



PLAY

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POWER

The urge to fill in every moment of the time allotted to us with intense engagement unavoidably ends up in a suffocating monotony.

Slavoj Žižek



HOW NOT TO BE SEEN

The terms *value* and worth often get confused with one another. Worth is the monetary value attached to any particular item. Value on the other hand is a broad term that encompasses emotion as well as cost.

Value therefore does not entirely depend on the market, it can be created without consumption. The following is a collection of unproductive activities creating social value in public space without being part of consumerism.

S I T T I N G

Forrest Gump sits on a bench at a bus stop in Savannah, Georgia, while telling several people about his life so far.

Sitting on a bench is rarely practiced as an exclusive activity. While sitting, one can observe the environment, listen to music, get lost in thoughts or talk to other people sitting close by. The activity of sitting brings pleasure as it is a great method of relaxation.



Savannah, USA
bench made of stone and wooden boards

SUNBATHING

The Solarium is an architectural typology one finds all around the coast of Sicily. It usually consists of a scaffolding covered by wooden boards. The construction is able to adapt to the rocky shore. Using a solarium is always free. Normally the municipality pays for the maintenance of it.

Sunbathing can bring enormous pleasure to people as it leads to the creation of vitamin D which is known for causing a happy mood and a healthy immune system.



Syracuse, Sicily
stairs made of wood and steel, wooden boards, plastic joints

SKATEBOARDING

Palais de Tokyo is a museum and exhibition venue for modern art on the right bank of the Seine in Paris. The museums outside spaces are intensely used by skaters due to their great versatility. The smooth marble courtyard, the fountain basin with stairs on either side and the huge ledge with its railings turn into an incredible place to practice.

Skating is an activity making use of various architectural elements in the city. The more versatile public spaces are, the better they can be occupied by skaters. The activity of skating can give pleasure as it releases adrenaline and brings up a collective spirit.



Palais de Tokyo, Paris
stairs made of marble and stone, metall railings

STROLLING

Paris is a city often identified as outstandingly beautiful. Its urban fabric is structured by *grands boulevards*, long axes traversing the city, that contribute to a good orientation. For these reasons Paris has a long tradition of strolling.

Strollology is a cultural-scientific and aesthetic method developed by Lucius Burckhardt, which aims to expand the perception of the environment. Strolling is always aimless and can therefore be seen as a form of experiment. Observations can help making conclusions and by that create a feeling of satisfaction and comprehension. Moreover, strolling can be extremely relaxing as it is independent from time and obligation.



Paris, France
asphalt street, any kind of architecture

R A V I N G

The rave culture has always been a political concept of the youth. Confronted with a world they had no control over, ravers in the 80ies and 90ies saw the parties as a means of freedom and self-expression.

The progressive, utopian vision of the rave allows diverse people of all race, gender, class, and sexual orientation to come together in an increasingly fragmented world.



London, England
dancefloor made of concrete

HANGING OUT

In cities worldwide, public spaces are used to hang out.

As hanging out always involves at least two people, it is a collective activity. To hang out means to do nothing besides talking, listening and watching. This minimization of engagement can lead to an extreme feeling of ease and relaxation.



New York, USA
concrete stairs

STREETBALLING

Rucker Park is a basketball court in New York's Harlem district, which has gained a certain popularity due to the fact that numerous later known basketball professionals, some of them NBA players, played there.

Streetball is performed in cities worldwide as a form of collective movement and play. Streetball courts are highly visited public places as they attract people to come together and watch the players collectively. The activity of playing streetball brings pleasure to both the players and observers. It provokes a form of social affiliation.



Manhattan NY, USA
floor made of synthetic tartan, metall grid

B A T H I N G

The Fontana di Trevi is a famous fountain in Rome. With a width of 50 meters it is the biggest fountain of the city.

People are often attracted to bathe in it during hot summers because of the clear blue water.

Public bathing is an activity performed mostly to cool off but sometimes also to heat up. As people normally bathe naked or wearing few clothes, the practice lowers constraints and connects socially. By that, a feeling of lightheartedness can come up.



Rome, Italy
fountain made of marble, water

D A N C I N G

The Centro Cultural de São Paulo is situated near the city center of São Paulo. It is a public institution including an art gallery, libraries, exhibition spaces, diverse workshops, theaters and a cinema. In the surrounding space of the building, numerous people use the mirroring effect of the glass facade to practice dancing.

The activity of dancing is known for provoking feelings of happiness. It can be performed individually or collectively. A collective form of dancing is able to create team spirit and solidarity.



São Paulo, Brasil
glass facade

S W I M M I N G

Badi Oberer Letten is a public swimming bath located at the river Limmat in Zurich. It is one of the most visited places in the city during summer. There is no entry fee. Visitors either swim against or with the river current.

The activity of swimming is practiced for pleasure or training. In summer, the cooling effect of the water contributes to the enjoyment of swimming.



Zurich, Switzerland
stairs and platforms made of concrete tartan, metall railings

S P R A Y I N G

Spraying is practiced in public spaces worldwide. In some cities, like Leipzig in Germany, one finds a sophisticated sprayer culture. Sprayers join gangs and clubs to be part of a movement.

As spraying in public space is often illegal, performing the activity generates high amounts of adrenaline. Moreover, spraying is a form of artistic expression and therefore creates feelings of satisfaction. To spray collectively can also produce social affiliation.



Leipzig, Germany
plaster facade

P A I N T I N G

As paint does not last on materials forever, it adds a temporary layer to architecture. Therefore painting is a common activity in public spaces worldwide. It is not always children who use pieces of chalk to draw something on the asphalt.

The act of painting in public space can be performed individually as well as collectively. It allows to change the perception of urban elements and therefore create a great amount of imagination.



Rome, Italy
asphalt street

DEMONSTRATING

New York is one of many examples for cities where demonstrating is performed frequently. Some of the great global demonstrations of the 20th century were those against the Vietnam War.

Demonstrating usually involves bringing together several people in public space, who are committed to a common interest. By expressing personal demands and needs, demonstrators can experience feelings of relevance and gratification. Having a shared voice generates collectivity and solidarity.



New York, USA
asphalt street

DISCUSSING

A well known image from Palermo, Italy: Old men sitting on the piazza and doing nothing else than discuss. They are assembled for the sake of being together and dispute about current political happenings, as it was done long time ago in the agora. They don't need anything else than a seating, warm sunlight and their friends or neighbours. An old telling in Italian families: "disputing keeps your brain young."



Palermo, Italy
bench made of wood and metal

P L A Y I N G M U S I C

The balcony can be seen as an element which belongs both to private and public space. In many European cities, people were playing music on their balconies during the Corona crises to overcome the loneliness caused by quarantine. This turned out to be a great form of collective pleasure.

Making music brings joy to both the players and the listeners. Performed collectively, it can generate group dynamics and mutual trust.

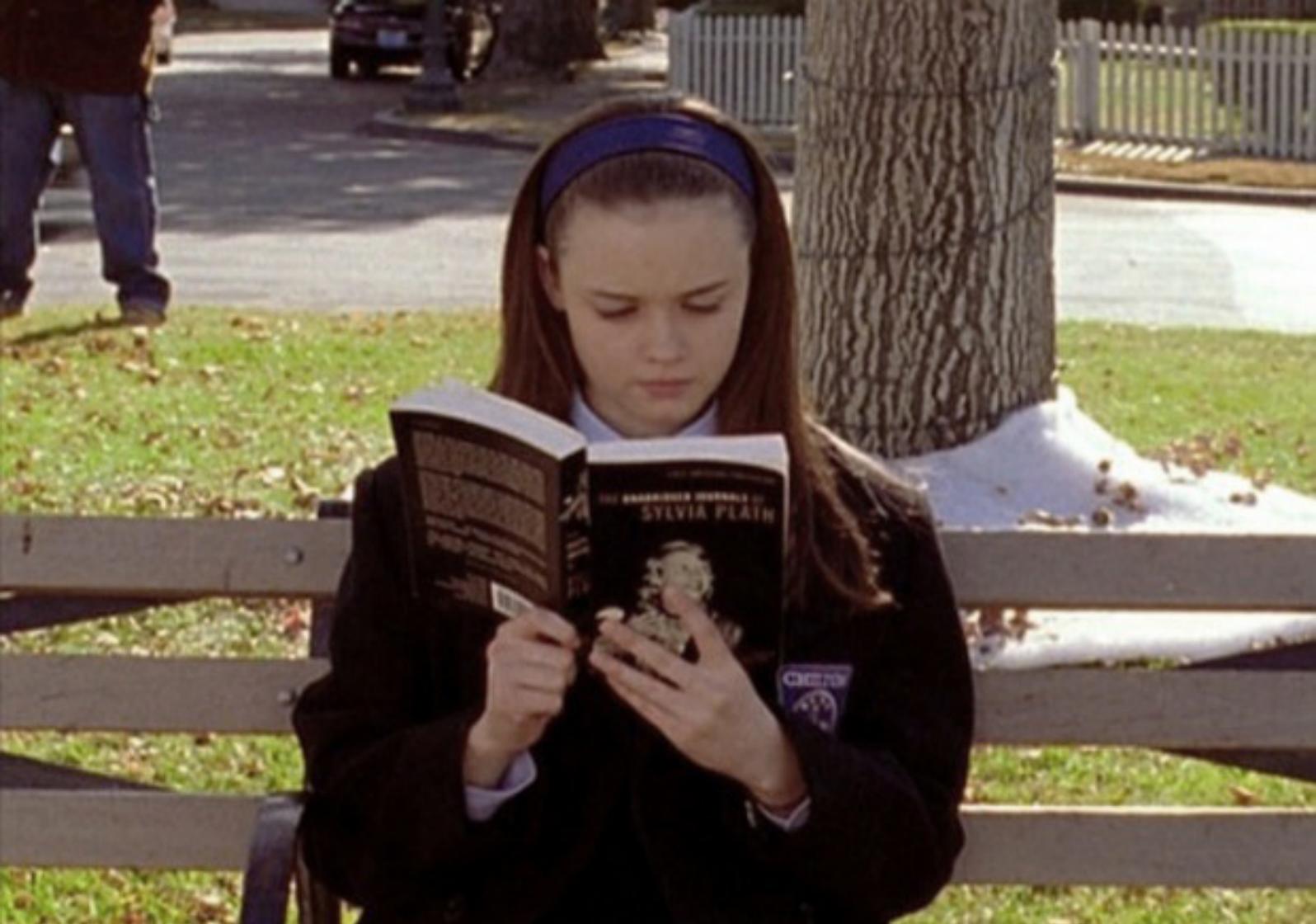


Pamplona, Spain
balcony made of stone

R E A D I N G

While Rory from the series *Gilmore Girls* is waiting for friends or the bus to pick her up, she often reads on a bench of the local park.

Reading can bring joy by widening one's imagination. One starts seeing the world from new perspectives. Doing this outside contributes to the detachment of a familiar environment.



Stars Hollow, USA (fictional location)
bench made of wood and metal

P I C N I C

Minhocão is an elevated highway passing through the center of São Paulo. Cars are not allowed on this street during the weekend. Then people go there to enjoy the free space and have a picnic. Having a picnic can be an excellent form of relaxation whilst meeting friends and family. To share a meal together in public space implies tolerance and improves human relations.



São Paulo, Brazil
elevated highway, asphalt street, sitting possibility out of concrete

Democracy in ancient Greece relied on the active participation of people in political life. This participation took the form of speech and action, and was supported by a certain configuration of space, the *agora*, and a certain configuration of community, the polis.

Subsequent developments, specifically the gradual rise of the economic and the parallel dismantling of the public sphere deeply affected the balance that these factors had achieved in the Greek city-state. Most importantly, they obscured the grounding of the political discourse in space and community. As a result, democracy today has come to be associated with abstract institutions and governance mechanisms.

We have hope for a participatory kind of democracy. To fulfil this hope it needs to reestablish the balance between the two axes, the discursive-performative — speech and action, and the embodied — space and community.













Play is a form of activity that can be performed for pleasure, for relaxation, but also as a profession. A large part of cognitive development and the development of motor skills and social competence takes place through play, in humans as well as in numerous animal species. A game is often based on very specific courses of action, from which binding rules can emerge, especially in community. The concrete courses of action can result both from the nature of the game itself, the rules of the game, and from the desire of different individuals to act collectively.

PLAY → RITUAL → SYSTEM

The **Homo Ludens** is the one who develops his skills mainly through playing. In play, he discovers his individual character. Simulation is the core of play.

