

# The Committee

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There is a television monitor. There is an image.

He is wearing a fine suit. He sits by a large table. There is a telephone. It is ceramic and modeled on the nuclear hotline devices in films of the 1960s. It is plugged into the wall and tethers him to the chair despite years of silence.

There is a voice: Perhaps the next moment will be the one in which the telephone rings. Perhaps the next. Every next moment is like every other.

He is a member of the committee that oversees the rules of the game.

The game is the rules that comprise it. When people play, the rules shape the regularities and delimit a range of outcomes. The play of what is determined and openness is that of society itself. The clash of strategies and the rise and fall of players is every social relation. The conversations that link the players are continuities of within and without.

The game is the rules that comprise it. Ordinarily, the rules are invisible. We think through them rather than about them. They only become visible at certain moments, when someone cheats or there is an innovation.

The sudden visibility of the rules gives rise to disputes. Most disputes are settled by the players. That is what they believe autonomy to be.

But there are situations that require consulting the printed rules.

Opening the printed rules opens the path that leads to us. On the next-to-last page of the rule book, there is a telephone number and a note: The reader is invited to call in the event of disputes that cannot be resolved or to inform us of innovation.

The Operator is authorized to address all matters that pertain to the application of the rules. Calls about innovation are put through to the committee.

Innovation alters the regularities and changes the range of outcomes. It threatens the identity of the game.

We are charged with dealing with such situations. For the duration of our deliberations, the game does not exist. We must come to decisions quickly. In a crisis of such magnitude, the stakes are very high.

Out of concern for the tranquility of the public, the committee has been kept secret until now.

He is wearing a fine suit. He sits by a large table. There is a telephone. It is ceramic and modeled on the nuclear hotline devices in films of the 1960s.

We are prisoners of anticipation. Perhaps the next moment will be the one in which the telephone finally rings. Perhaps the next. Every next moment is like every other.

The passage of time is exhausting. We have felt our capacities slip away. We have emptied out.

We were not appointed: we cannot resign. We cannot continue but this what we know.

There is a television monitor. It goes black.

