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The Burden of Choice, the Complexity of the World and Its Reduction: The Game of Go/Weiqi as a Practice of "Empirical Metaphysics"

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Abstract

The main aim of the text is to show how a game of Go (Weiqi, baduk, Igo) can serve as a model representation of the ontological-metaphysical aspect of the actor–network theory (ANT). An additional objective is to demonstrate in return that this ontological-metaphysical aspect of ANT represented on Go/Weiqi game model is able to highlight the key aspect of this theory—onto-methodological praxis.

Keywords: games; Go/Weiqi; empirical metaphysics; ontological imagination; the actor–network theory (ANT); studies on science and technology (STS).

1. Introduction

The primary aim of the article is to show how the game of Go can be used as a model to represent the ontological and metaphysical aspect of the actor–network theory (ANT). An additional aim is to show and highlight the crucial for this theory, ontomethodological aspect of praxis (Kuszyk-Bytniewska, 2015; Skórzyńska, 2017). The actor–network theory (ANT) is a representative of a more general trend in social sciences and humanities, known as the ontological turn (Heur van, Leydesdorff, & Wyatt, 2013). The specific language of this theory and the requirement to be familiar with the anthropology of laboratory tradition as well as Science and Technology Studies makes it difficult to become more recognizable by more traditional philosophical approaches. The references to the STS and Bruno Latour often blocks the reception in a purely philosophical field, due to his entanglement in the so-called Science Wars (Kazibut, 2013; Tuchańska, 2006). The representatives of the ANT

(M. Callon, J. Law, B. Latour, A. Mol) are labelled as constructivism, postmodernism, which makes the reception of the philosophical and ontological potential of their concepts in the field of "pure" philosophy difficult, despite some attempts (Bińczyk, Derra, & Grygieńć, 2015). The activity of researchers associated with the so-called speculative realism does not facilitate the reception of it either, and this applies in particular to Graham Harman (Harman, 2009). Although they introduce the ANT to the "parlours" of philosophy, it is, in my opinion, a very specific and controversial interpretation of the ANT at the same time, i.e. the one that focus mainly at the speculative and metaphysical level of analysis. The achievements of Latour and other representatives of the actor–network theory are not based on speculation but on translation between ethnographical sensitivity which focuses on concrete, grounded research and philosophical boldness which allows for philosophical (ontological) conclusions. In this approach which emphasizes praxis, the philosophical work (based on a research disposition called ontological imagination) allows for (re)constructing "metaphysical landscapes" owing to the data collected from "actors" and not only as part of speculation in the researcher's mind (Nowak, 2013, 2016, pp. 254–265).

The use of the reference to Go/Weiqi allows showing the most important ontological and metaphysical characteristics of the ANT and presenting the simultaneous co-constitution of methodological practices with the stabilization of the world (ontology) important to this approach (Law, 2004). I can legitimately apply the reference to Go/Weiqi for several reasons: firstly, this reference appears in key moments of the work by Bruno Latour himself (Latour, 2005; Latour & Woolgar, 1986, pp. 247–252) and earlier by Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Secondly, the shifting of the emphasis from reproducing authors' texts from the ANT to showing the "work" of the theory, illustrated by the reference to the game, makes it possible to grasp the praxis characteristic of this theory mentioned above. Thirdly, the focus on the story about the game and its recreation breaks with the theory-centric way of narrating, i.e. translating philosophical approaches produced as theories through other theoretical approaches. This is especially important because the ANT is a theory-praxis, a way of "enacting" rather than a classical theory. Therefore, in the case of the ANT, it is essential to practise the research rather than to talk about it only. A philosopher who "plays the ANT" learns a certain theory-praxis, the result of which is revealed only after "playing the game." Using different, more dedicated language, I want to show in the following article how to understand the ANT as ontomethodology (Law, 2004) and ontography (Lynch, 2013)—a methodological and ontological study which is established in conjunction with the examined object (Law, 2004).

2. Text Structure, Technical and Terminological Notes

Text structure: After the introduction, in the next part of the article, I will discuss the actor–network theory as a distinct non-reductive method of philosophizing (onto-methodology). Further, I will outline how Go/Weiqi has been used as a model so far. Then, by comparison with chess, I would like to point out that the ontological programme embodied and articulated in the rules and practice of playing Go is fundamentally different from the

ontological tradition in Europe. I will discuss it in more detail in the next section of the text. In another one, entitled *Playing as the Changing of the World*, I will demonstrate how the game of Go and the ANT ontomethodology can be described in parallel as an expression of a similar philosophical program. In the final part entitled *Game and the ontology of choice*, I will briefly outline the ethical and axiological consequences of this programme.

Go/Weiqi: In most cases, I will use this double notation mainly to emphasize the Chinese origin of this game, often known only through its significance in Japanese culture. There are other names for this game: *igo* (jap.) and *baduk* in Korea.

ANT: In the text, I will use the commonly accepted abbreviation, the ANT, to specify the actor–network theory.

STS: I will use this abbreviation to describe Science Technology Studies.

Ontological imagination: It is the philosophical paraphrase of Mills' sociological imagination and its adaptation to posthumanistic ontology. To be endowed with an ontological imagination means to be capable of performing an ontological analysis, which allows recognizing and potentially transforming networks of actors, configurations of beings through which our reality is stabilized, as experienced by individuals within *liferworlds* (Nowak, 2016).

Empirical metaphysics: In the text, I will use this expression referring to the so-called ontological turn (Heur van et al., 2013). Despite the relatively "young age" of the research field itself, (the STS is 30–40 years old), the very idea of an analogical concept of empirical metaphysics or ontology reaches Whitehead and Nietzsche (Law & Lien, 2013, p. 363). Although the STS tradition usually employs the term "empirical ontology" (Law & Lien, 2013; Woolgar & Pawluch, 1985), the terms "new empiricism" in reference to Latour (Krarup & Blok, 2011) and "empirical philosophy" are also often used (Latour, 2008). I decided to use the term "empirical metaphysics" consistently in the text, although I must admit that the interchangeable use of the term "empirical ontology" is justified. My decision was mainly based on the fact that I refer primarily to the most philosophical work by Bruno Latour entitled *Irreductions* (Latour, 1988) and not to more empirical works in the field of actor–network theory, keeping the term ontology for specific empirical applications of this method of philosophising. What is "empirical metaphysics" in the tradition that I find interesting, and which I also accept in this text, is well illustrated by the following quote:

> In Latour's view, not engaging in metaphysics means taking on the moderns' misinterpretation of their own world and inheriting their disastrous practices of exploitation of the planet. The positive political hope is placed on a study of "what there is and what it is like" which is empirical but not naively so, aimed at collective, pragmatic, and concrete renegotiations of what we take to be the fundamental conditions of our existence. Thus, Latour's metaphysical apparatus is aimed at providing an ontological toolkit ready at hand for continuously, in each new empirical as well as philosophical inquiry, reopening the question of what there is and what is important (Hämäläinen & Lehtonen, 2016, p. 14)

3. Non-Reductive Methodo-Ontology of Actor–Network Theory

Let me start with a strong statement: the actor–network theory has not been sufficiently introduced into philosophical debates. This may seem paradoxical, given how commonly we can find references to it, especially to Bruno Latour. However, what I believe attracts attention is a few "fashionable expressions" such as: non-humans, rhizome, net, turn to objects, agency of things, objects, etc, which are taken out of this tradition and used to embellish humanistic articles. In the following text, I make assumptions the same as I made in my book (Nowak, 2016), namely, that the fundamental philosophical core of the ANT presented by Latour in his Irreductions is relatively unknown (Latour, 1988). In this text written in points, similar to the Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* in structure, Latour presents his ontological-metaphysical programme and, exceptionally, does so directly. This was quite unique at that time, as Latour the philosopher was usually hidden in the shadow of Latour the anthropologist of science. *The Irreductions* are not an independent publication either, but they constitute the second part of a book entitled *The Pasteurization of France* (in a widely known English translation, while the original title was *Les Microbes. Guerre et paix, suivi de Irréductions*). Latour's philosophical pro-gramme gave the background for works on the boundaries of ethnography, laboratory, and STS, until the book *An inquiry into modes of existence* (Latour, 2013), which is an attempt to summarize and integrate both philosophical and "empirical" themes of his work, was published. In this text I will focus on the treatise entitled *Irreductions* due to its more analytical character. Latour the philosopher is slowly gaining popularity and in this sense my text is following a growing trend. In this context, it is worth reading the biographical-intellectual portrait of Latour drawn by Henning Schmidgen (Schmidgen, 2015). How-ever, let us come back to discussing the treatise itself. It is important to me that, as Knorr Cetina put it, in *Irreductions* Latour formulates a theory similar to that by Nietzsche, ac-cording to which politics and struggle permeate the whole reality (Knorr-Cetina, 1985, p. 581), and which is more visible in the original French title of his book referring to Tol-stoy. The "war" core is not a socio-political "overlay" on the "ontological" subsoil, but it is closely connected with Latour's ontological-metaphysical proposal. He does not sepa-rate types of entities and spheres of reality, but in *Irreductions* he tries to philosophically capture the mystical experience, which, as he himself confesses, was a kind of epiphany for him (Latour, 1988, p. 163; Nowak, 2016, pp. 233–244). Latour describes the situation when, as a young philosophy teacher, he had to stop his car when coming back from work because he experienced something overwhelming—the reality revealed itself to him as completely unreduced, none of the experienced things were inscribed in causal sequences, relations of dependencies, the results were suspended. As he says himself:

> "Nothing can be reduced to anything else, nothing can be deduced from anything else, eve-rything may be allied to everything else." This was like an exorcism that defeated demons one by one. It was a wintry sky, and a very blue. […]. I added it to other skies in other places and reduced none of them to it, and it to none of them. It "stood at arm's length," fled, and

established itself where it alone defined its place and its aims, neither knowable nor unknowable. It and me, them and us, we mutually defined ourselves. And for the first time in my life I saw things unreduced and set free (Latour, 1988, p. 163)

The experience described by Latour can be compared to Heidegger's proposition of the *Gelassenheit*, namely, "allowing things to be" (Heidegger, 1966), or similar to being submerged in existence on the same pattern as the religious experience described by William James (James, 2004, pp. 67–68). Experience, epiphany, is the beginning of Latour's philosophical work; in his treatise he simultaneously not only tries to reconstruct the world, to reassemble it, but also shows how it is possible to simultaneously exist in both the "unreduced" world experienced in epiphany, as well as the world experienced every day in its already always reduced form. In *Irreductions,* he proposes an initial version of the onto-method, an ontological procedure which will then be developed by other researchers from the ANT circle, including John Law (Law, 2004). It consists in procedural, methodological suspension of current causal relations, states of reality and then, with the help of detailed and empirical work (based on a "dense description," radical ethnographic method), tracing how the world has been reduced to the form with which we currently encounter. The Latour Program, despite its apparent novelty, is an ontological version of Husserl's *epoche*. In early Husserl, *epoche* meant "suspension," "hanging up" of sense-creating judgments within the work of the mind. In the case of late Husserl and within the phenomenological sociology that was a continuation of his research (Schutz, Berger, Luckmann), the sense-making matrix that established the horizon of meaning was no longer solely a soliptically closed mind, but the lifeworld—*Lebenswelt*. In this case, *epoche* meant the ability to "suspend" the current cultural and social rules determining the field of meaning and to analyse the very constitution of this field (Abriszewski, 2016). In *Irreductions,* Latour proposes an analogous procedure; the essential difference is that the procedure does not stop at the traditional division into a world of the subject and the object world ("things") defined by Neo-Kantianism. Phenomenological sociology, although it considered the role of "things" in the constitution of the horizon of meaning (*Lebenswelt*) as fundamentally asymmetrical was limited to the analysis of the human and social world. Latour's radicalism goes beyond this post-Kantian binarism and shows that this binarism is just another way in which "the world has been reduced."

Despite the baroque language, in *Irreductions* Latour offers a very simple set of basic rules which allow reconstructing its approach to reality. It is worth noting that this simplicity may be misleading; it only determines the basic methodological and ontological assumptions to be adopted when researching how the world "reduces" itself, i.e. how it stabilizes the very version of reality that has occurred. Experiencing the "epiphany" or performing a purely speculative, philosophical operation of an ontologized *epoche*, we are aware that this reduction is only one of the possible forms of reality (the one that prevailed) was constituted. This corresponds to the Nietzschean character of Latour's philosophy that has been derived from Deleuze (Deleuze, 2002; Knorr-Cetina, 1985, 1985; Latour, 1988, p. 251).

Therefore, we should examine the underlying concepts of his ontomethodology:

1. Every being, human and non-human, is irreducible, and is manifested in its existence and cannot be reduced or derived from another being.

2. Everything is relational because actors/actants constantly enter into alliances, and they are the assemblages that create reality.

3. Actors in *a priori* research are presented as concrete, non-reducible entities; this assumption results from the methodological postulate of radical symmetry. It means that we do not anticipate, do not impose any prejudgements of the examined reality concerning the properties of entities, unless we derive them from the onto-methodological analysis.

4. However, this does not apply to the already existing Wholes which are composed of collectives; they are, at the same time, treated as non-reductive when we think of them as a black boxed entity but also historical when we think of them as already formed assemblages through the process of creating alliances of other entities.

By reformulating it, we can summarise it as follows:

1. **The world is constituted by actors/actors.** They are equivocal, and defined by their agency understood as the ability to compose reality.

2. **Principle of non-reduction (irreduction).** No a priori object, on the basis of some predetermined principle, is reduced to another one. There is no metaphysical frame of reference that would be privileged over other frames. Irreduction is the postulate from which we begin to study the plexuses of given collectives, assemblages. In other words, we assume the world as unreduced at the "input," but not at the "output" of a given philosophical research process in the very idea of the actor–network theory. Thus, on the one hand, no object can be reduced to another (by the researcher-philosopher with the power of the apodictic work of reason), but, at the same time, the experience of everyday life is nothing more than experiencing the reduction that took place at the constitution of this very state of reality.

3. **Translation** is the way in which the process of self-reduction of the world is occurring. It can be understood as a radical suppression of hypostasis. The causal factors, agency, actors, in Latour, Law or Mol's view must always be shown by reference to an "indicator," the marker. If, in the study, you are not able to demonstrate the indicator on the basis of which you apply for a given impact, you are necessarily doomed to ontological agnosticism. This task is difficult because, with the reduction of the world, its past states are hidden, become transparent, and the work (agency) and relations that caused its current state become invisible (Star, 1999, p. 381). Advancing the course of the storyline which can be observed by analysing the board of the completed game of Go/Weiqi we can see the formation of stones (pieces), we can decide who won, but the game itself, its history, is largely hidden from us. Revealing the invisible work of causality in already constituted assemblages is, in my opinion, the key aspect of the ANT, more important than the more

familiar narrative of the dichotomy of human and non-human. The indication of translation emphasizes the key aspect of the ANT which is the analysis of stabilizing, sustaining, and destabilizing the order identical to the momentary, transient but currently binding state of the experienced reality. The actor–network theory allows us to reconstruct and dismantle the complex networks of actors (as mediators) that have allowed our world to emerge, to stabilize it, but what is more, it allows us to see the invisible effort (work) that had to be put into this stabilization, the creation of the network, and shows the externalised costs of this process (Abriszewski, 2008).

4. **Actors are not weak or strong through an inner being, but they gain strength or weakness through relationships and their allies**. Also in this aspect the Nietzschean character of Latour's philosophical system reveals itself (Knorr-Cetina, 1985). In his view, the world is full of negotiations, intrigues, calculations, acts of persuasion and violence, owing to which an actor or force grants itself power, or causes it to be given to them to speak or act in the name of another actor or force. Alliances is the name for the existence of beings understood in a radical relational way if we abandon the assumption of a "deeper" being; alliances are the only ways to acquire properties by beings and to build larger entities. There are no potential properties in a strong sense, i.e. features that would survive despite the relationship. Interconnecting actors and establishing networks means acquiring reality and power. Existence is a derivative of the number and quality of connections: "*1.1.5. Whatever resists trials is real.*" (Latour, 1988, p. 158). The danger of Latour's ontology reveals itself here—it is a metaphysical version of Darwinism and corresponds to its expression in Nietzsche's thought. It assumes a similar definition of existence visible in the tautological principle of *survival of the fittest*. This exists what is best suited to the state of the world, and we know about it because this "something" would not exist if it had not been adapted. Such an ontological approach causes many problems with axiology (Nowak, 2015) showing at the same time another aspect of comparison between the ANT and the game of Go/Weiqi used as war simulation (Boorman, 1969; Lai, 2004; Wasik & Cynarski, 2005).

4. GO as a Metaphor and Model

The fundamental difficulty associated with the main idea of the text is the possibility that it will be endangered with the risk of an *ignotum per ignotum* error, I will explain here a relatively unknown philosophical system referring to the equally little-known game Go/Weiqi. However, I dare to make this attempt because both the actor–network theory illustrated with reference to a non-theoretical reality, an interesting example of which is the use of LEGO blocks to illustrate an atomistic ontology (Maddalena, 2014) and the game of Go/Weiqi, were used to illustrate theoretical and philosophical ideas, for example the concepts underpinning Mao Tse-Tung's action during the partisan war (Boorman, 1969) or, more broadly, the policies of the People's Republic of China (Lai, 2004). The cultural importance of Go/Weiqi in China and neighbouring countries is significant (Moskowitz, 2013, pp. 14–30) as it affects literature, philosophy, politics, and gender roles.

Playing Go/Weiqi also shows a religious and mystical dimension in both China and Japan (Moskowitz, 2013, pp. 34–42).

For a Polish reader, is the book entitled *Świat Go* by Janusz Kraszek (Kraszek, 2008) is a good introduction. On account of a still relatively weak presence of Go in the Polish context[1]. I will first reconstruct the rules of the game and then show examples of using the game in Go as a model for different aspects of reality.

A Go/Weiqi set consists of 180 black and 180 white pieces called stones. Unlike chess figures, the stones in Go are equally "valuable" and have the same properties. In a more appropriate way, one could say that they do not have any properties to the same extent. The board (goban) for playing Go is composed of 19 lines crossing vertically and horizontally. On the board, there are highlighted places called stars (hoshi). They are important when playing with handicaps, but they do not differ in essence from other intersections.
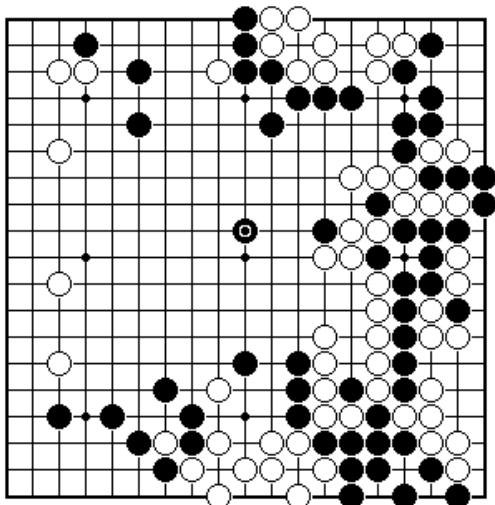

Figure 1. Diagram of the game of the master of Go, Honinbo Shusaku.

The picture represents an exemplary diagram showing the game of Go. In this case, the game of the master of Go, Honinbo Shusaku. https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Go.

The aim of the game is to conquer territory with as little loss as possible. The game is designed for two players. The stones are placed alternately at crossroads, intersections of lines. There are some very simple rules that describe the game. We can lay one stone at a time, at an intersection. Stones merge into chains if they occupy adjacent fields. When the stones are adjacent to an empty intersection, they have the so-called breath. Lack of an empty crossroad, breathing, causes the stone to be "dead," and we remove it from the board. The aim of the game is to create such structures out of stones that "survive" and, at the same time, allow occupying the largest portion of the board with the slightest loss of their own stones. In the game, there are a few more small additional rules which do not need to be discussed for the purpose of this text.

When you look at the game, it at first seems to be less complicated and interesting than chess, but when you start playing it, it turns out that it exceeds the complexity of chess many times over. Therefore, it is impossible to comprehend and plan the whole game on the basis of only a "computational" approach and analysis of one specific problem. Due

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[1] A short history of Go in Poland and a list of books and publications can be found on the website of the Polish go player association: http://biblioteka.go.art.pl/taxonomy/term/3.

to their openness and the possibility of multi-directional development of the game, players constantly have to switch their attention from one part of the board to another. At the same time, they make tactical decisions concerning playing, i.e. building local structures, as well as holistically plan the development of the whole game. The game consists of three traditionally specified phases: opening (*fuse*), middle phase (*chuban*) and final phase (*yose*). In the traditional parts, setting up approximately the first dozen of moves is crucial as it determines the spheres of influence. Often, it takes more time than the other parts of the game. However, this is the second, middle phase of the game which is most difficult. In this part of the game, most depends on intuition and internalized skills, as opposed to the initial and final phase which can be codified to a greater extent.

5. Chess and Go/Weiqi—Playing and Embodiment of (Different) Ontologies

The faithful commandment: "Follow the actor" I make a comparison between Go and the ANT boldly emboldened by findings, indicators found in Latour's work itself. In *Irreductions,* he evokes a novel entitled *Meijin—The master of Go* (Kawabata, 1973) in his thesis:

> 1.1.11 Everything is still at stake. However, since many players are trying to make the game irreversible and doing everything they can to ensure that everything is not equally possible, the game is over. Homage to the Master of Go.[2] (Latour, 1988, p. 160)

This fragment is preceded by an indication that each actor's action leaves a trace, history, action and creates an asymmetry which also leaves a trace, influences the state of reality that emerges from the fight; the losers and the winners will assemble the resulting shape of the fight. The reference to Go in such an important place of the Latourian philosophical treatise is not only an ornament, but also an important interpretive suggestion. I attach great importance to it because I consider Latour to be an author who, like Heidegger, blurs his footprints like a fox with his tail. Latour constructs his texts so that the reader has an impression of originality and novelty, and thus, references to intellectual inspiration are often hidden. An example that reveals this strategy is the text *Visualization and Cognition: Drawing things Together* (Latour, 2012) in which Latour showed his intellectual inspirations (Toronto school, Orality/ Literacy Theory). Interestingly, the original text was published in 1986 and, in later works by Latour, there is little reference to these traditions. Assuming this specificity of the author, I believe that the scattered minor remarks concerning the game of Go have a much greater qualitative significance in the reconstruction of Latour's philosophical system than the number of references would indicate.

Being at the same time a reader of Latour and Law and having experience in playing Go, I find it apparent that the "empirical metaphysics," which is founded and then embodied, and then performed within this game is the practice of the basic philosophical principles contained in the *Irreductions*. The strangeness and specificity of the ANT language lies,

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[2] In the Polish version of my article I referred to the Polish translation of Kawabata's novel, it is also in the bibliography, Latour's translation referred to the English edition from 1972.

amongst other things, in its difference from the "standard Euro-American metaphysics" (Law, 2004), a good example of which can be the Aristotelian system or, more generally, ontotheological systems (Kostyszak, 2010). For this reason, it will be convenient to illustrate the Latour system by intertwining it with the metaphor of the game of Go and juxtaposing it with the so-called standard metaphysics illustrated by the metaphor of the game of chess. Such a comparison is often used and is a variant of a more general comparison between the "East-West mentality" together with the potential Eurocentric and political burden of such a procedure (Moskowitz, 2013, pp. 30–34).

> Chess is deeply metaphysical. The various pieces have powers or abilities and the player's task is to get them into the ideal circumstances in which they can manifest them. A rook, for instance, could dominate many spaces on the board but begins with its power held back, trapped within a wall of its own colour. The power of a piece can be understood in terms of the possibilities it has available if unhindered. A queen threatens more squares than a pawn; yet even a little pawn in the right situation can play an important role. Most of the game possibilities go unactualised. Each move closes off old possibilities and creates new ones. If one wants to understand a metaphysics of causal powers, chess is a good place to start. (Mumford, 2013)

In the above quotation, one can clearly see the embodiment of Aristotle's metaphysics in the rules of playing chess. Figures have certain properties, forms. These forms are potential, waiting in sleep; updating is possible thanks to various configurations; they create new dynamic (in the sense of dynamism!) compositions. Some aspects of the figures are emphasized, others are moved to the background. In some situations, it is important that the queen has the ability to move around the board, in others that she beats in every direction. In the case of pawns, it is important that they beat diagonally, and in others that, after reaching the last field, they can be exchanged for any other figure (except for the king). Chess figures, therefore, have a clearly defined core, the essence, but they are subject to considerable modification dependent on the relationships in which they participate. These relations, however, are only updates of potency. In this sense, the world of chess, just like Aristotle's metaphysics, despite its dynamics and variability, does not allow for the moment of emptiness and creation. Let's now move on to the reconstruction of the game of chess and Go in the *Treaty on Nomadology* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 351–423) This will allow, on the one hand, capturing the differences between the two games in philosophical terms and, on the other hand, showing the link between rhizomatics and the theory of the actor–network and the game of Go:

> Let us take a limited example and compare the war machine and the State apparatus in the context of the theory of games. Let us take chess and Go, from the standpoint of the game pieces, the relations between the pieces and the space involved. Chess is a game of State, or of the court: the emperor of China played it. Chess pieces are coded; they have an internal nature and intrinsic properties from which their movements, situations, and confrontations derive. They have qualities; a knight remains a knight, a pawn a pawn, a bishop a bishop. Each is like a subject of the statement endowed with a relative power, and these relative powers combine in a subject of enunciation, that is, the chess player or the game's form of interiority. Go pieces, in contrast, are pellets, disks, simple arithmetic units, and have only an anonymous, collective, or third-person function:. "It" makes a move. "It" could be a man, a woman, a

louse, an elephant. Go pieces are elements of a nonsubjectified machine assemblage with no intrinsic properties, only situational ones. Thus the relations are very different in the two cases. Within their milieu of interiority, chess pieces entertain biunivocal relations with one another, and with the adversary's pieces: their functioning is structural. On the other hand, a Go piece has only a milieu of exteriority, or extrinsic relations with nebulas or constellations, according to which it fulfills functions of insertion or situation, such as bordering, encircling, shattering. All by itself, a Go piece can destroy an entire constellation synchronically; a chess piece cannot (or can do so diachronically only). (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 352–353)

The above quotation outlines a metaphysical dispute, which takes place in an ontological process enacted by the both games. The world of Latour, so well described by the rules and practice of playing Go, is completely different from the one presented in chess. Instead of the metaphysics of form and matter we are dealing with rhizome. It is also visible in the differences in strategic and tactical training that chess and Go players gain (Boorman, 1969, pp. 4–7). In classical Western war thought, it was crucial to win battles quickly, to strive for direct confrontation with the use of an overwhelming number of military units designed to overcome the opponent's resistance. In the Chinese (and Japanese) tradition, playing Go/Weiqi has shaped the war imagination (strategic and tactical) of both generals and politicians over centuries (Moskowitz, 2013, pp. 42–47) the traces of which can be found both in *The Art of War* and in the works of Mao Zedong. According to Hong Feng notes quoted by Moskowitz:

In ancient China they had a book to teach people to play Weiqi that was forbidden by the government because Weiqi is like a war. People are very smart so if they knew how to play this game they would know strategies that they could be used to fight against the government. Along the same lines, a library reference catalogue placed Weiqi books next to Sunzi's Art of War. In Sunzi's Art of War there is one war strategy where he said you can win a war without actually fighting. This is the highest form of battle. This being polite and avoids the road of killing. Weiqi also has a strategy like this. (Moskowitz, 2013, p. 42)

The above remarks can be found in the actions of Mao during the Chinese liberation war. In his writings from that period he directly referred to the inspi ration of Go/Weiqi (Boorman, 1969, p. 6), and indirect action aimed at prolonging the conflict, focused on shaping relations, networks, rather than on solving individual battles was the key for him:

Thus there are two forms of encirclement by the enemy forces and two forms of encirclement by our own—rather like a game of weichi Campaigns and battles fought by the two sides resemble the capturing of each other's pieces, and the establishment of enemy strongholds (such as Taiyuan) and our guerrilla base areas (such as the Wutai Mountains) resembles moves to dominate spaces on the board. (Mao, 1965, p. 147)

Chess requires the resolution of tensions between the existing qualities (figures), while the game of Go requires the simultaneous creation of structures which thus obtain "quality" and interplay of tensions between them. Playing Go teaches thinking as managing boundary conditions that cause the states of things to take on a given shape, and not so important in the ontotheology of investigating the essence of things:

Ten years after the publication of "On Protracted War," Mao once again used tern1inology reminiscent of wei-ch'i. In his can1paign directive regarding final operations against the Nationalists in the north China theater in late 1948, entitled in his Selected Military Writings "The Concept of Operations for the Peiping- Tientsin Campaign," Mao said, "If these two points, Tangku (the most important) and Hsinpao-an, are captured, you will have the initiative on the whole chessboard." The Chinese idiom used by Mao at the end of this sentence is "ch'iian-chii chieh huo-le," in literal translation, "the whole situation will be living," an expression which sounds bizarre to the Western reader but which corresponds to a common wei-ch'i idiom (Boorman, 1969, p. 7)

A reference to Mao, Deleuze, and Guattari allowed us to show the transitions between philosophical models, war practices, and a game of Go/Weiqi. It is worth mentioning that the language of Mao Zedong's metaphors is also present in fragments of Latour, Deleuze, and Guattari's works not directly related to the game of Go/Weiqi, it is worth noticing that Mao's refence to big areas and little areas (massifs, plateaus in Polish translations) as points diffusing resistance which founds structural resemblance in the title of *Thousands of Plateau* (Mao, 1965, p. 147). Unfortunately, a closer analysis of this relationship goes beyond the framework of this text, although it remains intriguing that Deleuze, and Guattari in their analysis of the partisan war ("nomadic war machine") explicitly refer to the Bedouin tactics described by Lawrence in *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 416) and do not mention Mao (Thoburn, 2008, 2013).

At this point, I will abandon further development of these analogies and move on to show the parallels between playing Go and the actor–network theory in more detail. "Empirical metaphysics," i.e. an ontological proposal whose embodiment is Go, is fascinating. On the one hand, we are dealing with a set of very simple rules. Neither stones nor intersections/crossings have properties. This means that it is only during the game, during the construction of the formation, that their properties are revealed. Playing is not about linking "ready-made rules" and detecting relations between them, but it is much more complex. At the same time, we construct the whole (stone formations), we recognize their properties (as formations, resulting from the properties of an assemblage) and the relations between assemblages (formations), and we also have to consider the game environment, i.e. the board and its spatial properties. They are not treated in Cartesian as an abstract space, but as a qualitatively significant place (Tuan, 1987). The properties of the formation of stones are treated similarly, constituted each time with emerging structures, and not assigned "permanently" to stones or the board. Although initially the number of rules is smaller than in chess, during the game, the number of configurations, the possibilities of evolution of given structures is huge. Learning to play the game of Go, on the one hand, is to practise what we can call tactical or pattern-reading skills. It is the ability to see the dynamics of a developing system after just two or three movements. These systems have been codified in subject literature for hundreds of years, from the simplest so-called "ladder" or "crane" to the more complex ones, often traditionally attributed to masters who were supposed to have invented them.

The second skill is closely related to the ability to "read" the whole board, to understand the meaning, the direction of development of the game. It is the ability to take a holistic and strategically key view of the whole complexity of the game in a certain phenomenological perspective. Importantly, in the world of Go players, the ability to play the game is not limited to the technical skills of the game since it also includes a certain holistic code of conduct while playing. Kraszek lists, among other things, examples of such rules: players should not rest their heads on their elbows, hold their stones while thinking, etc. They should not go against what is called "the spirit of Go" (Kraszek, 2008, p. 32). These rules are just as important in teaching Go/Weiqi as a purely technical mastery of game skills. Moskovitz also points to the emerging tension between the classic Confucian ideal embodied and practised in Go/Weiqi and the contemporary requirements of corporate professional structures of sports clubs (Moskowitz, 2013, pp. 77–80).

6. Placing Stones—Playing Go as Enacting and Embodying Ontology

Therefore, we will give a deeper insight into the "ontology of the game" itself; just like in the ANT assumptions, there are actors (stones), the causative, their mutual relations. Alliances determine the spheres of what is possible. The world is a field of play of forces which, in turn, result from the configuration and alliances of actors. The ontology of playing Go/Weiqi is as "flat" as the one adopted within the framework of the actor–network theory. The ANT, like the game of Go/Weiqi (and its internal ontology), is both simple (at the level of rules setting) and extremely complex (at the level of the received image/model of reality). What is particularly important to me is the fact that playing it is treated in China and Japan like life practice, a meditative one, connected respectively with Confucian philosophy (Moskowitz, 2013, pp. 72–74) and the concept of the Way (*Dao/Do*). Thus, playing the game is, at the same time, performing the game, practising a certain logical-philosophical model, lifestyle, and spiritual practice. Such a multi-faceted approach can be described in a reduced way as "performance" (enactment) "playing the game of the game." The above mentioned motives referring to the concept of the Way (Do) (Cynarski, 2000) and Confucian ideals reveal an important and complex problem of the relationship between ontology and axiology, which concerns both the game of Go/Weiqi, and the cultural practices inspired by it, as well as the actor–network theory (ANT).

Feenberg is an intrinsically important reference for me since the main motive of his philosophical work is analogous to my efforts. He tries to reconcile the ontological efficiency of the ANT and STS with the axiological dimension of classical Marxian criticism (Nowak, 2015, 2016). Feenberg accomplishes this by linking his studies of science and technology with reflections referring to Lukacs, Marcuse, and partly to Heidegger. I will not refer to this wide range of philosophical references and I will focus on Feenberg's book in which he directly refers to philosophical aspects of the modernization of Japanese culture, including references to the game of Go. His analysis of the concept of the Way (Do) will be particularly important to me:

> This characteristically Japanese concept of Way has a two-tiered structure. For an activity to support a Way, it must be abstracted from the contingencies of everyday life and constructed as an autonomous "field" with its own logic. Then, this field must become a locus of reflection and self-transformation for the agent engaged in activity on it. (Feenberg, 1995, p. 197)

The dialectic relationship between field autonomy and committed in-activity is crucial to achieve mastery in action. As Flyvbjerg, who referring to the Dreyfus research tries to make the concept of prudent action (phronesis) contemporary, points out that such a circular, dialectic structure is a universal model describing the cognitive processes of acquiring skills and reaching the mastery level in a selected aspect of action (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980; Flyvbjerg, 2001). Reconstructing the autonomous field that creates a network of rules of performance/game—whether in the case of the game of Go/Weiqi, or in the case of the ontological-philosophical projects—is the first step, the game practice itself (and its learning and teaching to others). So, it is important not to remain at the level of rules but to perform and practise it. Therefore, a comparison of the philosophical treatise *Irreductions* to game of GO/Weiqi shows the autonomy of the field within the "ANT game," which, like the game of Go/Weiqi *must become a place of reflection and self-transformation for the actor in this engaged activity* (Feenberg, 1995, p. 197). It harmonizes well with the mythical story about the beginnings of the game of Go:

> "My master showed me that playing Go is at the same time a cruel war, a great construction and wise trading," said Dan Zhu. "In order to play better I had to learn a lot and, as you saw, I tried to do it well." (Lubos, 2008)

The transformation requires simultaneous mastery of the rules of the game, its practice, and the transformation of the player himself. As Andrew Feenberg points out, autonomy in the case of Go/Weiqi game results from the following rules: moves are made according to clear, unambiguous rules and they are devoid of any semantic context, their goal is closely intertwined with the immanent rules of the game itself. The result of the game, the decision to win is also based on clear rules. Movements are strictly distinguished; they have their "place" and "time." The autonomy of the game, its specific separation from the context and environment allows us to improve playing. The process of self-reflection perfected during the game is intertwined with the life of the player, owing to which the game does not only serve to improve the gameplay itself but becomes a catalyst for the player's own transformations. The autonomization and recontextualization of the game lead to the player starting to act in one "non-dualistic" mode of action, previously referred to as "the Way" (Do):

> Reflection not only improves performance but also recontextualizes the autonomous game in the player's life process. Play is a practice of self-realization modifying the player through discipline. (Feenberg, 1995, p. 198)

The game becomes a way, a vocation, a practice of self-fulfilment. But remaining at the level of autonomy is not enough, it is necessary to recontextualise and immerse oneself in practice. Only owing to the work of translation between the discipline developed in the game and being in the environment is the effect of the Way achieved. This need to mediate the transition between the autonomous interior and the heteronomous environment was well

described by Latour when he described how Pasteur's success came about (Latour, 1983, 1988). It should be noted that the description of the victorious "war on microbes" waged by Pasteur, with reference to Tolstoy, is the first part of the volume in which the Treaty of Non-reduction is published as the second part. Latour pointed out how, on the one hand, the autonomy of the "laboratory" field with its specific rules, procedures, worked out and, on the other hand, success is possible only through the practice of recontextualization. Not only because a laboratory discovery should be "applicable" but, above all, because the whole cognitive process requires a constant transition, a translation between the autonomous field of the laboratory environment. Due to this, Pasteur can "pasteurize" France, i.e. successfully introduce the innovation of a vaccine. Pasteur could not fight direct microbes, he could not wage frontal war against them, but rather started partisan war in the spirit of Mao Zedong (Mao, 2012 (1938)), or in the style of the game of Go/Weiqi had to make a "protracted war," manage boundary conditions, occupy and create stable "massifs and islands," thanks to which he could expand the effect of his influence until victory—the enemy's environment and stabilization of the situation on the "board" according to his rules. It is clear that an important aspect of the ANT, the link between micro and macro-level analysis, can be seen here (Callon & Latour, 1981). Pasteur achieves success because, alike Mao in his guerrilla war, or a good player, he combines strategic, tactical, and ethos skills. The "game" principle permeates the whole of reality and allows for victory in a world defined by simple Nietzschean-Darwinian rules—the winner is the version of reality that has stabilized and emerged from the abyss of infinite alternatives.

Practising the game as a way is crucial for me, because it shows that it is possible to learn how to co-create and stabilize reality, how to influence indirectly, through a "protracted war," the axiologically desired state of reality, to stabilize and have a lasting effect. On the one hand, the action should be based on the autonomous sphere, with its own rules; on the other hand, there should be a similar process of translation as in the case of the game of Go/Weiqi, or in the case of the discovery of the vaccine by Pasteur.

Returning to the game of Go/Weiqi, describing the above rule may sound too metaphorical, but it is essential to understand the importance of practice and performance aspect of full involvement of immersed participation "in game." This moment of unity of the game and its performance Bourdieu used to express with the term illusio. However it is important to keep in mind that simultaneously being "in game" is at the same time conditioned by the possibility of autonomy and distance. Describing game practice does not reflect what can be well captured when playing Go/Weiqi. The writer of these words is in the comfortable situation of having a Go/Weiqi player's experience At some time, I even used to be a club member and took part in competitions. Taking part in a tournament celebrating the Days of Japan, under the auspices of the Embassy of that country was the crowning achievement of my short amateur career. I still remember when, during that tournament, I played with the master at the level of several Dan (in Go/Weiqi, because of an extensive handicap system such a duel is not meaningless). The master did not limit himself to the game, but commented on it, teaching me and others who watched the game a specific way of thinking about the game. In Go/Weiqi, as I mentioned above, due to the complexity and the number

of potential combinations, it is not possible to remember, predict and plan moves. What is crucial is to learn a certain situational wisdom, which in each game allows us to recognize non-specific "movements," or stone within each of the emerging game dynamics.

Developing sensitivity to the sequence, the occurrence of a "situation," the game of Go/Weiqi teaches the recognition of patterns, thinking in the style of Gestalt. During his commentary, the master of the game constantly referred to the metaphor of influence, strength and tension, as well as resistance (note how well they interact with the ANT dictionary). The key to the game was to create assemblies that would be strong enough to survive when the player is forced to defend his position in another part of the board. The part of the game was a complicated theatre of forces, moments of stabilization and destabilization, formation of alliances of stones that created the structure and their disintegration. While playing a single stone on the board, the master at the same time commented on how the stone plays with the balance of forces on the board, how it disturbs those forces. In the next move, the player had to face a changed balance of forces, negotiate with other forces, and at the same time influence the new balance of forces. Despite the fact that, for a layman, it might have looked like pseudo mystic remarks in the "new age" style, for a player, and especially for me, who not only knew the rules of the game, but was involved in this particular game, it was completely understandable. Unfortunately, I did not reach such a level of skills, I did not internalise the rules in a way that would able me to achieve such freedom, such an ability to "read" the board by myself.

Practising the game, participating in this doubled game of autonomization and contextualization, allows for a kind of reflectiveness that escapes the overrationalized, cephalocentric analyses to follow the metaphor taken from Bourdieu. Playing Go/Weiqi allows us to participate in what Heidegger once again called an "event." Let's take a look at the "dense" reporter's descriptions of the game of Go prepared by Kawabata which will allow, although up to a minimal degree, bringing the atmosphere and specificity of the game closer also to those readers who have not had the opportunity to play it:

> The Master had put the match together as a work of art. It was as if the work, likened to a painting, were smeared black at the moment of highest tension. That play of black upon white, white upon black, has the intent and takes the forms of creative art. It has in it a flow of the spirit and a harmony as of music. Everything is lost when suddenly a false note is struck, or one party in a duet suddenly launches forth on an eccentric flight of his own. A masterpiece of a game can be ruined by insensitivity to the feelings of an adversary. That Black 121 having been a source of wonder and surprise and doubt and suspicion for us all, its effect in cutting the flow and harmony of the game cannot be denied. Black 121 was much discussed among the professionals of the Go world and in the larger world as well. To an amateur like me the play most definitely seemed strange and unnatural, and not at all pleasing. But afterwards there were professionals who came forward and said that it was time for just such a play. (Kawabata, 1973, p. 38)

In the quotation above (biasedly valorising the Master) one can clearly see that playing Go/Weiqi was a means of communication understood not as a dualizing language but as a transforming life practice of the players. Feenberg points out that the concept of the Way

(Do) is based on the concept of an "empty mind," a way of acting based on a non-dualizing way of acting and speaking, specifically understood praxis.

> The doctrine of no-mind agrees that apparent dualities reveal a more fundamental unity. But what makes it so interesting is the elimination of the third position. Struggle itself is shown to be prior to the parties it joins, an underlying unity of which they are mere projections. True nonduality therefore cannot be achieved by observing the conflicts in which others are plunged, no matter how dialectically. Such an observer would still stand in dualistic opposition to an object. Rather, no-mind is a particular way of living duality, an existential position within it, and not a modality of knowledge transcending it (Feenberg, 1995, p. 199).

This attempt to express the tension between dualism which necessarily appears at the level of language or within the structures of knowledge and the unifying role of practice is also visible within the framework of the actor–network theory. That is also the reason why Krzysztof Abriszewski compares the actor–network theory with the non-dualizing way of philosophizing proposed by Joseph Mitterer (Arbiszewski, 2010). I do not intend to recreate Abriszewski's analyses since for our purposes it is enough to point out that the aforementioned practice of translation, so crucial within the actor–network theory, is only fully understood when we treat it in the same way as the above described practice of playing Go/Weiqi or practicing the Way (Do). Dualizing descriptions will not be fully understood beyond the context of practice/execution. The ANT is not a theory that only needs to be reconstructed. It is rather a set of rules of the game, practices that gain meaning when we act (we play). The simultaneous moment of practice is the only way out of the paradoxes in which we get entangled when the ANT is considered only as a description.

7. Playing to Transform the World

Practising the Go/Weiqi game as well as analysing in the spirit of actor–network theory teaches a certain attitude, a disposition that can be used as a tool for analysis and changes the world:

> The situation is all the more confusing because, as many anthropologists have shown, people devise new 'localisms' even faster than globalization is supposed to destroy them. Traditions are invented daily, entire cultures are coming into existence, languages are being made up; as to religious affiliations, they may become even more entrenched than before. It's as if the metaphor of 'roots' had been turned upside down: the more 'uprooted' by the forces of modernization, the farther down identities are attaching themselves. Modernization, with its clear frontlines, has become as confusing as a game of Go at mid-play (Latour, 2005).

We can see again a reference to the game of Go/Weiqi and the obvious use of war metaphors: front lines (frontlines), entreched, hence we can assume that the supposed social, political action is a Nietzschean war play, well described both by the "theoretical apparatus" of the actor–network theory and by the metaphors taken from Go/Weiqi.

Playing Go/Weiqi can therefore be a kind of training to develop a certain disposition, to teach a certain way of thinking and acting, which also allows you to practice this philosophical attitude outside the game. In a sense, the game of Go/Weiqi teaches basic rules on

how to become an "antographer," i.e. an ANT researcher (in a generalized version we can call such a researcher an "ontographer") (Lynch, 2013) that is an explorer of ontology). I owe the metaphor of the "antographer" to the brilliant remark by Marcin Zarod. This metaphor, evoking the association with the pantograph, harmonizes well with the metaphor of railway tracks which is used by Latour to describe how scientific facts "circulate."

> It is rather funny to consider that so much saliva (including mine) has been spent for or against a "correspondence theory of truth" by which proponents and critiques of the theory have always meant a jump between object and subject without ever inquiring about the type of correspondence. Trains and subways would have offered a better metaphor for defining what we mean by a correspondence: you don't shift from one subway line to the next without a continuous platform and corridors laid out allowing you to correspond on schedule. So James and Fleck are certainly proponents of a "correspondence theory of truth" —if you keep in mind the train metaphor— whereas they would strongly object to the "salto mortale theory of truth". If you accept renewing the metaphor, then you move forward when you go from a simple, isolated, poorly-equipped, and badly maintained straight line, to a complex network of well kept-up stations allowing for many correspondences to be established. So "forward" means going from a bad to a good network. 15 Anyone living in a big city with or without a good public transportation networks will grasp the difference (Latour, 2007, p. 96)

Therefore, an antographer is someone who is able to connect passengers-users of knowledge and "tracks," networks that determine the existence of knowledge with trains circulating on them—facts considering the system requirements (timetable). Antograph—evoking the metaphors of the game of Go/ANT would be able to "read the board," see the game holistically, notice tensions, flows occurring on the board (goban), observe connections between seemingly distant areas of the board. What is more, he can "switch attention" between different areas of the game, focusing on those that require intervention and abandoning those that "deviate." Self-organization does not threaten the whole game. In this sense, Latour is right when he evokes the metaphor of playing Go in the context of modernization because the disposition to practise it teaches the philosophical disposition to un-think of a modern, Kantian provenance division into facts and values, a determined world of object and a subject-spiritual world of freedom. Latour, referring to the game of Go/Weiqi, its rules and practice, formed a specific, very hermetic alliance with those, the few readers who played this game. One can accuse Latour and the author of this text that the connection of philosophical and ontological "ANT content" with the game of Go/Weiqi is a kind of vain gesture, exoticism, or pseudo erudition. It is true that there are not many players in Go/Weiqi among the readers of the actor–network theory, but there is a similarly limited group of readers who have ever participated in scientific research and an even smaller group of readers have become ethnographers of science. I suppose that mastering an amateur game in Go/Weiqi requires less resources and less fees "at the entrance" than getting to know the functioning of scientific laboratories. In this way, as if through the "back door" we take a chance to have an important philosophical disposition. I understand the reference to the "Go/Weiqi game" as a play with the reader: "You do not understand the reference to this game in my text—try to play it yourself, you will

understand it." This is exactly how I understand the sense of reading works on the actor–network theory as an incentive to "play the game," because it is only practice/performance that makes the ANT understandable.

The above mentioned call to "play the game" teaches us one further lesson. It somehow shows that thinking and action embodied by the game can become an "ontological generator" Through an "ontological generator" I understand the factor (theory, text, social phenomenon) which intertwines, assembles many entities, networks with each other, influences and changes the state of reality (Callon, Lascoumes, & Barthe, 2009). Such a generator can also be a theory, a scientific text, a popular lecture given by a scientific celebrity. Practicing the ANT, as I have already indicated, is not only stopping at the level of description, theory, but also ontological analysis of how my situated position influences the change of the microcosm (and also mezo-, macrocosm). Similarly, the game of Go/Weiqi can be treated as something more than its immanence, its limitation to the field of autonomy. Contextualisation mentioned above does not have to be limited only to spiritual transformation, a player's self-reflection. It can be treated much more broadly. In the aforementioned novel, the party of Go/Weiqi, between the old master Mejin and the contender described as Onoda[3], is a good example of such an ontological generator. The game lasted from 26 June to 4 December 1938 and became an event that not only shaped the lives of the players but was also widely commented and focused the attention of the whole Japan. This game, played with long breaks due to the master's illness, was described in newspapers (Kawabata's novel is a fictionalised version of his own reports from this game, printed in episodes in one of the newspapers). The novel clearly shows that "the game of Go/Weiqi" does not represent or illustrate anything (this would be impossible given its abstract character), but it is capable of transforming reality. Just as in the game itself, by entering into relationships, the "stones" create a reality with specific characteristics, so the game part itself, by entering into relations with players, spectators, fans at a distance, shapes the reality of Japan in 1938. This novel reveals the observation, important for the ANT, that it is possible to describe the transitions from how micro actors become macro actors. Kawabata's novel is valuable on several levels—it is an interesting description of the game, which can itself be a model of Latour's philosophical system, on the other hand it shows this "empirical metaphysics" in action, and shows how one can translate between the game Go/Weiqi ("the ANT model") and the transformation of society through the influence of this metaphysical model symbolized by the game. This is not, however, because "non-intermediate" thought has an impact on reality, but because it is possible to show in a frame of a unified relational ontology how translation takes place, the transition between the location at the intersection of a particular colour stone and launching the whole series of transformations of the community which occurred in Japan in 1938. It is worth mentioning, pointing to Latour's statement mentioned above, that the party between the master and pretender mentioned in the novel became a statement in a dispute in Japan about the modernisation of the country, defence of tradition, ways of carrying out (or abandoning) reforms.

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[3] True name: Kitani Minoru.

> It may be said that the Master was plagued in his last match by modern rationalism, to which fussy rules were everything, from which all the grace and elegance of Go as art had disappeared, which quite dispensed with respect for elders and attached no importance to mutual respect as human beings (Kawabata, 1973, p. 12).

The game of Go/Weiqi also becomes a matrix, which allows the author not only to present a discussion about the modernization of Japan, but also to speak about cultural differences; the author notes that in Western countries Go/Weiqi is treated only as a game, in isolation from the overall attitude of the Japanese who treat it as an art of life (Kawabata, 1973, p. 106).

I am not the only one who, in the game of Go/Weiqi, is searching for a pattern, a model of both a certain style of philosophy and a key to Japanese culture. As I pointed out above, in Japan, the Go/Weiqi party described in Kawabata's novel has become an important point of reference for the discussion on the ways of modernising that country. Andrew Feenberg in his book *Alternative Modernity* uses a reference to the game of Go/Weiqi in three aspects: he presents the game of Go/Weiqi as a metaphysical proposal, reconstructs discussions around the modernization of Japan and shows the proposal of the so-called alternative modernization. For Feenberg, the party of Master form Otake becomes a symbolic duel between the old, traditional Japan and its new modernised version (Feenberg, 1995, p. 204). He indicates that the description of the party given to us by Kawabata is a statement on the ways of modernising Japan similar to the diagnosis contained in the dialectic approach of Nishida. This philosopher tried to reconcile the effectiveness of instrumental rationality embodied by Western technoscience with the Japanese cultural background which tried to create a coherent, harmonious organism. The reference to Kawabata's novel and drawing attention to the game of Go/Weiqi as a kind of "rational system" allows Feenberg to metaphorically show the possibility to introduce relatively autonomous, non-Western modernity in Japan (Feenberg, 1995, p. 215).

As Feenberg points out, alternative paths of modernization which, to a large extent, defined the transformation in Japan, were connected, among others, with the specific category of "place": "This is the experience of seeking one's «place» in the system of social relations in which one finds oneself" (Feenberg, 1995, p. 216). Feenberg warns against a hasty interpretation which links the concept of place with traditionalism and adds ideology to it. Rather, it indicates that this "place" should be understood as a location, a kind of synthesis of rationality, which does not operate in an empty world without properties. "Place," location, means rather full awareness of immersion in the relative world of the game(s) and the awareness that rationality must be at the same time a game between the sphere of autonomy (formal rules) and their performance.

8. Game and Ontology of Choice

Playing Go/Weiqi, just like the theory of the actor–network, is important to me, because they combine a process, relativistic ontology with axiology. In the both approaches, the onto-methodological proposal of the ANT as in the practice of the game Go/Weiqi, the

ontological "burden of choice" is visible[4]. Each position of a stone on the board affects the reconfiguration of the future states of the game, but also reconfigures the past states. Each movement, although extremely situated, is at the same time interwoven with the whole game, and even, as Kawabata's story showed, with a discussion about the fate of the whole nation. The combined an analysis of Go/Weiqi and the ANT games allows, in my opinion, getting acquainted with an important practical and theoretical disposition, which I call ontological imagination (Nowak, 2013, 2015). One of the crucial aspects of this disposition is to break with the assumption characteristic for the so-called philosophy of access (Harman, 2009) which assumes that ontology is something external to our life practice and the resulting inseparable axiological issues. The ability to think about Go/Weiqi from the player's perspective, the rules of the game (its autonomy) as well as the weight of a single stone is the ability to abandon the assumption about the exteriority of ontology and think from the ontological imagination perspective. It is due to such a perspective that we gain a sense of importance of ontological choice. From the game of Go/Weiqi perspective we have to abandon the assumption about the "singularity" of the world (Law, 2015) and recognise the ontologically understood pluralism. This is well visible in the practice of the game. There is no tactic for one properly played game of Go/Weiqi. But, at the same time, there is only one actual version of this game which we have just finished. This corresponds well with decisions made within the framework of ontological turn (Heur van et al., 2013). Instead of epistemological "perspectivism" we are being confronted with a **cosmopolitan choice**. Cosmopolitanism is the ability to perceive and act in the presence of the complexity of the world (*cosmos*) which requires a specific disposition—"ecology of practices" (Latour, 2004; Stengers, 2010, VII).

The ontologically determined cosmopolitan choice is the necessity to decide the path we choose, fully aware that with each choice we open the possibility of performing (enacting) a certain world, and we close and make it impossible to establish another one. This choice becomes "heavy," from the responsibility as the weight of the stone placed on the goban (the board) during the game, the paths once chosen to determine further choices. It is no coincidence that most of the Go/Weiqi game time in is spent in its initial phase (*joseki*).

Ecology of practices, ontonorms, cosmopolitics are different terms for an important consequence of ontological turn (turns) in contemporary social sciences (especially the STS/ANT). Ontologies proposed by the researchers discussed above, but also the experience of Go/Weiqi players are a proposal of the world, which is a pluriversum, the dynamic world of struggling, self-organizing orders. Dynamic ontologies restore the unenchanted world to such an extent that one may risk the statement that we are dealing here with a return to some form of hylozoism, so visible during the game of Go/Weiqi with its metaphors: influences, interactions, forces. Ontology proposed by the ANT and Go/Weiqi teaches us that a choice is not only an epistemological cognitive operation but a necessarily entangled, situated participation in changing the collective.

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[4] This corresponds to the qualitative and ontological understanding of "heaviness" and "slowness" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 371).

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