedged round, hallowed, within which special rules obtain” (Huizinga 1949: 10).

Starting from these premises, in *Man, Play and Games* (1958), Roger Caillois defines play as an activity that is separated from ordinary life, “circumscribed within limits of space and time, defined and fixed in advance” (Caillois 2001: 9). Unlike Huizinga, however, Caillois adopts a pluralistic approach, shifting from the concept of ‘play’ to that of ‘games’ (*agon, alea, mimicry, ilinx*), which may degenerate when a contamination between the world of play and the world of reality occurs – thus when the previously established limits of space and time are crossed (cf. Caillois 2001: 61-74). The definition put forth by Benveniste in *Le jeu comme structure* (1947) is similar to the ones proposed by Huizinga and Caillois. As a matter of fact, this linguist points out that the formal and regulated character of game takes place within strict limits and conditions and constitutes a closed totality compared to the real world (cf. Benveniste 1947: 161).

Contemporaneously with Caillois, Eugen Fink reflects on the connection between play and space, as well, proposing the image of ‘oasis of happiness’. When they play, men distance themselves from the hustle and bustle of life and are brought to an oasis of happiness (cf. Fink 2016: 20), an “enigmatic field” (Fink 2016: 25) where traditional spatial-temporal coordinates as well as the border between the actual and the imaginary world are constantly being renegotiated, thus leading to the player’s ‘schizophrenia’ highlighted by Rovatti (2008: XIII).

In the postmodern era, in line with the fragmentation of society, knowledge, space, and time, the discontinuity elements of game are accentuated. As highlighted by Sidoti (2007: 107, our translation), “games which require dilated time, open and wide spaces are the first to fall” and game adapts pervasively to the progressive erosion of spatial frontiers: “if we see it less it is because it is omnipresent, or nearly so” (Bartezzaghi 2001, our translation). This spatial redefinition may be observed, for instance, in digital games, “[which] tend to replace linearity with nonlinear spatial organization” (Jenkins 2003: 121). The narration of game, therefore, inhabits the threshold between a virtual and a physical space, between which an actual contamination is triggered (Jagoda 2018: 241).

The aim of this conference is therefore to explore the connection between game and space from the perspective of literary, linguistic, translational, as well as philological studies. The necessary

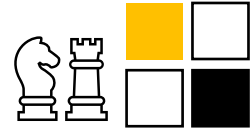


methodological premise for this is to consider not only games *in* texts, but also texts themselves as a play space. Texts are recurrently conceived of in terms of space, as is shown by the existence of countless spatial metaphors, such as the *beginning* and *end* of a text, or elements of textual deixis which refer to the collocation of its parts (cf. Merlini Barbaresi 2008: 217-219). Indeed, as highlighted by Westphal, “[f]or if writing is a creeping forward in time, it also spreads itself out on the space of the page” (Westphal 2011: 20). While examining his *chaîne phonétique* in temporal terms, Saussure uses the geometry of the line with the aim of defining it formally; he claims that the alignment of acoustic significant in chains becomes apparent solely when they are represented through writing, i.e. when the spatial line of graphic signs replaces the sequence in time (Saussure 1966: 88). In the same vein, Lotman foresees the so-called *otgraničennost’*, “demarcation”, between his three criteria to define a text. According to him, texts should be characterized by a clear beginning and end (Lotman 1977: 52-53). Genette (1997) employs a spatial metaphor, as well: while analyzing paratexts, he calls them “thresholds” of the actual texts. Furthermore, paratextuality has been recently applied to the study of manuscripts (cf. *inter alia* Ciotti - Lin 2016). In this field, paratexts provide us with spatial and temporal information, which may be explicit (for instance through colophons, prefaces, or postfaces) or implicit (accessible through paleographic and codicological analyses). Finally, with the most recent reflections about hypertexts and multimodality, texts become open, multidimensional spaces, where “everything signifies ceaselessly and several times” (Barthes 1974: 12).

Within this theoretical framework which, although based on a 20<sup>th</sup> century perspective, does in no way intend to limit the conference to contemporaneous studies, we invite participants to submit abstracts in the following research fields (which are to be considered as mere suggestions and do not exclude other research lines):

### Literature, cinema and new media:

- Representation of specific game spaces: ballrooms, sports courts/grounds/fields, stages, chessboards, gaming tables/game boards... (S. Zweig, *The Royal Game*; D. Delillo, *Underworld*; F. Dostoevskij, *The Gambler*; A.S. Puškin, *The Queen of Spades*; M. Aub, *Juego de Cartas*);
- Analysis of the relationship between individuals and space in the mimetic game and masquerade (P. de Marivaux, *The Game of Love and Chance*; A. Schnitzler, *Rhapsody: A Dream Novel*, *Les Garçons et Guillaume, à table !* by G. Gallienne);
- Resemantization of objects and game spaces in literary works and theatre plays (L. Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*; F. Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*; *Dogville* by L. von Trier);
- The Renaissance and Baroque court as game spaces;
- The literary text as a game space: combinatory literature (I. Calvino, *The Castle of Crossed Destinies*; G. Perec, *Life: A User's Manual*; R. Queneau, *Exercises in Style*; L. Carroll, *The Game of Logic*; but also J. L. Borges, J. Cortázar and J. Bergamín) and literary crosswords (L. Sciascia, *Cruciverba*);
- The game between authors and readers in crime/detective novels (F. Dürrenmatt, *The Judge and His Hangman*; P. Auster, *City of Glass*; T. Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*);
- Contamination and interaction between the play world and the real world (*Free guy* by S. Levy; *Black Mirror* by C. Brooker);



- Texts as spaces of game inventions (Eschaton in D.F. Wallace, *Infinite Jest*; Quidditch in J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter Saga*);
- Meanings, implications, and spaces of chance and gamble (P. Auster, *The Music of Chance*, *Blind Chance* by K. Kieślowski; *Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy* by R. Hamaguchi).

### Linguistics and translation studies:

- Wordplays within textual spaces;
- Theoretical reflections and translational analyses of wordplays in textual spaces, for instance in literary works or audiovisuals (cfr. *inter alia* Vandaele 2002);
- Games in the space of learning: recreational linguistics;
- Games in digital spaces: the language of videogames and gamers (anglicisms and distinctive features) as well as videogame translation and localization;
- Game metaphors in negotiations or other discourse spaces;
- The concept of space within games (and consequent translation issues): toponyms and other culture-bound references, for instance in boardgames or digital games;
- *German vs American games*: different game styles and consequences on the linguistic-textual level;
- Gambling in the space of translation: risk-taking in the translating process (cf. *inter alia* Pym 2015, 2020; Künzli 2004).

### Philology and medieval studies:

- Lexicon and semantics of ‘play’ and ‘game’ (*plega* vs *gamen* in Old English or *ludus* vs *iocus* in Latin);
- Game representation in the space of medieval texts: for instance, Alcuin’s *propositiones* or ‘mathematical games’; the swimming contest between Breca and Beowulf; game and competition in *Hemings þáttur Áslákssonar*;
- Texts as spaces where authors play with the meaning as well as with the ‘visible’ and/or phonic aspect of language (*kenningar* or *heiti*, runic acrostics and cryptography, anagrams, wordplays, puns, alliteration, rhyme, formulas, and other rhetorical-stylistic aspects);
- ‘Intellectual’ games in the space of texts: riddles and enigmas;
- Aspects of textual criticism, such as the interplay between authors and copyists in text transmission;
- Playing beyond the *borders* of texts: medievalism (‘Neo-medievalism’ or Middle Ages in Popular Culture, for instance the roleplay *Dungeons & Dragons*, the imaginary Middle Ages in *Game of Thrones*, the riddle-game between Bilbo and Gollum in *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien), *Digital Humanities* (see, for instance, the paper by Karen Arthur titled *Playing the Editing Game with an Electronic Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*).



## PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES:

The conference will take place in Udine on **March 22-24, 2023**.

The languages of the conference will be Italian and English.

Applicants must send a pdf file (named according to the following system: GiocoUdine\_Surname\_PresentationTitle) by e-mail to [giocoudine2023@gmail.com](mailto:giocoudine2023@gmail.com) by ~~30<sup>th</sup> September~~ **1<sup>st</sup> December 2022**. The file must include:

- Name, surname, affiliation, brief biobibliographical profile (maximum 200 words);
- Title of the proposal;
- Discipline of the proposal (literature, cinema, and new media; linguistics and translation studies; philology and medieval studies);
- Abstract in Italian or in English containing up to 250 words, followed by essential bibliographical references (excluded from word count).

The organizing committee will confirm proposal acceptance by ~~16<sup>th</sup> November 2022~~ **12<sup>th</sup> December 2022** by sending an e-mail. In case of acceptance, participants will have up to 20 minutes to give their talk.

Conference papers will be published after a review process.

### Organizing committee:

Davide Belgradi  
Erika Capovilla  
Federica Di Giuseppe  
Antonio Di Vilio  
Elena Fogolin  
Giorgia Lo Nigro  
Giulia Pedrini

### Scientific committee:

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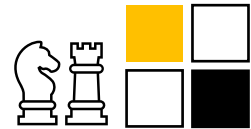
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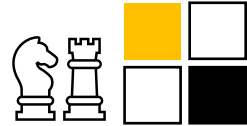


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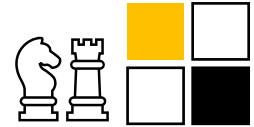


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