

intrinsic
agent's
intrinsically factors
Autotelic
motivational
goals
metaphysical
may
action
activity
enjoyment think
intentional one's
valuable intentions
Play
two
content
end case playing
motivation
conception
might autotelicity acting
agent cases clear
psychological
activities
one motivated
reasons
extrinsic actions
account whether
sport goals
account

Reconsidering Autotelic Play

Stephen E. Schmid
Assistant Professor, Philosophy
University of Wisconsin–Rock County
stephen.schmid@uwc.edu, stephen@seschmid.org

Play activities are certain types of agent actions. What types of actions? According to the philosophical literature, play is an autotelic activity; namely, an activity pursued for intrinsic factors. Play conceived, in whole or part, as an autotelic activity has broad acceptance among the philosophy of sport literature. Despite its broad acceptance, this conception of play as autotelic activity is less than clear. In part, this lack of clarity is due to the lack of consistency in conceptualizing autotelicity. As I will show in the first part of this paper, play as autotelic activity can be characterized in at least three different ways. Often, philosophers who appeal to autotelic activity employ more than one of these three characterizations as part of their definition. This is not surprising given both the close relationship of these different conceptions of autotelic play and the lack of clarity in the very notion of intrinsic properties and intrinsic values upon which the notion of autotelic play depends. I will argue that the conception of autotelic play pursued for intrinsic reasons is fundamental to the other conceptions. In the second part of this paper, I will sketch an account of the types of intrinsic reasons that figure into the conception of autotelic play. To do this, I will reconsider autotelic play and argue that an adequate account must address both the motivational and goal contents of an agent's play activities.

Reconsidering Autotelic Play

Play activities are certain types of agent actions. What types of actions? According to the philosophical literature, play is, in whole or part, an autotelic activity; namely, an activity pursued for intrinsic factors. Play as an autotelic activity is usually contrasted with activities pursued for instrumental or extrinsic factors. These instrumentally pursued activities are frequently characterized as work and not play.¹ Play conceived, in whole or part, as an autotelic activity has broad acceptance among the philosophy of sport literature.² Despite its broad acceptance, this conception of play as autotelic activity is less than clear. In part, this lack of clarity is due to the lack of consistency in conceptualizing autotelicity. As I will show in the first part of this paper, play as autotelic activity can be characterized in at least three different ways. Often, philosophers who appeal to autotelic activity employ more than one of these characterizations as part of their definition. This is not surprising given both the close relationship of these different conceptions of autotelic play and the lack of clarity in the very notion of intrinsic properties and intrinsic values upon which the notion of autotelic play depends. I will argue that the conception of autotelic play pursued for intrinsic reasons is fundamental to the other conceptions. In the second part of this paper, I will sketch an account of the types of intrinsic reasons that figure into the conception of autotelic play. To do this, I will reconsider autotelic play and argue that an adequate account must address both the motivational and goal content of an agent's play activities.

I: Three Conceptions of Autotelic Play

While the term *autotelic* has been used in twentieth century psychological and philosophical literature, the conception of a thing having its purpose or end in itself is one dating back at least to Aristotle, most notably. Within the philosophical and psychological literature,

autotelicity has been used to describe a particular type of action or activity. These activities are supposed to have some intrinsic factor or feature that sets them apart from extrinsic or instrumental activities. Within the philosophy of sport literature, the conception of autotelic play has been formulated in several distinct and overlapping ways.

In an early paper on the topic of play, Suits writes of a cat's and Aristotle's activities that they are, "autotelic activities—that is, activities which are ends in themselves" (15: p. 117). Suits wants to deny Aristotle's activities are instances of play while the cat's are because, he thinks, autotelicity may be necessary but not sufficient for play. In his seminal work, Suits uses slightly different language to characterize play when he writes, "[b]y amateurs I mean those for whom playing the game is an end in itself, and by professionals I mean those who have in view some further purpose which is achievable by playing the game" (16: p. 143). While Suits notices that play activities occur in relation to other things and offers a broader conception of play in which autotelicity is but part, it is clear that his conception of autotelicity is an activity which is an end in itself.

A similar but conceptually distinct account of autotelicity arises in a more contemporary discussion. Feezell (8) identifies three characteristics of play. Play is voluntary, it is separate from ordinary life, and it is autotelic. Feezell's definition and discussion of autotelicity is informative. When discussing the third characteristic of play, he writes,

Finally, and perhaps most important, the activity is engaged in for its own sake. It is autotelic, intrinsically valued, not instrumentally desired. Play is engaged in for the sake of the intrinsic enjoyment of play itself. One might see the play of sport as a free and immensely enjoyable physical activity engaged in for its own sake. (8: p. 14)

He continues along these lines to discuss how universal pleasure is in the playing of sports. It is the pleasure of play, he states, that accounts for the dedicated athlete's and hacker's continued pursuit of a sporting activity. Once the pleasure is gone, the athlete will likely cease playing: "...when the athlete can no longer play 'at' or 'in' his game, he will probably give it up" (8: p.

14). As he concludes, “[e]ngaging in sport is a self-contained activity bringing an immediate enjoyment; it is in this sense intrinsically valuable” (8: p. 15). This intrinsically valuable interpretation of autotelicity is similar to the end in itself conception. Though the two are often conflated, I will argue that they are conceptually distinct.

Another conception of autotelicity emphasizes a different aspect. Meier (10) explicitly appeals to the reasons of the agent to define play. Noting that play is often defined by appeal to what it is not, Meier writes, “... I wish to provide a definition based upon the orientation, demeanor, or stance of the participant. It is my opinion that play may be viewed, simply and profitably, as an autotelic activity; in other words, an activity voluntarily pursued for predominantly intrinsic reasons” (10: p. 25). When Meier speaks of the “orientation, demeanor or stance” of the agent, he means the agent’s psychological attitudes, intentions, and motivations initiating and guiding the relevant actions. This becomes clear later when Meier summarizes his objection to the claim that sport and play exist on a continuum:

In other words, particular attitudes or stances manifested by the participants, including motives and inducements for engagement as well as the setting of the action, do not dictate whether a specific activity may legitimately be termed a sport. The essence of sport is independent of these concerns. However, such factors most certainly determine whether or not the sport activity at hand is also a form of play. (10: p. 26)

As Meier clearly states, it is not the activity (usually sports or games) but the attitude of the agent that defines play—autotelic play is defined with respect to the attitudes, intentions, motives, and reasons of the player.³

What is important to notice about the conceptions of autotelicity used in each of the above accounts is that they are not all saying the same thing. The above accounts characterize, in whole or part, autotelicity as “activities which are ends in themselves” (Suits), activities which are “intrinsically valued, not instrumentally desired” (Feezell), and an “activity voluntarily pursued for predominantly intrinsic reasons” (Meier). These accounts ground autotelicity in

three different ways: an activity as an end in itself, an agent's valuing of the activity, and an agent's reasons. These conceptions are neither conceptually equivalent nor equally plausible. In what follows, I will argue that these three conceptions characterize play differently and the first two conceptions ultimately depend upon the latter. While it is true that Suits and Feezell do not wholly define play as an autotelic activity, my concern is with how autotelicity is conceived as a constituent part (or whole) of the definition of play activities. If a conception of autotelicity does not make sense, then conjoining it with some additional conditions will not resolve the problem or clarify the concept of play.

In what follows, I will restrict my discussion of autotelic play to sports. Following Meier (10), I will consider sports to be those demonstrations of physical skill in a goal-directed activity governed by accepted rules which place restrictions upon the achievement of the activity's goal. For Meier, a sport and a game share the same properties except that sports are displays of physical skill and games are not. What is important about the conceptions of both sport and play is that one can play with or without regard to a sport. As Meier notes, play is not an essential attribute of sport; one may also work at one's sport (10: p. 25). While I am restricting my discussion to sports, I think the application of autotelic play also applies to games, as well as other activities.

Intrinsic, Extrinsic Distinction: One of the problems with an appeal to intrinsicness in the conception of autotelicity is that it is less than clear exactly what one means. When appealing to intrinsic or extrinsic, one might be attempting to give a descriptive account of the metaphysical nature of intrinsic properties. Or, one might be referring to a normative notion of intrinsicness. One might, in fact, be doing both. The metaphysical notion is concerned with those properties without which a thing would not be what it is. Intuitively, this notion of intrinsicness is often

characterized in terms like *ends in themselves*, *for its own sake*, *non-derivative*, and *because of itself*, to name a few common ones. The debate about how to define the metaphysical notions of intrinsic and extrinsic is complex with several candidates for the distinction, including essential vs. accidental, non-relational vs. relational properties, non-qualitative vs. qualitative properties, interior vs. exterior properties, and independence from causal influence vs. causally influenced, respectively (9). Not only is one faced with the difficulty of determining which, if any, of these candidates apply, but one also is confronted with the difficulty of determining whether one can apply the metaphysical notion of intrinsic/extrinsic to actions, in particular play activities. Despite the difficulty of determining which of these distinctions is correct, or simply best, the metaphysical distinction has been thought to be important in determining what has intrinsic value.

While many might argue that the metaphysical conception of intrinsicness is more fundamental than the normative notion, I think it is the latter that dominates the discussion about autotelic actions in the philosophy of sport. Many judgments concerning the benefits of play activities assume the intrinsic value of certain actions. The normative discussions surrounding intrinsic and extrinsic values revolve around two related but distinct questions, namely what things have intrinsic value and what intrinsic value is.⁴ For example, in the philosophy of sport literature it is not always clear whether one is defining the intrinsicness of autotelic play in terms of a metaphysical (descriptive) or normative conception. On the surface, it appears that play activities conceived as ends in themselves appeal to some metaphysical property of the activity which makes it an intrinsic (play) activity. The conception of autotelicity as intrinsically valuable clearly expresses a normative notion of intrinsicness. With the third distinction, it is less than clear whether autotelic activities as intrinsic reasons should be understood by appeal to metaphysically intrinsic properties or intrinsically valuable states of affairs. For example, Meier

writes, “that play may be viewed...as an autotelic activity; in other words, an activity voluntarily pursued for predominately intrinsic reasons” (10: p. 25). Later in the same section, he says that play is, “any activity voluntarily pursued...for intrinsic rewards” (10: p. 26). Should one assume that “intrinsic reasons” are the same as “intrinsic rewards”? Meier’s appeal to reasons and his claims about the attitudes of the agent in determining play activities implies that there is some type of motivational stance that is essential to autotelic play. As such, an internally motivated action could be seen as metaphysically intrinsic. On the other hand, the appeal to “rewards” may imply one or both of the following: the content of the reason(s) motivating the activity is valuable; or, the psychological state (fun, pleasure, etc.) produced in the pursuit of the activity is valuable. Moreover, the “rewards” of the activity are indeterminate with respect to the nature of those rewards, namely whether they are intrinsically or extrinsically valuable. It is this lack of clarity in the conception of autotelic play that I will address in the following sections.

I take the three philosophers’ accounts reviewed in the previous section as examples of three different ways of capturing the intrinsicity of autotelic play. Suits partially characterizes play as “activities which are ends in themselves.” With this characterization, it appears there is an attempt to give a metaphysical specification of that property of certain actions or activities that make them play. I will call this the *metaphysical account* of autotelicity. In contrast to play as an end in itself, Feezell’s account partially characterizes autotelicity as actions which are “intrinsically valued, not instrumentally desired.” This notion of autotelicity moves from the claim that some action is an end in itself to saying that the action is valued for its own sake and not instrumentally as a means to an end. I will call this account the *intrinsically valued account* of autotelicity. Finally, Meier’s account is the prototype for what I will call the *intrinsic reasons* account of autotelicity. This agent-centered account characterizes the intrinsicity of autotelic activities as an intensional property of the action which is grounded in the agent’s motivating

reasons.

The Metaphysical Account: The metaphysical account of autotelic play attempts to ground the intrinsicity of autotelic play in some property or properties inherent in the activity which makes the activity an end in itself. This account identifies an activity's intrinsic properties independent of the agent's psychological attitudes. In other words, if the activity is an end in itself, then that activity has the requisite property for it to be an end in itself, or autotelic play. The problem is that it is not clear how to descriptively specify that property or properties of an activity which is/are essential to that activity being an end in itself. The physical act of throwing a baseball may be an end in itself given certain assumptions about the context in which the event occurs. But, within the context of sports, such particular actions themselves serve a purpose within the context of the sport. So, the particular action of throwing a baseball, when it is to strike out a batter, is a means to an end. As Beardsley (1) notes when examining the nature of the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction, what is an end in one case may be a means in another case. As such, there may be no reason to think that one can identify those properties of an activity itself which makes it an end in itself. Similarly, there may be no reason to expect there to be a property or list of properties (e.g., running, throwing, catching, swinging, etc. in the sport of baseball) that make playing a sport an end in itself.⁵

One might expect that if autotelic play activities are physical activities which are ends in themselves, then there is some intrinsic property of a particular autotelic activity which makes it an end in itself. If the arguments of the preceding paragraph are sufficient, then there is reason to think that, at least within the context of sports, there is no intrinsic property of an action or activity which makes the action or activity an end in itself. In fact, when the intrinsicity of autotelic play is conceived in terms of a metaphysical property which grounds the activity's

intrinsicness, the question appears nonsensical. But, if one claims that play activities are ends in themselves, then this interpretation is legitimate. Of course, one may posit that relative to a particular sport there exists a particular set of actions that have the property essential to play being an end in itself. But, this stipulation appears purely arbitrary because there may be, plausibly, actions which are ends in themselves but are not performed within the context of sports. Or, there may be activities intrinsic to participating in a sport yet, given a different context, are not intrinsic to some activity (e.g., throwing a baseball versus throwing a grenade at an enemy combatant). Rather, it seems that determining whether an activity is an end in itself will depend on how and in what context that action is described. Or, more importantly, determining whether an action is an end in itself will require knowing the intentions and/or values of the agent for whom the action is to be an end in itself.

So, what one might really mean by saying autotelic play is an activity that is an end in itself is that it is an activity that is either intrinsically valuable or pursued for intrinsic reasons. Thus, the metaphysical account's conception of autotelic play as an activity which is an end in itself reduces to at least one of the other two characterizations of autotelic play.

The Intrinsically Valued Account: The intrinsically valued account of autotelic play values an activity for its own sake and not as a means to an end. While one may argue that the intrinsically valued account does not differ in substance from the metaphysical account account of play since there is reason to think that things that are intrinsically valuable require some metaphysically intrinsic property to ground them, I think there is an important sense in which they differ. Feezell's definition makes explicit appeal to the agent's attitudes in valuing an action (in particular the felt enjoyment or pleasure), while the preceding account could be seen as not including the agent's attitudes at all, but only describing the action itself, independent of the

agent's attitudes. As I argued above, in describing the intrinsicity of an action by appeal to its being an end in itself, it is not clear what aspect or property of the action is supposed to be an end in itself. It appears that one must include an agent's attitudes and desires when saying that an action is an end in itself and when saying that it is intrinsically valuable for the agent.

Despite the fact that the conception of autotelic play as an intrinsically valuable activity better captures play activities than does autotelic play characterized as an end in itself, there are two problems I have with this account. First, this account of play begs the question. It seems that play is intrinsically valuable because play's value is found in playful activity. In contrast, extrinsically valuable things are not intrinsically valuable (and often assumed to be less valuable) because their value is derivative on something else. In effect, play is intrinsically valuable because it is an activity pursued in itself. But, it is assumed that an activity pursued in itself is just intrinsically valuable. Accounts of autotelic play that understand autotelicity as intrinsically valuable activity seem to have this characteristic. Autotelic play is valuable because the activity is intrinsically valuable and what makes the activity intrinsically valuable is that it does not depend on anything else extrinsic to the activity. Since the value of the activity does not depend on anything else, it is intrinsically valuable. So, autotelic play is intrinsically valuable because it is intrinsically valuable.

One might argue in defense of this account that what makes the activity intrinsically valuable is the pleasure or enjoyment the player gets from engaging in an activity for its own sake. This is how, I think, Fezell might want to respond. He would say that play as an intrinsically valuable activity is not circular because there is a property of play activity, namely the agent's enjoyment, that makes it intrinsically valuable over and above the claim that play activity is intrinsically valuable. Under this variation, it is not the activity itself that is intrinsically valuable but the agent's enjoyment derived from playing that is valuable. While this

might solve the problem of circularity, it is not clear that it leaves this conception of autotelicity in better shape. Primarily, this conception appears overly hedonistic. It seems possible to imagine that one can engage in an activity for its own sake while being neutral with respect to the pleasure or enjoyment of the activity. It also seems that one can participate in a sporting activity for its own sake while at the same time that participation causes a great deal of pain and harm (e.g., boxing). Should we deny that one cannot *play* these sports because one is not or cannot derive pleasure and enjoyment from those activities? It seems pleasure is not the only element for valuing an activity.

Furthermore, Feezell comments that it is the agent's pleasure in the activity that keeps a person playing. But, why can it not be the case that an athlete continue in their activities for reasons independent of their enjoyment? For instance, perhaps one plays one's sport for the camaraderie and the opportunity to join friends. Or, perhaps one plays a particular sport because it is the only sport at which one has ever felt mildly competent. Perhaps, finally, one plays one's sport because one entered it without the influences and pressures of family, friends, or society. In these cases, I am inclined to say that one participates in one's activity first because one finds in it the opportunity to connect with others, feel competent, or express one's autonomy. In these cases, the enjoyment one experiences derives from the satisfaction of something more basic— one senses enjoyment *because* the sport satisfies some basic needs for human relatedness, *because* it allows one to feel competent, or *because* one's actions are self-determined. In other words, the enjoyment of the activity is derivative on something else and pleasure is not itself intrinsic to the activity. This last point also can be made differently if one considers that one and the same sporting activity may be enjoyable at one time and not enjoyable at another time. While many enjoy their sporting activity, it is not clear that an agent's enjoyment of an activity is essentially connected to a particular activity.

This discussion highlights a further problem. If it is not the activity itself that is intrinsically valuable but the agent's enjoyment derived from the activity that is, then autotelic play gains its value from desired psychological states: namely, "fun," "enjoyment," or "pleasure." But, this means that these psychological states are what is intrinsically valuable and one's participation in a sport is a means to this end. These points make clear that the appeal to enjoyment or pleasure does not make the activity intrinsically valuable nor does it explain why one might find an activity intrinsically valuable.

Finally, one and the same action may be intrinsically valuable in one situation and instrumentally valuable in another context. What are these contexts? I will argue that what characterizes the context in which an action is intrinsically valuable or instrumentally valuable will depend on the motivations of the agent. If the agent's reasons for acting are internally initiated for intrinsic reasons, then that action will be intrinsically valuable for the agent; the value attributed to the action is derivative and results from the agent's reasons for acting. This way of formulating the problem makes an agent's motivations fundamental to attributions of intrinsically valued actions. When an agent acts from intrinsic reasons, then the action is intrinsically valuable to the agent. Indeed, it seems hard to understand the value an agent places on his actions apart from or independent of the reasons for that action. The motives and reasons of the agent are fundamental to the agent's valuing an action.

The Intrinsic Reasons Account: I have argued above that two conceptions of autotelic play, the metaphysical account and the intrinsically valued account, are problematic. Further, I have argued that these two problematic conceptions ultimately depend on an agent's reasons for acting. The appeal to intrinsic reasons for one's actions arises in Meier's definition of autotelicity when he explicitly states that his definition appeals to the "orientation, demeanor, or

stance of the participant” in defining autotelicity (10: p. 25). The appeal to intrinsic reasons is fundamental when determining whether an action is pursued for its own sake or for instrumental reasons. For example, if one’s reason for playing baseball is to make millions of dollars or to bask in the glow of adoring fans, then one is motivated by an extrinsic reason; namely, glory, fame, or wealth, for example. In this and similar cases, one is not motivated by the sport, or sporting activity; the agent’s orientation is toward extrinsic and not intrinsic aspects of the sport. As such, it is reasonable to argue that this agent is motivated by extrinsic reasons and not intrinsic reasons.

This conception of autotelic play as intrinsically motivated activity escapes the charge of circularity discussed in the previous section. Autotelic play is intrinsically valuable because it is intrinsically motivated action; that is, action executed for intrinsic reasons. If the intrinsicality of the reasons is grounded in the agent’s intentional attitudes, then circularity is prevented. In the next section, I will examine the relationship between intrinsic reasons and autotelic play. I will argue that in talking about intrinsic reasons, one is talking about an agent’s intentional actions. As such, I will briefly consider the dual nature of intentional actions and suggest that one should view autotelic play similarly. Finally, I will present a model for evaluating intrinsic reasons.

II. The Relationship Between Intrinsic Reasons and Autotelic Play

Meier characterizes play as an autotelic activity that is pursued for intrinsic reasons. Meier’s rough characterization of play is, I think, the most plausible definition of autotelicity in the literature. But, his characterization needs further explanation and clarification. Meier makes a distinction between play and non-play activities. Play activities are autotelic and non-play activities are instrumental, or activities pursued not for themselves but from some benefit extrinsic to that activity. Writing about the relationship of play to sports, Meier thinks that

whether someone's sport or game participation is a case of play or non-play depends,

...upon the contingencies surrounding or motivating participation. Thus, whereas National League baseball may indeed be viewed most often as non-play activity, a sandlot game of baseball, incorporating many or even all of the same playing rules, may most definitely be a play occurrence....In other words, particular attitudes or stances manifested by the participants, including motives and inducements for engagement as well as the setting for the action, do not dictate whether a specific activity may legitimately be termed a sport. The essence of sport is independent of these concerns. However, such factors most certainly determine whether or not the sport activity at hand is also a form of play. (10: p. 26)

Even though Meier admits that he is not giving a thorough analysis of play and non-play activities, it is clear that he sees autotelic play as determined by the motivations of the agent and the "inducements" or contextual influences upon the agent's motivating reasons. So, an obvious question is, what are these motivations and inducements that reflect and influence the nature of the motivating reasons that make an activity play or non-play?

Motivating Reasons: To answer this question, I first will sketch an account of motivating reasons. When Meier asserts that play activities are those pursued for intrinsic reasons, it is reasonable to assume that the intention of the agent is to act on these reasons. This seems reasonable because an agent who has no intention of acting on his intrinsic reasons would not be acting from those reasons but from some other reasons or contextual influences. If one makes the assumption that the agent intends to act on his intrinsic reasons, then intrinsic reasons are at least part of, if not wholly, the content of an agent's intentions. Furthermore, one might argue that these intrinsic reasons play a causal role in the initiation and maintenance of the agent's intentional actions. Given these considerations, it seems reasonable to assume that agents who act on intrinsic reasons intend to play. If these are reasonable assumptions, then the intrinsic reasons account of autotelic play will have to be understood in relation to intentional action, where intentions are reasons for acting.

But, this raises a new question. Is the content of an intrinsic reason the same as the

content of an intention to act, or are intrinsic reasons only part of the content of intentional actions? In what follows, I offer a very brief discussion of intentions and intentional action. While what follows outlines a convergence of two philosophers' positions, the intrinsic reasons account is consistent with the philosophy of action literature. I will motivate an account of autotelic play as intentional action with both motivational and representational features. Thus, the intrinsic reasons account of autotelic play must address both the motivational content and the goal content of an agent's actions.

Play activities are agent-performed actions. These actions are not randomly occurring activities but are performed intentionally. What the agent intends to do reflects the reasons the agent has for acting. The reasons for acting, then, guide and inform the agent's intentions to act. Furthermore, the reasons one has for acting have a causal role in the formation of intentional action. While a causal theory of intentional action is not controversial, it provides a point at which to start the discussion about motivating reasons and intentional action.

In two well-established accounts of intentional action, both Bratman (3) and Mele (11) propose similar functional accounts of intentions. Mele sees intentions performing four functions or roles. Briefly, intentions initiate and motivationally sustain intentional action, guide and monitor behavior, coordinate an agent's activities, and prompt and terminate practical reasoning (11: p. 145). Bratman sees intentions as having three roles: intentions have inertia, control conduct, and provide inputs for practical reasoning and further planning (3: p. 22). Bratman and Mele basically conceive of the functional roles of intentions similarly. Also, intentions inform practical reason. As such, intentions provide reasons for acting and will plausibly play a role in the formation of new reasons guiding future intentions.

One might ask whether the functional roles of intentions have any relevance to autotelic play. I think they are relevant. When one conceives of the role of autotelic play in sports, one

can ask whether an agent's intrinsic reasons initiate and sustain activity, guide and monitor behavior, coordinate play activities, and prompt and terminate practical reasoning about playing (to borrow Mele's language). While a player's attitudes and ambitions may not always be explicit, it is clear that play activities do possess these features. Intrinsic reasons are supposed to initiate, guide, and maintain play activities. Otherwise, claims about the inducements and factors influencing an athlete's motivation would not make sense. It might be that when these intentions are implicit then the agent is best expressing autotelic play. Nonetheless, there are good reasons for taking autotelic play as intentional action for intrinsic reasons.

Just as both Mele and Bratman analyze the functional role of intentions similarly, they also see the components of intentional mental states in like fashion. Mele conceives the constitution of intentional mental states as involving two aspects: a representational content and a motivational aspect. Concerning the latter, he identifies a motivational feature in the functional role intentions have in order to initiate and sustain intentional action. Consequently, he thinks we can assign a motivational component to intentions. At the same time, intentions are not "raw motivation" but have representational content. To clarify this point, Mele compares an intention to A with a desire to A. Both the intention to A and the desire to A, he claims, include the motivation to A and a representation of one's A-ing. However, the desire to A does not imply one has the intention to A unless one is "settled upon A-ing" (11: p. 142). Here is his example: "I now have a very strong desire to smoke a cigarette. But I am not settled upon smoking one—partly because I have resolved to kick the habit" (11: p. 142). This feature of being settled upon A-ing is the essential difference between an intention to A and a desire to A. He claims that this motivational difference corresponds to the access intentions and desires have to the mechanisms of intentional action. Moreover, this difference is consistent with the commonsense claim that intending to A entails being settled upon A-ing, while desiring to A does not entail being settled

upon A-ing. In short, "settling" is the defining feature of the motivational aspect of intention and "settling" on some representational content distinguishes intentions from desires.

Similarly, Bratman says intentions are plans, and "[p]lans...are mental states involving an appropriate sort of commitment to action: I have a plan to A only if it is true of me that I plan to A" (3: p. 29). Bratman hopes to convey the point that in conceiving of intentions as plans, one should not merely conceive of plans as a blueprint or recipe for achieving a goal. Rather, in having a plan (in being in a psychological state of intending or planning) one is committed to pursuing or expressing that plan. Bratman's example is that his having a plan to roast lamb requires that he plan to roast the lamb. This notion of a plan is meant to rule out cases of one having a plan for achieving a certain goal while never intending on pursuing that plan or action. Thus, plans as intentional psychological states involve a commitment to the expression of that plan. Taken as a whole, Bratman's account attributes to intentional mental states two structural aspects: the having of a plan and the commitment to act on that plan. Both Bratman's and Mele's accounts provide a similar view—an agent's intention has both a representational component and a commitment (settling) component to initiate and sustain an action, the latter being a motivation to pursue the representational content of the intention.

Given this account of the dual nature of intentions, the answer to one of the questions I posed above is that intentions are types of reasons for acting. They are reasons that have both a goal content and a motivational component. Given this model of intentions, autotelic play as intrinsic reasons should be reconceived as having both a goal content and a motivational component. This follows from the account above. It is not enough to say that one has a desire to play or a belief that play is fun, one must also be "settled upon" playing if one is to autotelically play. In the context of autotelic play, then, both the goal content and motivational component constitute the play activity.

The dual nature of these accounts of intentional action is relevant to play activity. When one participates in a game of baseball (for example), one intends to take part in the game. Similarly, to exhibit autotelic play in a sport one must have committed, or motivated, oneself to participate based on a specific goal content, namely intrinsic reasons. These intrinsic reasons are in whole or part, then, the goal content of the intention to play baseball. Moreover, the goal content must be one's own for the simple reason that if the reasons are not one's own, then one is not pursuing the activity for one's own reasons. In other words, if the motivational aspect of the autotelic play is not autonomously initiated and maintained, then it is not clear how one can speak of one acting on one's intentions and intrinsic reasons. One might act on another's influence, but that is to participate for reasons that are not one's own. So, an important feature of the motivational aspect of autotelic play will require that one act autonomously.⁶

This discussion of intentional action transforms the analysis of the intrinsic reasons account. When claiming that intrinsic reasons are the essence of autotelic play, one must analyze both the motivational aspect of action and the representational content guiding action. If by intrinsic reasons one meant only a type of internal, autonomous attitude motivating action, then intrinsic reasons would have to be understood only as autonomous motivational factors and extrinsic reasons would be thought of as non-autonomous or externally controlling motivational factors. Similarly, if by intrinsic reasons one meant only the representational content of one's intentions, then intrinsic reasons are only concerned with the sporting activity or some other agent-relative, internal content. Accordingly, extrinsic reasons then will be about factors extrinsic to the activity. But, excluding one or the other aspect of intrinsic reasons will fail to provide a useful analysis. The athlete who autonomously seeks to make millions from baseball is generally not what philosophers hope to capture with their appeal to autotelicity. Likewise, an athlete who might find a sport fun and enjoyable will not find that activity enjoyable if they feel

they are being forced or coerced to participate. While I do not think the two aspects of motivating intentions are equivalent, they are conceptually linked. Furthermore, the two aspects of motivation are, I think, often conflated when talking about intentional actions and reasons for acting. As intentional actions, an analysis of autotelic play should include both aspects: a goal content and a motivational component.

Content of Intrinsically Motivated Play: I have argued above that one should view autotelic play as a type of intentional action. To the extent that an athlete's autotelically playing a sport can be influenced by motives, inducements, and the context in which the sport transpires, I think the intrinsic reasons account should be understood as arguing, separately or jointly, that these factors influence a player's goal contents or that these factors influence the agent's motivation and felt autonomy. In other words, the intrinsic reasons account maintains that inducements and context can play a role in influencing whether the agent feels that he is acting of his own accord, or from his own reasons, as opposed to acting on goals that are not his own or not autonomously initiated. In either case, both goal content and motivational factors are part of the reasons one has for acting. The question now arises as to how to parse the intrinsicity of the intrinsic reasons account of autotelic play. Given the dual nature of this account, what are the contents of the "intrinsic reasons" causing the action? What kinds of reasons count as intrinsic and which do not?

Empirical Research: Part of the answer to which kinds of reasons count as intrinsic and which do not can be found in the above sections. But, how do these suggestions fit into the dual nature of the intrinsic reasons account of autotelic play? In order to answer this question, I think one must part with a purely philosophical account and consider intrinsically motivated play activities

in light of empirical research concerning agent motivation, and by doing so gain a richer understanding of autotelic activity and intrinsic reasons. In addition, what is revealed in the psychological research is a similar dual analysis of motivating reasons as found in the philosophical theories of Mele and Bratman.

One of the most influential and extensively researched theories on motivation is Self-Determination Theory. Initially formulated by Deci & Ryan (5, 6), Self-Determination Theory (SDT) concerns itself with human motivation and the social contexts which influence motivation.⁷ Between the extremes of fully self-determined, autonomous behaviors (intrinsic motivation) and fully nonself-determined, controlled behaviors (amotivation), research revealed the need to distinguish between different types of extrinsic motivation between these two. Depending on the degree to which the initially extrinsic factors are internalized by the agent and made one's own, extrinsic motivation varies along a continuum from behaviors that can be seen as internally regulated and governed (in effect autonomous) to those governed by external forces. For example, the child whose parents force him to sit at the piano and practice before going outside to play will be extrinsically motivated to practice by forces which are not his own. In time, however, the child may internalize the factors motivating his piano practice and adopt them as his own. This process of internalization may go through different stages. For example, the child's parent may no longer need to stand over him while he practices the piano. Instead, he may practice before going out to play because he would feel guilty if he didn't practice first. Later, he may come to realize that practicing the piano is a valuable activity because making music is valuable. He may even come to enjoy practicing the piano and playing music. In these latter cases of internalization, the motivating factor is still conceived as extrinsic. But, SDT classifies the behavior as an integrated behavior and such integrated actions are seen as autonomous and have the same impact on well-being and satisfaction as intrinsically motivated

behaviors.⁸ With respect to the continuum of intrinsically and extrinsically motivated behaviors, those actions which are initiated and pursued from a sense of one's self will be seen as autonomous. The degree to which one perceives oneself as autonomous will vary with the degree to which one perceives one's actions as determined by some internally or externally controlling forces.

According to SDT, the process of adopting as one's own the motivations of external forces is theorized to be facilitated by the psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Based on decades of research correlating autonomous or controlled regulation of behavior with, respectively, positive or negative psychological consequences, SDT emphasizes these three psychological needs. Motives or goals not directly linked to the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness showed no effect upon agent well-being, growth, or satisfaction when those motives or goals were fulfilled or thwarted.

In relation to sport, Brière *et al.* (4) and Pelletier *et al.* (12) found that athletes displayed greater intrinsic motivation toward their sport the more they perceived themselves as competent and self-determined. In addition, research of athletes about their sports participation indicates that intrinsic and extrinsic motives are viable distinctions for understanding sports participation and that athletes rate intrinsic motivation as more important than extrinsic motivation for amateur athletics (18).

While much of the research in SDT is concerned with the internal or external motivating influences that guide agent behaviors, recent research has focused on the content of the goals people pursue. SDT has divided these goal contents into intrinsic and extrinsic goals. Intrinsic goals include health, emotional intimacy, personal growth, and community contribution, while extrinsic goals include fame, financial success, and physical appearance. The former goals are labeled intrinsic because they are seen as satisfying or rewarding on their own and provide direct

satisfaction of the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. On the other hand, extrinsic goals are conceived as outwardly focused and are not concerned with the activity but with what one hopes to gain from the activity. Individuals who are concerned with extrinsic goal satisfaction are oriented toward interpersonal comparisons, contingent approval, and external signs of success and self-worth. While intrinsic/extrinsic motivation and intrinsic/extrinsic goals are closely correlated, research has shown that goal motive and goal content predict independent variance in psychological well-being.⁹ So, while closely related, the research indicates it is a mistake to confound goal motives and goal content.

What does this research on motivation have to contribute to a reconception of autotelic play as intrinsic reasons? As I discussed earlier, the intrinsic reasons account of autotelic play is concerned with the reasons, attitudes, and motivations of the agent. While on the surface this account seems plausible, I argued, using Mele's and Bratman's account of intentional action, that one has to understand the reasons causing action as both the motivating factors and the content. The empirical research surrounding agent motivation supports this dichotomy.

Cases of Intrinsically Motivated Play: In the last section, I provided psychological research that coincides with the dual aspects of intentional action and that provides a basis for determining the content of intrinsic reasons. Building on the model provided in the research mentioned above, the following four cases provide a method for determining the content of intrinsic reasons. Consider the following cases:

Case 1: Rob plays ball to win a college scholarship *because he wants to be a famous ball player.*

Case 2: Bob plays ball to win a college scholarship *because playing ball allows him to better himself through education.*

Case 3: Teri participates in a rock climbing competition *because her parents want her to.*

Case 4: Keri participates in a rock climbing competition *because she enjoys the physical challenge.*

In each of these cases, I have split the description into the goal content and the goal motivation. What occurs after “because” and italicized in each case is the goal motivation. What occurs prior to that is the goal content.¹⁰ Examples of autonomous motivation goals are: “because one really identifies with the goal” and “because of the enjoyment or stimulation that this goal provides one.” Two examples of controlled motivation goals are: “because of the external rewards (grades, status, money)” and “because one would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if one didn’t act a certain way.” With respect to goal contents, examples of intrinsic goals are: “having many close and caring relationships” (emotional intimacy), “helping to make the community/world a better place” (community contribution), and “being fulfilled and have a meaningful life” (personal growth). Examples of extrinsic goal contents are: “getting a job that pays well and having lots of nice things” (financial success), and “being known and/or admired by many people” (fame/popularity). The content of the respective goals arises from the research surrounding motivation and the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness which are thought to inform and influence agent motivation.

Even though the above goal contents may not be directly related to a sporting activity, the ones listed can serve as a model for more specific, sport-related contexts. For example, an intrinsic goal content related to being fulfilled and having a meaningful life might be translated to, “participate in sport S to gain the skills to pursue my sport to the best of my ability.” Similarly, one might reinterpret the “emotional intimacy” goal content with, “participate in a baseball game to be a valuable part of a team.” An example of an extrinsic goal content is, “play baseball to be recognized as the greatest home-run hitter of all times.” Of course, there are many available options for each of these types of intrinsic and extrinsic reasons. The point is to

provide a framework for modeling these reasons with the purpose of determining, by appeal to dual intrinsic reasons, when an action is a case of autotelic play and when it is not.

Admittedly, the model I provide in the cases above is simple in that there is one goal content and one motivation goal for each case. What motivates individuals to participate in sports is not often this simple. In some if not most cases, many reasons motivate an agent's actions. In some cases, there may be several reasons for one's participation in a sport and this collection of reasons may reflect various goals and motivations, both intrinsic and extrinsic. For example, I may participate in a charity golf tournament instead of a charity 10 kilometer run because I enjoy golf.¹¹ Even though the motivation to enter this tournament may have been extrinsically motivated, the motivation to enter the golf tournament as opposed to the 10k run is ostensibly intrinsic—I enjoy golf and not running. This fact about multiple and concurrent agent motivations which this example illustrates does not undermine my proposal as much as highlight the need to clearly understand the dual nature of intrinsic reasons and a framework from which to analyze these competing reasons. There might be cases where it is difficult to tease apart an agent's collection of reasons. Likewise, one's motivations may change through time, as in the above example of the child playing the piano. This account attempts to provide a model by which this analysis can proceed.

Given this model, how can we interpret Cases 1–4 with respect to autotelic play conceived as intrinsic reasons? In the first case, the goal content is extrinsic (Rob is participating in his sport for financial gain) and the goal motivation is controlled/extrinsic (Rob's engagement is for external rewards). In Case 1, Rob is not playing (autotelic) because both his goal content and motivation goal are not directed toward the sport but what the sport can do for him. Contrast Case 1 with Case 4. In the latter case, Keri's goal content is intrinsic (she is participating for personal fulfillment) and her motivation goal is autonomous/intrinsic (she is engaged in the

activity for the stimulation and challenge it gives her). In Case 4, Keri is autotelically playing in the purest sense of the term since *both* her goal content and goal motivation are intrinsic. Of these two cases, I think Keri is exhibiting autotelic play where Rob is not. Keri is playing at her activity because she is pursuing the activity for intrinsic reasons. On the other hand, Rob is not playing (in the autotelic sense) because his reasons for participating in the sport are based on extrinsic factors.

Cases 2 and 3 are less clear. Is Bob exhibiting autotelic play when he participates in a sport because it allows him to get an education? Is Teri exhibiting autotelic play when she participates in a climbing event because her parents want her to? In the former case, Bob is good enough at his sport to earn a scholarship and it is reasonable to assume that he enjoys his sport. At the same time, his sport is a means to an end and not an end in itself. To further complicate the analysis of Case 2, Bob's goal motivation ("to better himself through education") is an intrinsic motivation according to the SDT model because he is autonomously motivated by something he finds personally meaningful. In Case 2, there is an extrinsic goal content (win a scholarship) combined with an intrinsic motivation goal (personal meaning). Just the opposite is at play in Case 3—there is an extrinsic motivation goal (parental coercion) with an apparent intrinsic goal content (rock climb). These types of "mixed-motivation" cases are difficult since they are neither clearly cases of autotelic play nor non-play. Likely, Cases 2 and 3 are probably the norm for most athletes since seldom are both one's motivation and goal contents purely intrinsic. As I discussed above, the degree of intrinsic to extrinsic content of both one's goal motivation and goal content changes in degree and substance, sometimes even during the same event.

These mixed-motivation cases are difficult to interpret. However, they demonstrate that we often interpret a play behavior by looking at both the agent's goal motivation and goal

content. In the philosophy of sport literature, these two aspects of motivation have been conflated or assumed to be one and the same. This lack of clarity results in concepts of play that allow for varied analyses of play activities depending on which aspect one emphasizes. Clarifying and examining the relationship between these two aspects of agent motivation (e.g., which one we tend to favor against the other in claiming whether an activity is a case of autotelic play) helps clarify the concept of autotelic play and those activities which are autotelic. At the same time, there may be cases in which there is no clear means of determining how to interpret the participant's intentional actions. In addition, the psychological research on the relationship between goal motivation and goal content shows both a close correlation of one with the other and independent variance in agent well-being. Not only does this empirical finding provide an understanding of the shifting ground of autotelic play activity, it also shows the need to include both aspects of motivation in the justification of autotelic play. It is these very points which I think provide an improvement on Meier's account of autotelic play as intrinsic reasons. While I am inclined to deny the attribution of autotelic play to both cases because there is not a consistent intrinsic goal motivation and goal content, these two cases are debatable and make clear the need to consider both goal motivation and goal content in the concept of autotelic play.

Notwithstanding these points, one may protest that the dual intrinsic reasons model I propose for autotelic play is inadequate. The model fails, one might argue, because it emphasizes an agent's "subjective goal set" at the expense of, in Suitsian (16) terms, lusory goals.¹² Lusory goals, with respect to games, are the goals an agent possesses which reflect the objective of achieving the goal of the game as defined by the rules of the game. The concern is that my account would allow for attributions of autotelic play without there being anything in the goal set that includes the goals of the game in which one is allegedly participating.¹³ While I understand this concern, I do not think it necessarily follows from the model I have proposed. If

Rob, Bob, Teri, or Keri are participating in their respective sport, then their intentional actions will conform to the rules, notwithstanding breaking the rules or cheating, and they will be attempting to achieve the objectives of the sport. This seems true regardless of whether one is participating for intrinsic or extrinsic reasons. The athlete who competes in order to make millions has lusory goals as much as the athlete who competes for the fun of the sport. Both athletes' actions are bound by the goals and rules of the sport. The question is whether both the goal contents and the motivating goals initiating and maintaining the action are intrinsic or extrinsic.

There is much to commend in this Suitsian position, but its simplicity creates the very confusion the dual intrinsic reasons account attempts to clarify. If one conflates the goal content and the motivational goal, then it is possible that one might call an action a case of autotelic play even though one's lusory goal is not autonomously generated. For example, in Case 3 Teri participates in a rock climbing competition because her parents want her to. I argue above that this is a case of mixed-motivating reasons: Teri's goal content is intrinsic (to climb rocks) but her goal motivation is extrinsic (parental influence instead of autonomously motivated). In this case, one might be inclined to argue that Teri is autotelically playing because the content of her lusory goal is about rock climbing and not about something extrinsic to rock climbing (fame or fortune)—Teri is autotelically playing even though her motivation goal content is not autonomously generated. What matters, the critic would add, is that Teri have a lusory goal that is focused on rock climbing itself and not on factors extrinsic to that sport. In Teri's case, however, she may perceive her goal content to rock climb as not her own but her parents. If this were Teri's perception of her action, then I do not think she is autotelically playing even though she may be acting consistent with a lusory goal.

A related issue arises for Bob in Case 2. One might argue in Case 2 that Bob is not

autotelically playing because his goal content is extrinsic and focused on winning a college scholarship and not on the sport itself even though Bob is autonomously motivated. What matters, the critic will conclude, is whether the agent has a lusory goal, namely a goal content that is focused on the sport or game itself. Bob's goal content is not intrinsic to the activity since Bob is playing ball to win a college scholarship. But, what motivates Bob is intrinsically valuable and autonomously motivated; namely, his desire to better himself through his education. Is Teri or Bob closer to the ideal of pure autotelic play? My guess is that there would be a difference of intuitions in answering this question. Does one's autonomous motivation goal trump goal content, or vice versa? Does intrinsic goal content reign supreme even if that content is perceived as controlled by factors extrinsic to the agent? As I stated earlier, my inclination is to deny that Teri and Bob are autotelically playing. I'm sure there are those who would disagree. But, the mere possibility of a difference of opinion is informative in that it reveals the need to clearly distinguish both aspects operative in the intrinsic reasons account of autotelic play. It seems that both aspects of intrinsic reasons are involved in guiding one's thinking about autotelic play.

Conclusion: I have argued that a dual intrinsic reasons account is the best conception of autotelic play. And, I have argued that this conception needs to include both the motivational aspects and goal contents of intrinsic reasons. In reconceiving autotelic play as intrinsic reasons in this fashion, I have, perhaps, narrowed the activities which might be considered autotelic play. Even so, this narrowing does not undermine this account as much as reveal the challenge to autotelically play one's sport. While the story I have told in this paper focuses on the reconceptualization of autotelic play as intrinsic reasons, I have argued that the other two conceptualizations of play (an end in itself and intrinsically valuable) do not make sense, are

circular, and/or ultimately depend on an appeal to the agent's reasons and motivations. So, there is no falling back on one of these other accounts of autotelicity if one is inclined to reject autotelic play as intrinsic reasons and motivation. Any one of the other two versions conjoined with any other characterization of play will similarly fail. Moreover, the first part of this essay highlighted a common confusion in the literature when dealing with the intrinsicity of autotelic play. It is not always clear in the discussions of autotelic play whether the intrinsic property is metaphysically grounded in the activity or whether it is some normative attribution of the agent. Finally, the positive argument of this paper was intended to provide a model for analyzing agent actions to determine whether they are instances of autotelic play. Admittedly, there is much more to say. And, the model is simple in that many agent actions are simultaneously motivated by many varied reasons. Nonetheless, the model provides a method for recognizing and analyzing the dual aspect of the intrinsic reasons of autotelic play.¹⁴

REFERENCES

1. Beardsley, Monroe C. (1965). "Intrinsic value." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 26, 1–17.
2. Bradley, Ben. (2006). "Two concepts of intrinsic value." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 9, 111–130.
3. Bratman, Michael. (1987). *Intentions, Plans and Practical Reason*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
4. Brière, N. M., Vallerand, R. J., Blais, M. R., & Pelletier, L. G. (1995). "Développement et validation d' une mesure de motivation intrinsèque et extrinsèque et d' amotivation en contexte sportif: L' Echelle de motivation dans les sports (EMS) [On the development and validation of the French form of the Sport Motivation Scale]. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 26, 465–489.
5. Deci, Edward L. & Ryan, Richard M. (1985). *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-determination in Human Behavior*. New York: Plenum Press.
6. Deci, Edward L. & Ryan, Richard M. (1991). "A motivational approach to self: Integration in personality." In R. Dientsbier (ed.), *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation: Vol. 38. Perspectives on Motivation*, (237–288). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
7. Deci, Edward L. & Ryan, Richard M. (2000). "The 'What' and 'Why' of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior." *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268.
8. Feezell, Randolph. (2004). *Sport, Play & Ethical Reflection*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
9. Humberstone, I. L. (1996). "Intrinsic/Extrinsic." *Synthese*, 108, 205–267.
10. Meier, Klaus V. (1988). "Triad trickery: Playing with sport and games." *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, 15, 11–30.
11. Mele, Alfred. (1992). *Springs of Action*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
12. Pelletier, L. G., Fortier, M. S., Vallerand, R. J., Tuson, K. M., Brière, N. M., & Blais, M. R. (1995). "Toward a new measure of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation in sports: The Sport Motivation Scale (SMS)." *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 17, 35–53.
13. Sheldon, Kennon M., & Kasser, T. (1995). "Coherence and congruence: Two aspects of personality integration." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68, 531–543.

14. Sheldon, Kennon M., Ryan, Richard M., Deci, Edward L., & Kasser, Tim. (2004). "The independent effects of goal contents and motives on well-being: It's both what you pursue and why you pursue it." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30 (4), 475–486.
15. Suits, Bernard. (1977). "Words on play." *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, 4, 117–31.
16. Suits, Bernard. (1978). *The Grasshopper: Games, life and utopia*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
17. Suits, Bernard. (1988). "Tricky triad: Games, play and sport." *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, 15, 1–9.
18. Vallerand, R. J., Deci, E. L. & Ryan, R. M. (1987). "Intrinsic motivation in sport." *Exercise and Sport Sciences Reviews*, 15, 389–425.
19. Vansteenkiste, Maarten., Lens, Willy. & Deci, Edward L. (2006). "Intrinsic versus extrinsic goal contents in Self-Determination Theory: Another look at the quality of academic motivation." *Educational Psychologist*, 41(1), 19–31.

¹ Suits (16) has one of the earliest characterizations of this play/work dichotomy. There also is the colloquial characterization of play as simply the *participation* in a game, sport, or challenging endeavor. This common, non-technical characterization is widely used but not what philosophers of sport have in mind when defining play. Throughout this paper, I will try to use "play" only in its technical sense, in particular that aspect of play understood as an autotelic activity (autotelic play). To that end, I will use terms like "participate," "engage," etc. to neutrally describe relevant activities for which it is indeterminate whether it is autotelic play.

² While many of the philosophers I discuss take a stance on whether autotelicity is necessary and sufficient for an activity to count as play, I will not. The arguments for this cannot proceed until an account of play is provided. The arguments for the sufficiency conditions of play are arguments for another paper.

³ In addition, Meier goes further in his conception of autotelicity than does Suits. Meier claims that autotelicity is necessary and sufficient for play. Suits maintains that autotelicity is necessary for play, but not sufficient. Fezell, it appears, also thinks autotelicity is necessary, but not sufficient for play.

⁴ To further complicate the discussion, Bradley (2) argues that there are two distinct and compatible conceptions of intrinsic value—a Kantian notion where intrinsic value is possessed (or not) by a living being and it makes one worthy of respect and a Moorean conception where intrinsic value is a state of affairs that comes in degrees, is to be promoted, and allows for valuing the world, to name a few characteristics. Both the Kantian and Moorean conceptions of intrinsic value have distinct answers to what intrinsic value is and what things have it. I will not spend time in this paper examining this distinction and how it might apply to autotelic play.

⁵ The metaphysical account seems to serve an important role in Suits's thinking. In thinking about Olympic sports, Suits writes, "play becomes transformed into game when the skills learned in serendipitous play, instead of being instrumental to other payoffs...themselves constitute the payoff..." (17: p. 3). And, he writes, "I am merely suggesting...how unsophisticated play can become sophisticated play, that is, game" (17, p. 3) This passage, and others like it, implies a metaphysical grounding of both autotelic play and games.

⁶ Both Fezell and Meier include voluntary action as part of their account of play. Whether one should conceive of autonomous and voluntary action as the same is a debate I will not enter. By autonomous, I mean self-determined. I will contrast autonomous actions with externally controlled actions. As will become clear soon, most human actions can be seen as existing on a continuum between these two extremes.

⁷ A more complete and informative synopsis of SDT can be found in Deci & Ryan (7) and Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci (19).

⁸ While the SDT literature considers internalized extrinsic motivation as fundamentally extrinsic, I think an intrinsic reasons account of autotelic play would be justified in including cases of internalized extrinsic motivation as autotelic because in these cases the agent has adopted the motivations for acting as one's own, even though they were originally not one's own reasons.

⁹ Research in this area looks at these two aspects of motivation separately and together. Research shows that the differing effects of intrinsic goals correlate with intrinsic motivation (13) but each predicts independent variance in

psychological well-being (14).

¹⁰ I have created these cases to be consistent with Sheldon's *et al.* (14) model. In that paper, motivation goals (italicized in the above cases) are divided into autonomous (intrinsic) and controlled (extrinsic), while goal contents are divided into intrinsic goals and extrinsic goals. The following examples are directly quoted from the studies discussed in Sheldon's *et al.* (14) paper.

¹¹ I borrow this example from an anonymous reviewer who raised this concern.

¹² An anonymous reviewer raised this point. It is interesting to note that Suits speaks of the lusory goals, lusory means, and prelusory goals of games in *The Grasshopper* (16) but abandons this terminology in his more considered account of play in *Tricky Triad* (17).

¹³ If lusory goals are essential to an account of autotelic play, then such an account cannot include play activities that are not rule-bound, like a cat chasing its tail or a child playing in a sand box. It seems an adequate account of autotelic play must be able to account for these types of apparent play activities.

¹⁴ My thanks to Kenneth Harris for many useful discussions and editorial comments on this paper.