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Book Review

The Game

by Alessandro Baricco. Ed. Einaudi, 2018

In the text elaborated by the writer and essayist Alessandro Baricco, "The Game", p. 324, published by Einaudi, 2018, the author invites us to reflect on the great stages of history that have accompanied man in his evolution from Homo analogicus to Homo digitalis.

Although the digital revolution has followed a rather complex process, Baricco tries to trace the salient points that have constituted this change of scenery.

A radical change in some ways but, in fact, after a careful analysis also shows some imperturbable (perhaps archetypal?) peculiarities of man: whether it is Homo analogicus or digitalis, in fact, what emerges are the typical traits of a Homo ludens.

Through this key of interpretation, it is possible to notice how the great changes that have taken place in the technological field have been possible because they are capable of stimulating the playful disposition of the human being.

From the table-football to the flipper, continuing for Space Invaders and Commodore 64 up to the invention of the iPhone, it seems that to emerge with respect to the rest were inventions able to offer not only utility but also simplicity and fun to people: «digital revolution: generating change by creating tools that, if they are not played, at least they resemble to toys».

For this reason, underlines the Author, «all the digital insurrection carried within the unexpressed claim that experience could become a round, beautiful and comfortable gesture. Not the reward for a fatigue. But the consequence of a game».

The intuition by Baricco is to make it clear how even when we were young each of us was educated to gamification (just think of the “fork” used as a “plane” to make even the least favorite dishes acceptable, or the pot-shaped

spaceship), so we cannot be surprised if the inventions capable of provoking the same emotions perceived in the game during childhood are to be successful. As the same Author notes, something in the Game «seemed to empty the human experience of its highest reasons [...] by bringing everything back to a simplified system that avoided fatigue, reduced the specific weight of the facts and chose solutions that were comfortable and fast».

Perhaps it is precisely for this reason that we have come to elevate «the play as a foundational scheme of an entire civilization», giving rise to a world in which even the truth of the facts is not decisive for the establishment of opinions.

Compared to the twentieth century canons, with the Game we get to conceive the world in a different way.

People no longer interface with reality as before and, with extreme acumen, the Author highlights the many social, political and human implications that this revolution has brought about.

In addition to mass individualism, the Game seems to have been able to generate further disadvantages and advantages, which have meant that the typical dynamics of the world we knew a short time ago, were replaced with something that, we will really need to understand who has played in the Game since he was born.

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