

Review of *Ludica* by Riccardo Pelizzo and Mark Nowacki

Books that represent true turning points in the history of political thought tend to be short; *The Prince*, *The Communist Manifesto*, and *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* come to mind. Perhaps this is because no one has the time to read long books. Has anyone really read *The Wealth of Nations*, end to end, including all the bits about England's eighteenth century trade policy challenges, and stayed awake to tell about it? Is Volume 3 of *Capital* ever checked out of the library? Does anyone even know for sure just how many volumes there are in *The Network Society* or *The Modern World-System* without checking Wikipedia? I think not.

The publication of Riccardo Pelizzo's short new book *Ludica* is such a turning point, even if more of a personal than of an epochal kind. It marks the death of seriousist and the birth of a humorist. Like all deaths and births -- not to mention puberty! -- *Ludica* is not without its spillage of bodily fluids. These are spilled in copious quantities, especially in the chapter on neologisms. Sometimes the fluids spilled are the author's (note to prospective humorists: when poking fun at oneself, use a prop sword), more often his friends', but much more often his not-so-friends'. In any case, be sure to wear protection.

It bodes well for the author's future employment that his foils are mostly dead, old and near death, obscure even to themselves, unlikely to read this book, or now in another field from the author (since the author has now given up political science for humorism). On the other hand, it bodes poorly for the author's future income that his foils are mostly dead, old and near death, obscure even to themselves, unlikely to read this book, or now in another field from the author (since that makes them unlikely to buy his book). Adam Smith and Dante Alighieri will surely be curious to know what Pelizzo has written about them, but they have their own sources that pay even lower royalties than pirated e-books from China. My own copy I got for free.

But back to the blood (be sure to see the chapter on Bowie). One problem for the casual reader -- oh, sorry, my Google Translate seems to have gotten stuck on Latin -- one problem for the casual reader of this book will be the dense references to books that only the author (and one M. Nowacki of Singapore) have ever read, made in languages that even M. Nowacki may not understand. Skip these parts. Skip also the self-indulgent one-act plays at the end (sadly, "One Night in Paris" seems to not to involve Paris Hilton, Paris Texas, or even Paris France, though it does include Riccardo Pelizzo -- though mercifully not M. Nowacki). But buy the book, and read it. You can even buy my copy. And when you read it, what the hell, go ahead and read the plays.

No -- wait -- you can't buy my copy. As the famous Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto ("Pareto distribution," "Pareto optimality," "Pareto Indiana not Louisiana Paris France New York or Rome") wrote, "we do not exchange A for B; instead a certain quantity of A is exchanged for a certain quantity of B" (as paraphrased in R. Pelizzo, 2010, *Ludica*, Part I, p. 36, reviewer B). As I only have a single unit of A (the book) it will be theoretically impossible for us to achieve a market-clearing equilibrium price, and thus theoretically impossible for me to sell you the book. *Quod erat demonstrandum*. But make me an offer anyway.