Play Schemas

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- Games as the Play of Experience
- Games as the Play of Pleasure
- Games as the Play of Meaning
- Games as Narrative Play
- Games as the Play of Simulation
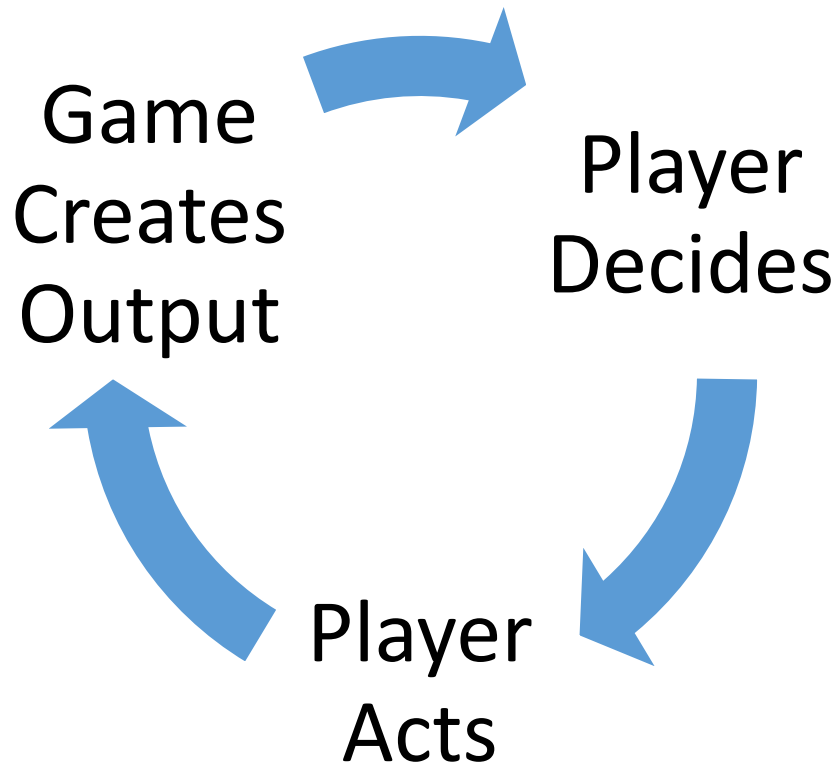- Games as Social Play
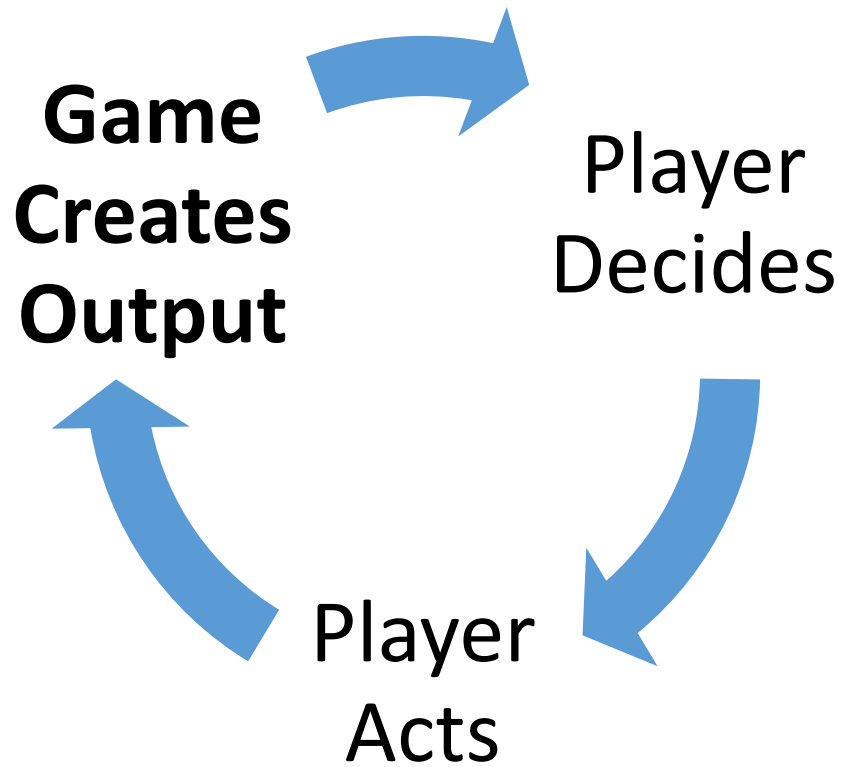
Games as the Play of Experience

Experiencing a Game

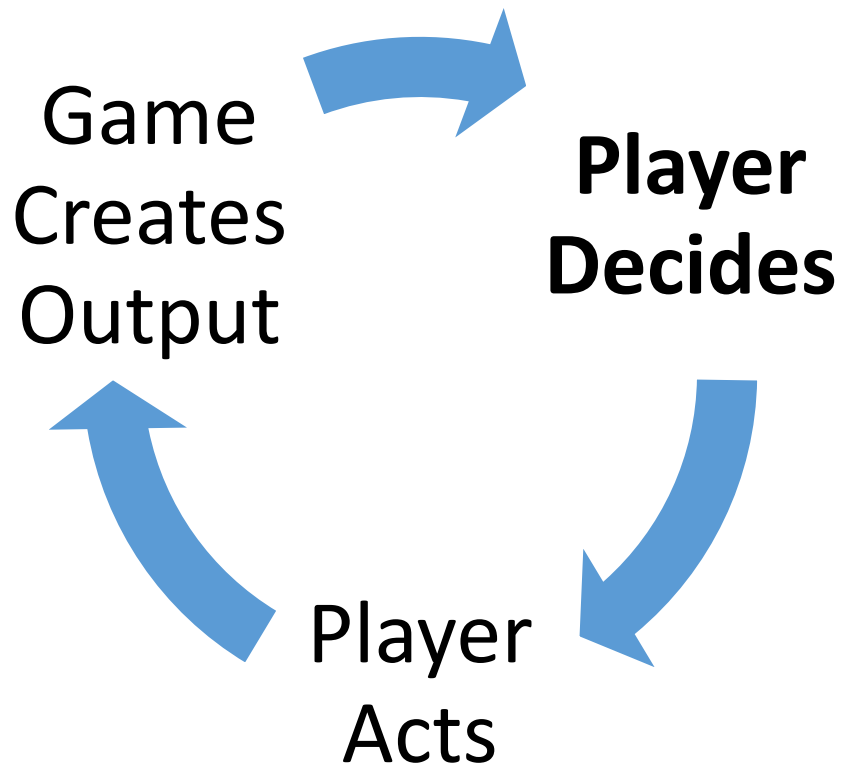Experience happens via the 5 senses:
- Sight
- Sound
- Touch
- Smell
- Taste

Experiencing a Game

Game Creates Output

Player Decides

Player Acts

Experiencing a Game

Game Creates Output → Player Decides → Player Acts → (back to Game Creates Output)

Experiencing a Game

Game Creates Output → Player Decides → Player Acts → (cycle back to Game Creates Output)

Experiencing a Game

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Experiencing a Game

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Player Acts

Core Mechanic(s)

Every game has a core mechanic which:

• An activity

• Done by the player

• That is repeated over and over again

• Is so important that it is usually included in the name of the genre or in a short summary of the game (e.g. a "shooter" game)

Breakout, 1976

Dungeons and Dragons, 1974

Counter Strike, 2000

Colossal Cave Adventure, 1976


```
AUSE   INIT DONE statement executed
o resume execution, type go.   Other input will terminate the job.
o
xecution resumes after PAUSE.
WELCOME TO ADVENTURE!!   WOULD YOU LIKE INSTRUCTIONS?


SOMEWHERE NEARBY IS COLOSSAL CAVE, WHERE OTHERS HAVE FOUND
FORTUNES IN TREASURE AND GOLD, THOUGH IT IS RUMORED
THAT SOME WHO ENTER ARE NEVER SEEN AGAIN. MAGIC IS SAID
TO WORK IN THE CAVE.   I WILL BE YOUR EYES AND HANDS. DIRECT
ME WITH COMMANDS OF 1 OR 2 WORDS.
(ERRORS, SUGGESTIONS, COMPLAINTS TO CROWTHER)
(IF STUCK TYPE HELP FOR SOME HINTS)


YOU ARE STANDING AT THE END OF A ROAD BEFORE A SMALL BRICK
BUILDING . AROUND YOU IS A FOREST. A SMALL
STREAM FLOWS OUT OF THE BUILDING AND DOWN A GULLY.
```

World of Warcarft, 2004

Mortal Kombat, 1992

StarCraft, 1998

Games as the Play of Pleasure

Pleasure

Pleasure is an enjoyable feeling which we seek out for its own sake. It is defined as a thing with its own intrinsic purpose.

Games are Autotelic

Games are autotelic (and end in and of themselves). Many people play games simply because they like to play games. The activity is its own reward and is not done for any other purpose.

Bulk Rename Utility   — □ ×

File   Actions   Options   Help

	Name	New Name	Sub...	Type	Size	Created	Mo
100923-Chandigarh-H	01-delhi-erstes-photo.JPG	01-delhi-erstes-photo.JPG		JPG F...	2 MB	21.11...	11.
100927-Kharar	02-delhi-imbau.JPG	02-delhi-imbau.JPG		JPG F...	3 MB	21.11...	11.
101007-Kharar-Haridw	03-delhi-eis.JPG	03-delhi-eis.JPG		JPG F...	2 MB	21.11...	11.
101015-Jaipur-Jaisalm	04-delhi-ventilator.JPG	04-delhi-ventilator.JPG		JPG F...	3 MB	21.11...	11.
101019-Jaisalmer-Jod	05-delhi-northern-palace-fe...	05-delhi-northern-palace-fens...		JPG F...	3 MB	21.11...	11.
101031-Udaipur-Goa	06-delhi-northern-palace-ve...	06-delhi-northern-palace-versi...		JPG F...	3 MB	21.11...	11.
101102-Goa	07-delhi-humuyans-tomb.JPG	07-delhi-humuyans-tomb.JPG		JPG F...	2 MB	21.11...	12.
dia-abend	08-delhi-eichhoernchen.JPG	08-delhi-eichhoernchen.JPG		JPG F...	2 MB	21.11...	12.
dia-abend.blog							
Für-das-Blog							

RegEx (1) ☑ R
Match 0
Replace 00
☐ Include Ext.

Repl. (3) ☑ R
Replace
With
☐ Match Case

Remove (5) ☑ R
First n 0   Last n 0
From 0   to 0
Chars   Words
Crop Before ▼
☐ Digits ☐ High   ☐ Trim
☐ D/S   ☐ Accents ☐ Chars
☐ Sym. Lead Dots Non ▼

Add (7) ☑ R
Prefix
Insert
at pos. 0
Suffix
☐ Word Space

Auto Date (8) ☑ R
Mode None ▼
Type Creation (Cur ▼
Fmt DMY ▼
Sep.   Seg.
Custom
☐ Cent. Off. 0

Numbering (10) ☑ R
Mode None ▼   at 0
Start 1   Incr. 1
Pad 0   Sep.
Break 0   ☐ Folder
Type Base 10 (Decimal) ▼
Roman Numerals   None ▼

File (2) ☑ R
Name Keep ▼

Case (4) ☑ R
Same ▼
Excep.

Move/Copy (6) ☑ R
None ▼ 1   None ▼ 1   Sep.

Append Folder Name (9) ☑ R
Name None ▼ Sep.   Levels 1

Extension (11) ☑ R
Same ▼

Selections (12) R
Filter *
☐ Match Case ☑ Folders ☐ Hidden ☑ Files ☐ Subfolders
Name Len Min 0   Max 0
Path Len Min 0   Max 0

New Location (13) R
Path
☐ Copy not Move

Reset
Revert
Rename

Working on multiple computers? Synchronize your files across computers with **ViceVersa PRO. Click Here To Find Out More ...

187 Objects (0 Selected)   Favourite   D:\bilder\2010-Max-Indien\dia-abend.blog

Game Designers Are Held to a Higher Standard

People will suffer through a bad interface or unenjoyable experience when using a tool because using the tool is not, itself, the goal.

People will not suffer through a game which is not enjoyable.

This may be why gaming has pushed hardware and software design; to make money a game has to be enjoyable in and of itself.

Enter. Play. Stay.

Games must be seductive in two ways:

• Encourage the player to start playing.

• Encourage the player to stay and keep playing.

Marc LeBlanc's 8 Kinds of Pleasure:

1. Sensation (color, sound, etc.)
2. Fantasy (make-believe)
3. Narrative (storytelling and drama)
4. Challenge (exercise of ability)
5. Fellowship (social framework)
6. Discovery (finding new things and abilities)
7. Expression (discovery of self and others)
8. Submission (ritual and rehearsed activity)

Flow

Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi described **flow** as the optimal experience of doing a task:

The task must be:
- A challenging activity
- With clear goals
- That provides clear feedback
- Creates the paradoxical perception of having control in an uncertain situation

The player:
- Loses the sense of self and becomes one with the system
- Experiences mastery
- Concentrating intensely on the task
- Time dilation

Ikaruga, 2001

The Same but Different

One way that games provide pleasure is by being "the same but different."

The rules system provides a pleasing familiarity.

Play can happen differently every time, providing pleasing novelty.

Goals and Pleasure

Pleasure can arise at various times:

- The moment-to-moment exercise of the core mechanic

- Achieving short-term goals that provide a sense of rising action and progress

- The final goal of the game, which motivates the entire experience (even if it is never achieved)

Space Invaders, 1978

World of Warcarft, 2004

Conditioning Players

Conditioning is the process by which an animal learns behavior though:

- **Positive Reinforcement:** providing something pleasant
- **Negative Reinforcement:** removing something unpleasant
- **Punishment:** providing something unpleasant

Game designers can condition players toward the intended style of play in a game.

Reward Schedules

Rewards can come a different times:

- Fixed (always the same)

- Variable (unpredictable)

Variable punishments are seen as arbitrary, but variable rewards are enjoyable.

Challenge
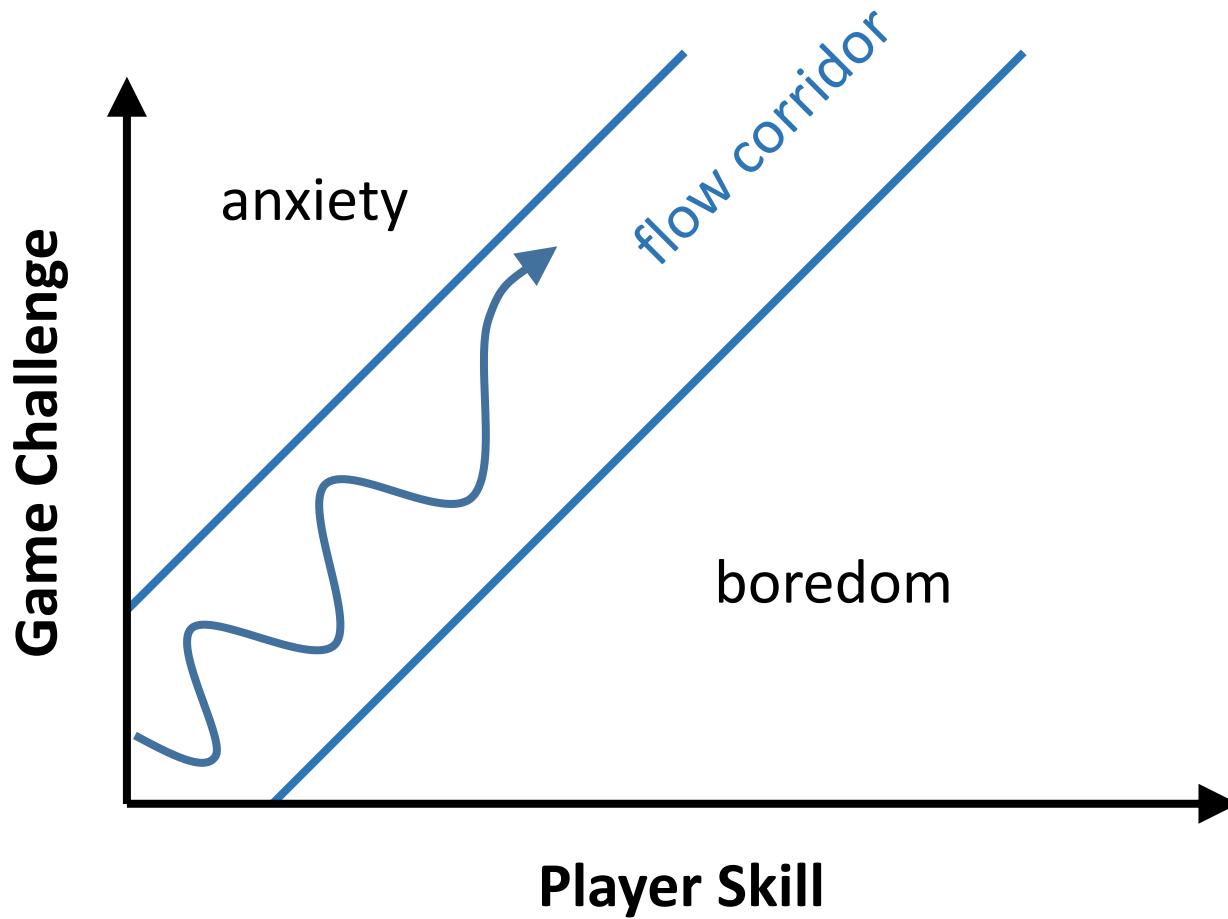
Addiction

In game design, addiction is spoken of as a good thing. It is not being used in the medical sense.

When someone becomes addicted to a game in the medical sense (e.g. a gambling addiction), they are no longer moving freely in the larger system. Their own will is lost and thus meaningful play is not happening.

Games as the Play of Meaning

Games define a vocabulary of symbols and their meanings.

Making sense out of a system is a pleasing act of play.

The role of the game designer is to choose a vocabulary, set of relationships, and context to help the player make sense of the system.

Cat Mario
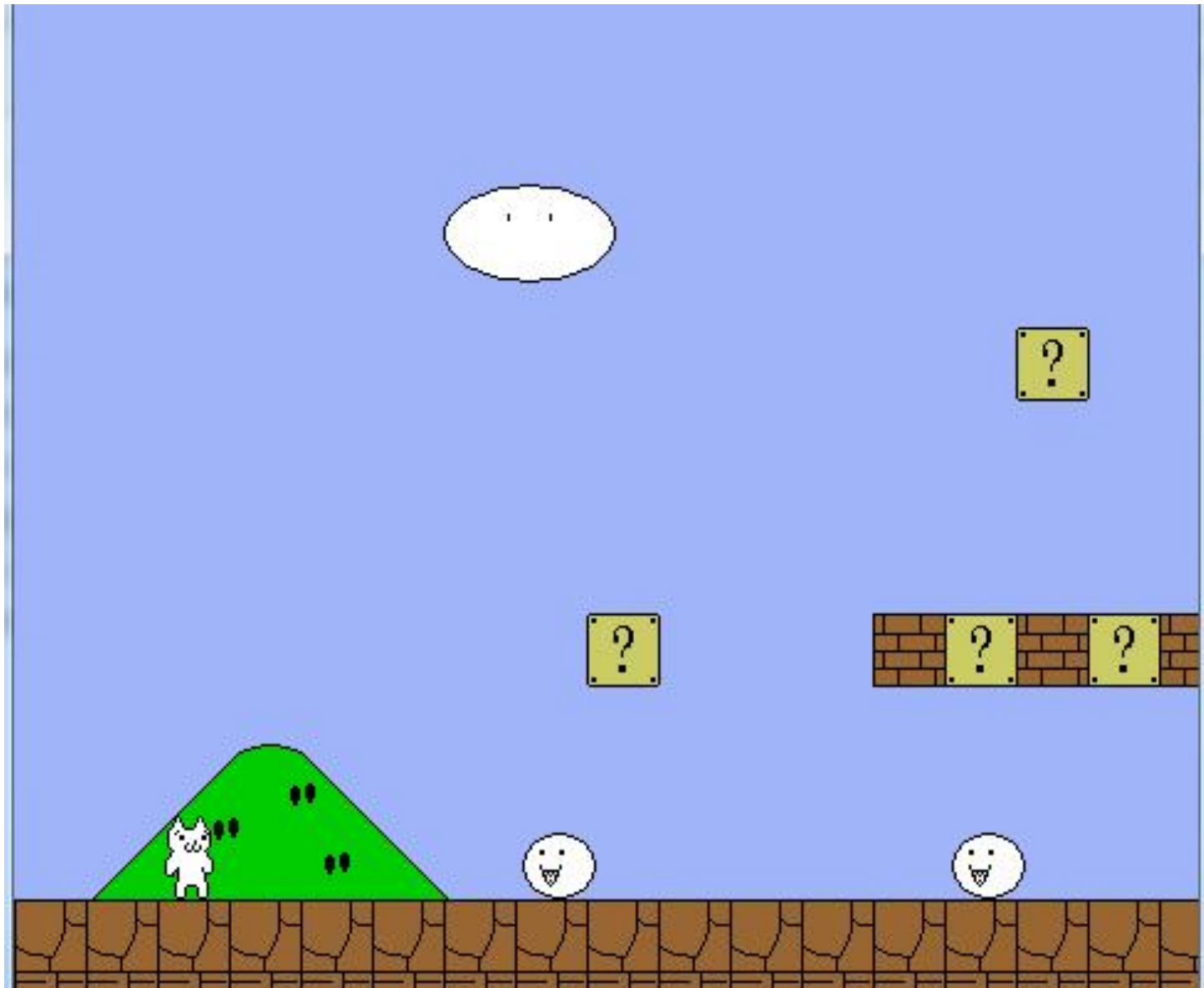
Games as Narrative Play

Games as Narrative

Narrative is one of the fundamental cognitive tools that we use to make sense out of a series of casually-related events.

Narrative

- **Situation:**
  - Initial state
  - Reversal of fortune
  - Revelation
- **Character:** personification of the events
- **Form:** patterns and repetition following a central theme

Why Narrative?

- Provides a semiotic setting and vocabulary that makes the game easier to understand.

- Explains the conflict and motivation.

- Communicates goals to the players.

- Creates building dramatic tension through progressively more intense scenes / levels.

Hangman
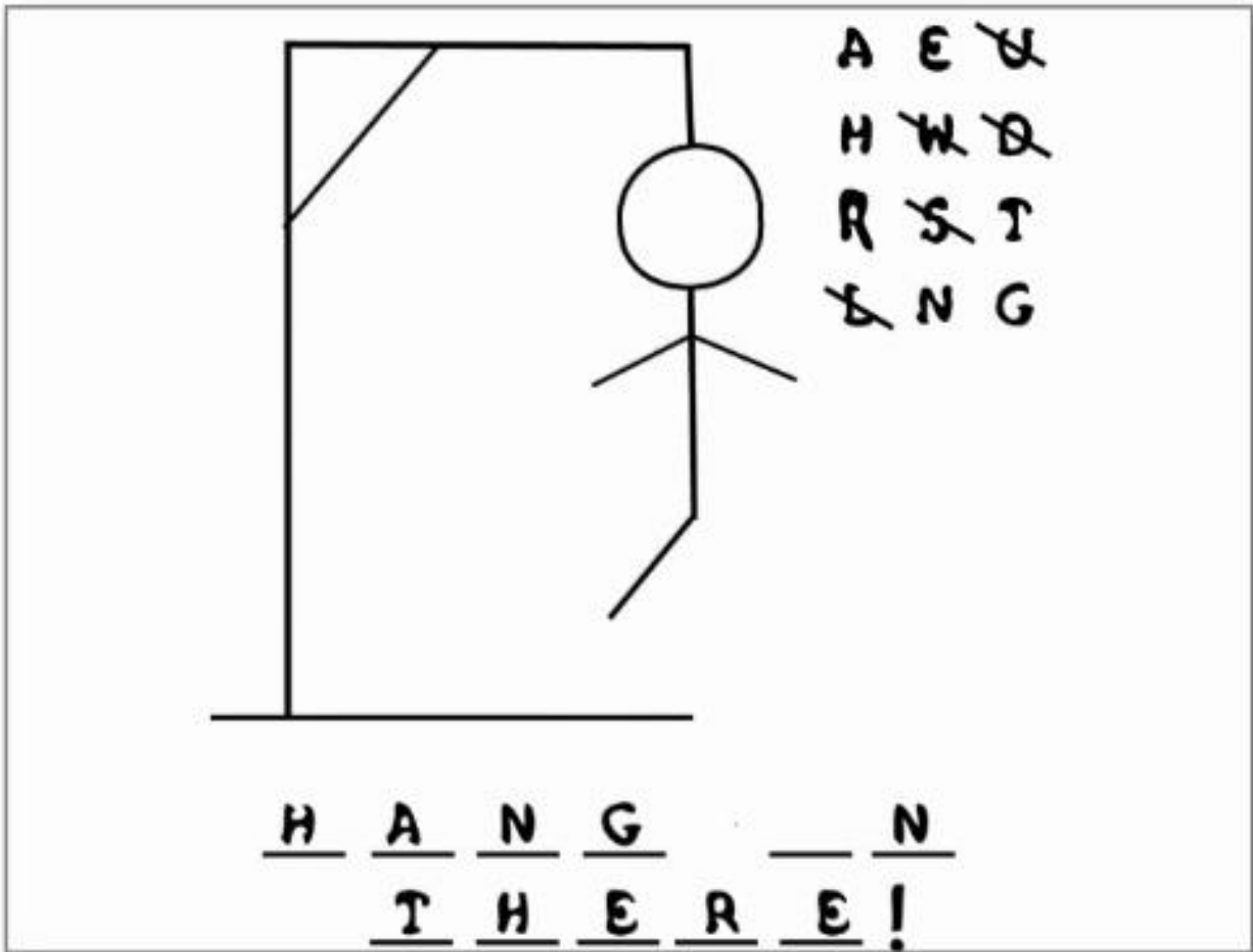
Narrative of Hangman

Narrative Elements:

- Initial State / Reversal

- Revelation

- Personification

- Pattern and Repetition

Value of Narrative:

- Provides setting and vocabulary

- Explains motivation / goals

- Builds dramatic tension

Embedded vs. Emergent Narrative

- **Embedded narrative** elements are created by an author at design time and experienced similarly to how we experience of forms of static media, such as literature and films.

- **Emergent narrative** arises at run time as a result of interactions in the game system. Emergent narrative systems focus on realistic simulation, coupled elements, and context-sensitivity.

Author Control vs. Player Agency

- **Authorial control** is the ability of a game's designer to communicate a specific message or theme to the audience.

- **Player agency** is the player's perception that his or her choices are having a meaningful, recognizable effect on the game.

Narrative on 2 Axes

Dragon's Lair

Author Control

no-one has to die

Embedded

Emergent

Fable

Minecraft

Player Agency

Façade, 2005

Grace, are you angry at Trip?|

Narrative Tips and Tricks

- Create diamond branches in a storyline.

- Provide short term feedback by acknowledging the player's choices, even if the story does not change significantly as a result.

- Provide long term feedback by acknowledging the player's past choices, even if the story does not change significantly as a result.

Cutscenes

- Set the mood
- Provide players with a reward for their work
- Provide players a break from the action
- Provide information about other parts of the game world
- Help players transition into a new level or goal
- Reveal the consequences of a player's choices
- Allow "hardcore" players to skip narrative content

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Challenge: Show Don't Tell

One common piece of advice to writers is: "show, don't tell."

Don't reveal information about the story or the characters through explicit exposition; reveal it through the environment and player actions.

Half-Life, 1998

Games as the Play of Simulation

Simulation

A **simulation** is an interactive representation of some aspect of a world (real or fictional) which takes place over time.

A maze navigation game is a simulation.

A map of that maze is not a simulation.

Accuracy of Simulation

- Simulations do not need to be realistic to be enjoyable.

- Indeed, sometimes the fact that a simulation is not realistic makes it more enjoyable.

Guitar Hero, 2005

Attacking in D&D First Edition

Characters have a stat called Armor Class (AC).

Armor lowers your AC.

To determine if an attacks hits, roll a d20. Consult a chart to see if your roll is high enough to hit given your level and the target's AC.

Attacking in D&D Second Edition

Characters have a stat called Armor Class (AC).

Characters have a stat called THACO (To Hit at Amor Class Zero).

Armor lowers AC. Higher levels lower THACO.

To determine if an attacks hits, roll a d20. Subtract your THACO from the target's AC. If your roll is higher than that number, you hit.

Attacking in D&D Third Edition

Characters have a stat called Armor Class (AC).

Armor raises AC.

To determine if an attacks hits, roll a d20. If your roll was higher than the target's AC, the attack hits.

Challenge: Distillation

Drill down to the most important and enjoyable aspects of the activity you are simulating.

Make the most enjoyable (not necessarily the most accurate) simulation you can with the simplest system.

Each new complexity must be justified.

Common Simulations

- Conflict over life and death
- Conflict over territory
- Conflict over resources
- Conflict over knowledge

Cid Meyer's Civilization IV, 2006

Designing Simulations

Method 1: A grenade can destroy a door. Every time a grenade explodes, check if there is a door nearby, and if so, destroy it.

Method 2: A grenade does damage. A door can be damaged. When a grenade goes off, it damages things around it. When a door is damaged, it is destroyed.

Designing Simulations

Rather than specify many 1-to-1 relationships, specify message senders and message receivers.

- Decreases dev time, testing, and refactoring

- Increase player's options

- More likely to create emergent behavior

Character of a Simulation

The character of a simulation is revealed by playing with it. By leveraging familiar content from the real world, game designers can make it easier to understand a system.

Super Smash Bros.

Immersion Fallacy

The appeal of simulations in games is their ability to transport us to alternate worlds so completely that we forget we are not really there.

Refuting the Immersion Fallacy

- We can be immersed in games that do not simulate real things, e.g. *Tetris*.

- Players are always aware that they are playing a game.

- Consider the dangerous consequence of a game becoming too real.

- Acknowledging the player's awareness of being a player will help video games mature as a medium, as it has helped other media.

Games as Social Play

Multi-Player Games

Historically, most games have been multi-player.

Video games are anomalous for having so many examples of single-player games.

The shift toward more multi-player video games is a return to the norm in game history.

Social Roles in Games

Player 1	Player 2
Pull ahead	Stay ahead
Chase	Elude
Attack	Defend
Capture	Avoid
Search	Hide
Rescue	Guard
Tempt	Resist

Capture the Flag

Bartle's Player Types

- **Achievers** want to gain points.
- **Explorers** want to visit and map large spaces.
- **Socializers** want to chat and learn about others.
- **Killers** want to harm and frustrate others.

Social Contract

- Joining a game (entering the magic circle) requires trust.

- It is implied that we will all try to keep the space inside the magic circle safe.

- As we become part of a game's community, we learn how the rules can be changed (with the consent of the whole group).

Implicit Rules

Implicit rules reveal the priorities and the culture of a game's players.

World of Warcarft, Roleplay Servers

Forbidden Play

Games allow us to experiment with things that would be taboo in the real world.

Spin the Bottle

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