UNIVERSITÉ DE FRIBOURG
UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG

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GAME DESIGN

ACT 1

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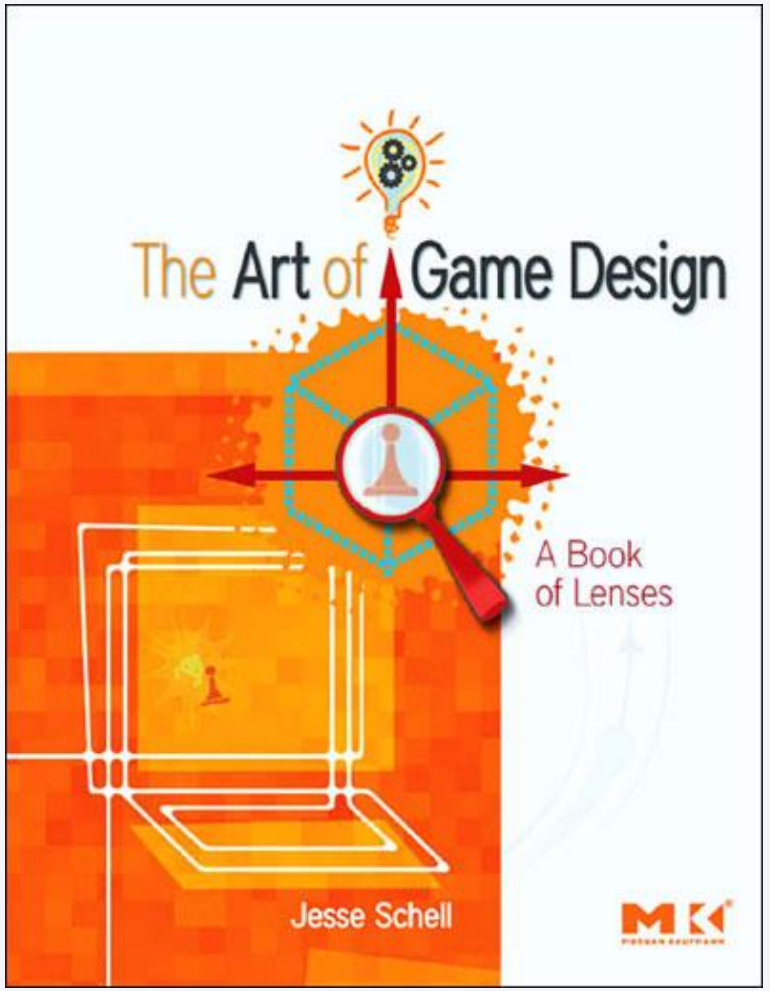
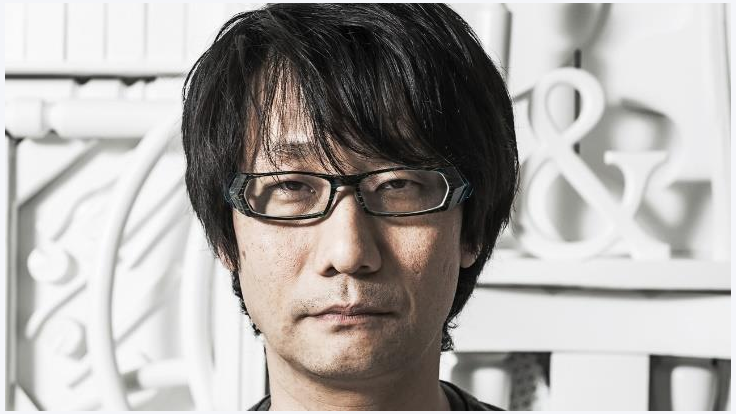
SOME REFERENCES

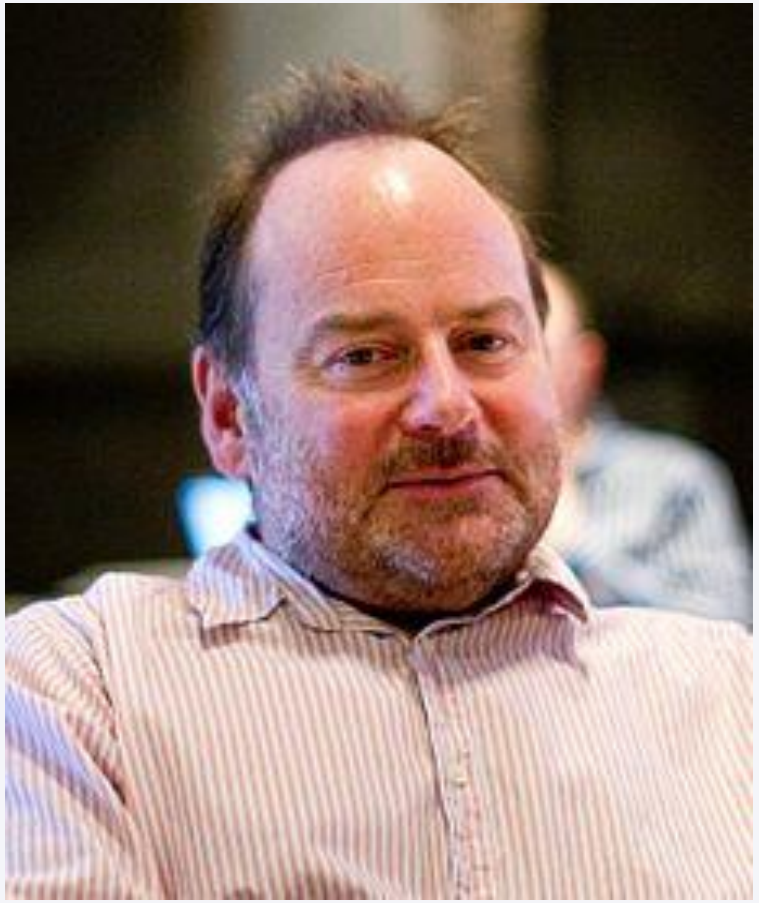
Schell, Jesse. *The Art of Game Design – A Book of Lenses*. Morgan Kaufmann, USA 2008

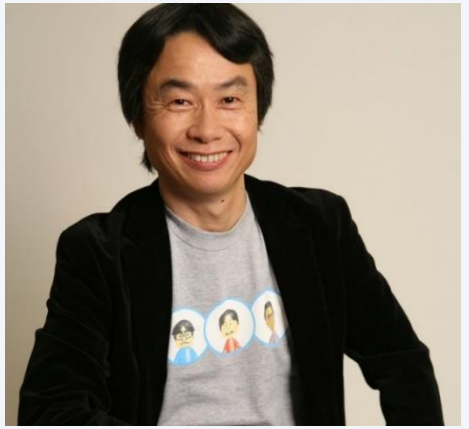
Fullerton, Tracy. *Game design workshop: a playcentric approach to creating innovative games*. CRC press, 2014



Who is the designer?







HOW TO BECOME A GAME DESIGNER?

I’m a game designer.

“Design games. Start now!”
“People become what they pretend to be.”
“You will fail again, and again, and again.”

[J. Schell]

REQUIRED SKILLS

- Animation
- Anthropology
- Architecture
- Brainstorming
- Business
- Cinematography
- Communication
- Creative writing
- Economics
- Engineering
- History
- Management
- Mathematics
- Music
- Psychology
- Public speaking
- Sound design
- Technical writing
- Visual arts
- And so on!

THE MOST IMPORTANT SKILL

- **Listening**
- 5 Categories
  - Team
  - Audience
  - Game
  - [Client]
  - Self

What is the game designer goal?

THE EXPERIENCE

- Designer’s goal is to create an experience
- Games are simply artifacts
- Experiences are part of us, but hard –impossible ? - to describe
- The game **enables** the experience, but it is not the experience.

THE EXPERIENCE AND THE MEDIA

- In all type of entertainment : books, movies, music, and so on. *[linear]*
- More interaction in videogames *[complex]*

CREATING THE EXPERIENCE

- Psychology, anthropology and design -> introspection
- **Peril 1**: false conclusions
  - Greek philosophers
- **Peril 2**: subjectivity VS objectivity
  - “I only design for people like me”
  - “Personal opinion can be trusted”
- **Listen!!!!**

HOW TO « CORRECTLY » USE INTROSPECTION?

- Dissect your feelings
- Observe yourself during experiences
  - Analyze memories
  - Two passes
  - Short glances
  - Continuous observation
- **Essential Experience**

BASTOGNE (6TH EPISODE)

- How the essential experience is reproduced:
  - Boredom => low rhythm of the episode
  - Cold => colors, breath, snow, actors
  - Loneliness => Field of view, colors

ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE

- What experience do I want the player to have?
- What is essential to that experience?
- How can my game capture that essence?

What is a game?

But what a…????

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

It is impossible to define what a game is but it is easy to recognize a game in the reality.

[Not really a citation]

- Lack of terms
- Game designers follow instincts
- Difficult to explicitly identify good and bad aspects in a design

IS THAT A GAME?

WHAT IS A GAME?

- Something you play with
- They are not toys
- They generate **fun**
- They **surprise** the players
  - Crucial in entertainment
  - Root of humor, strategy, problem solving, etc.

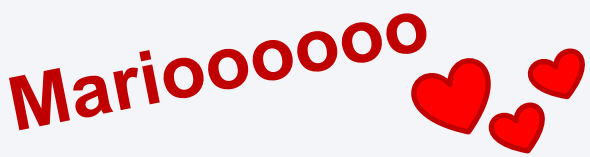
GAMES CHARACTERISTICS

- Games are entered willfully
- Games have **goals**
- Games have conflicts
- Games have **rules**
- Games can be **won or lost**
- Games are interactive
- Games have **challenges**
- Games can create their own **internal value**
- Games engage players
- Games are closed, formal systems

INTERNAL VALUES

Points and money **make sense** in the **game economy**

- Videos
- Lives
- Secret levels
- And so on



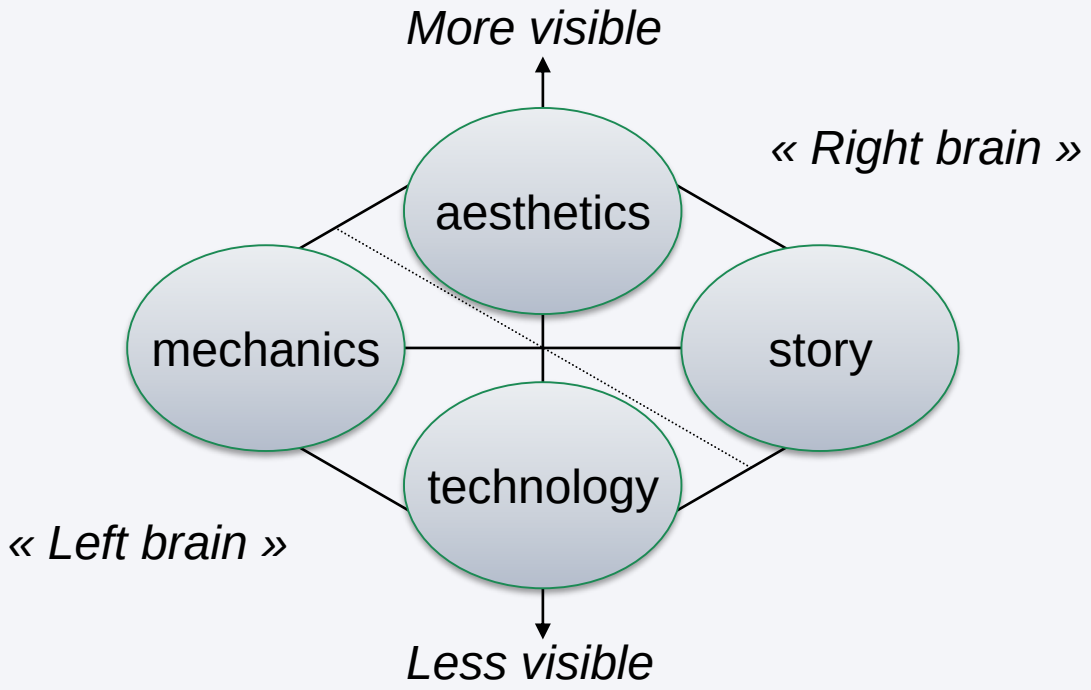
A « DEFINITION » OF GAME

A game is a problem-solving activity,

approached with a playful attitude.

What Are Games Made of?

ANATOMY OF A GAME



- Elemental **tetrad**
- Those components are related, influence themselves, and have exactly the **same** importance

MECHANICS

- Procedures and rules of the game
- **Goals**
- Players opportunities to achieve the goals
- Globally, it does not exists in movies, music, books, and so on.

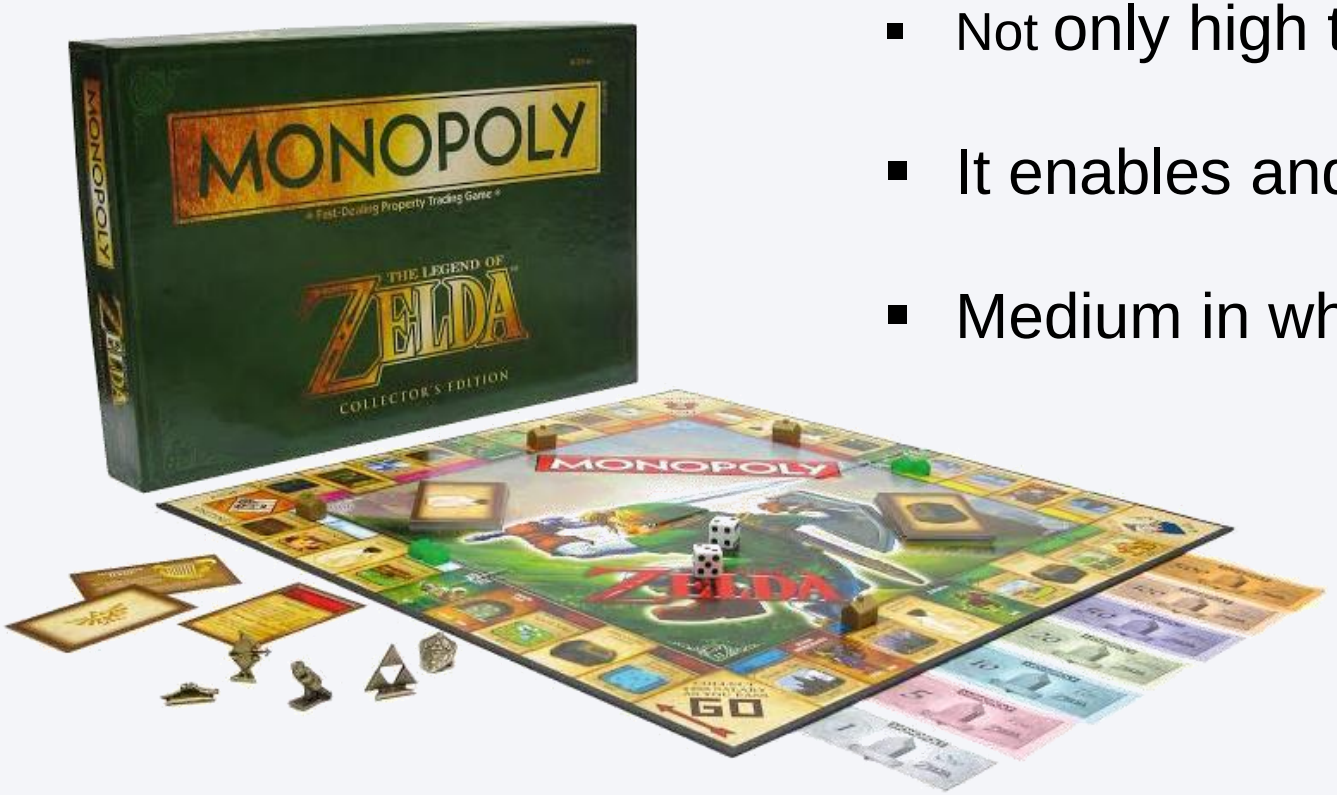
STORY

- Sequence of events
- **Linear and pre-scripted** or **branching and emergent**

AESTHETICS

- How the game looks, sounds, feels, etc.
- Directly and strictly related to player's experience

TECHNOLOGY



- Not only high technology
- It enables and prohibits things to do
- Medium in which the aesthetics take place

HOLOGRAPHIC DESIGN

- What elements of the game make the **experience enjoyable**?
- What elements of the game detract from the experience?
- How can I change game elements to improve the experience?

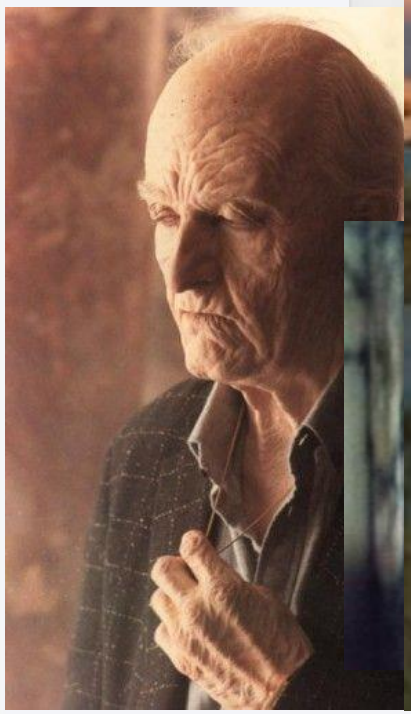
*** AFFORDANCE ***

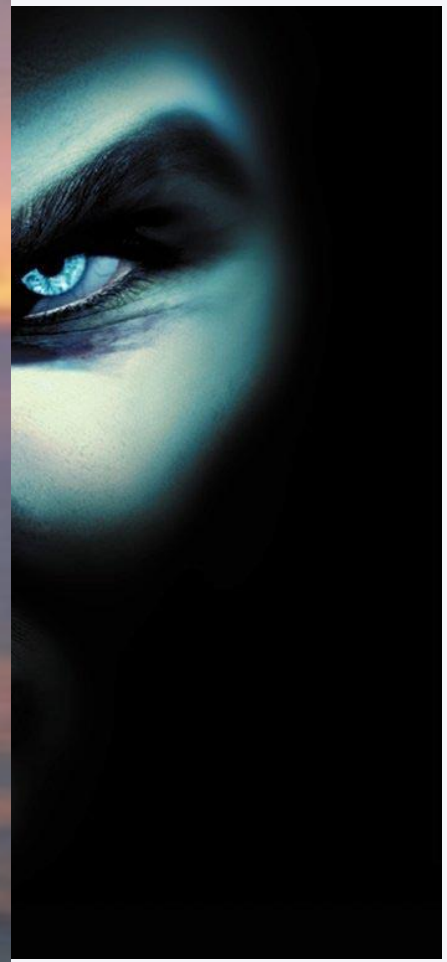
The theme

THE IMPORTANCE OF A THEME

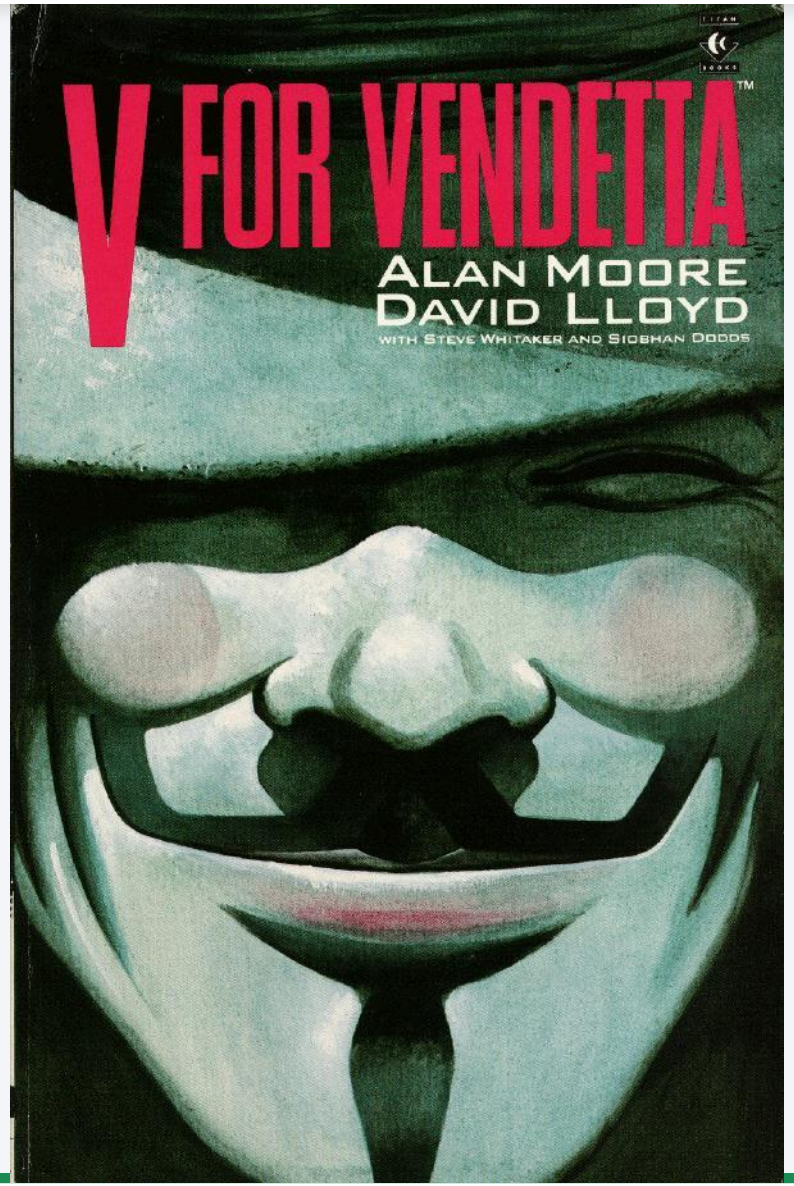
- The elements support a theme
  - Define the theme as soon as possible
  - Use every means to reinforce it
- Unifying themes = stronger experience
- Examples: **Being** a pirate -> sense of freedom

STRONG THEMES



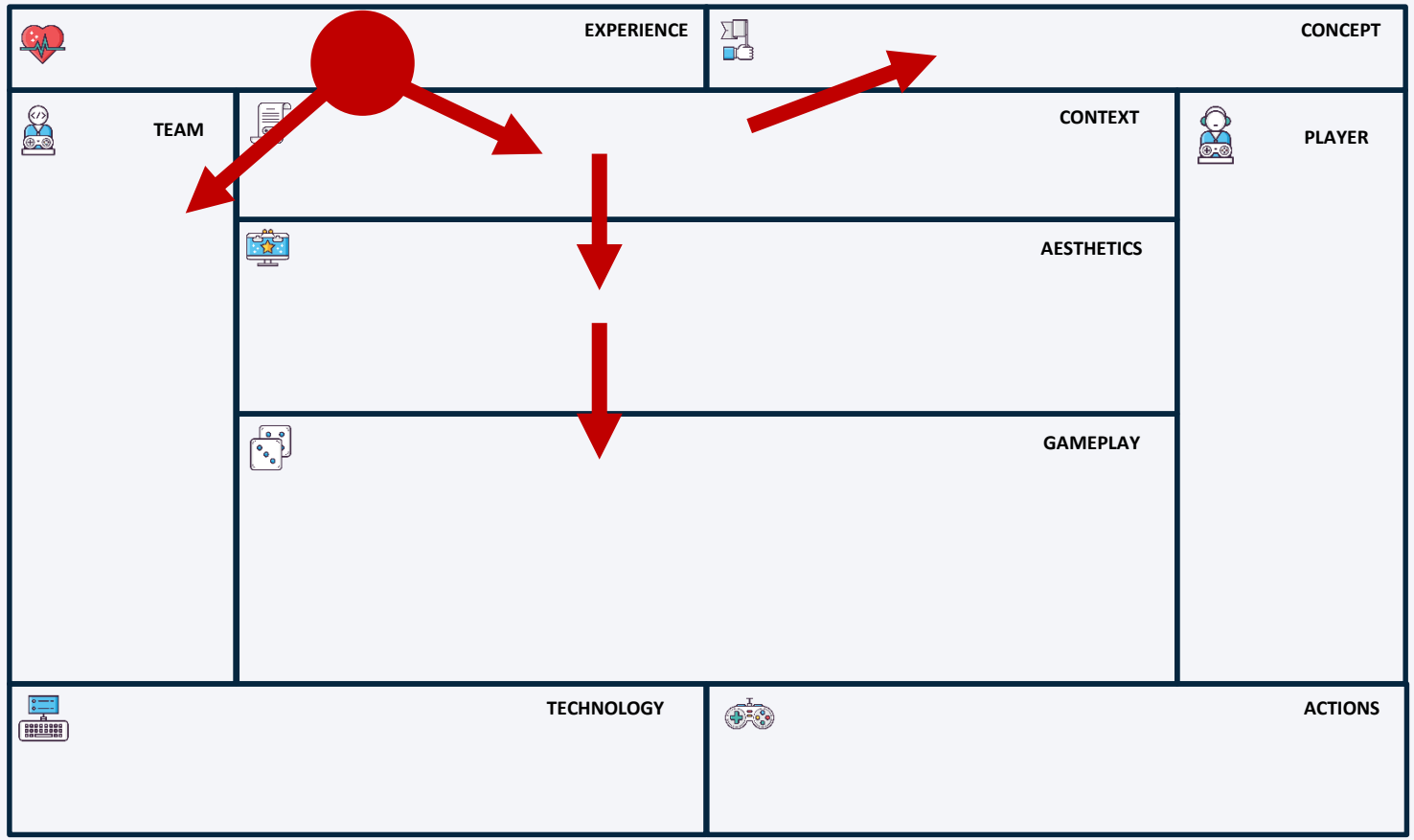


The idea


V FOR VENDETTA™
ALAN MOORE
DAVID LLOYD
WITH STEVE WHITAKER AND SIOBHAN DODDS

EXPERIENCE			CONCEPT
TEAM	CONTEXT		PLAYER
	AESTHETICS		
	GAMEPLAY		
TECHNOLOGY			ACTIONS

Slide:
Qui Cung



- Game design idea based on the experience

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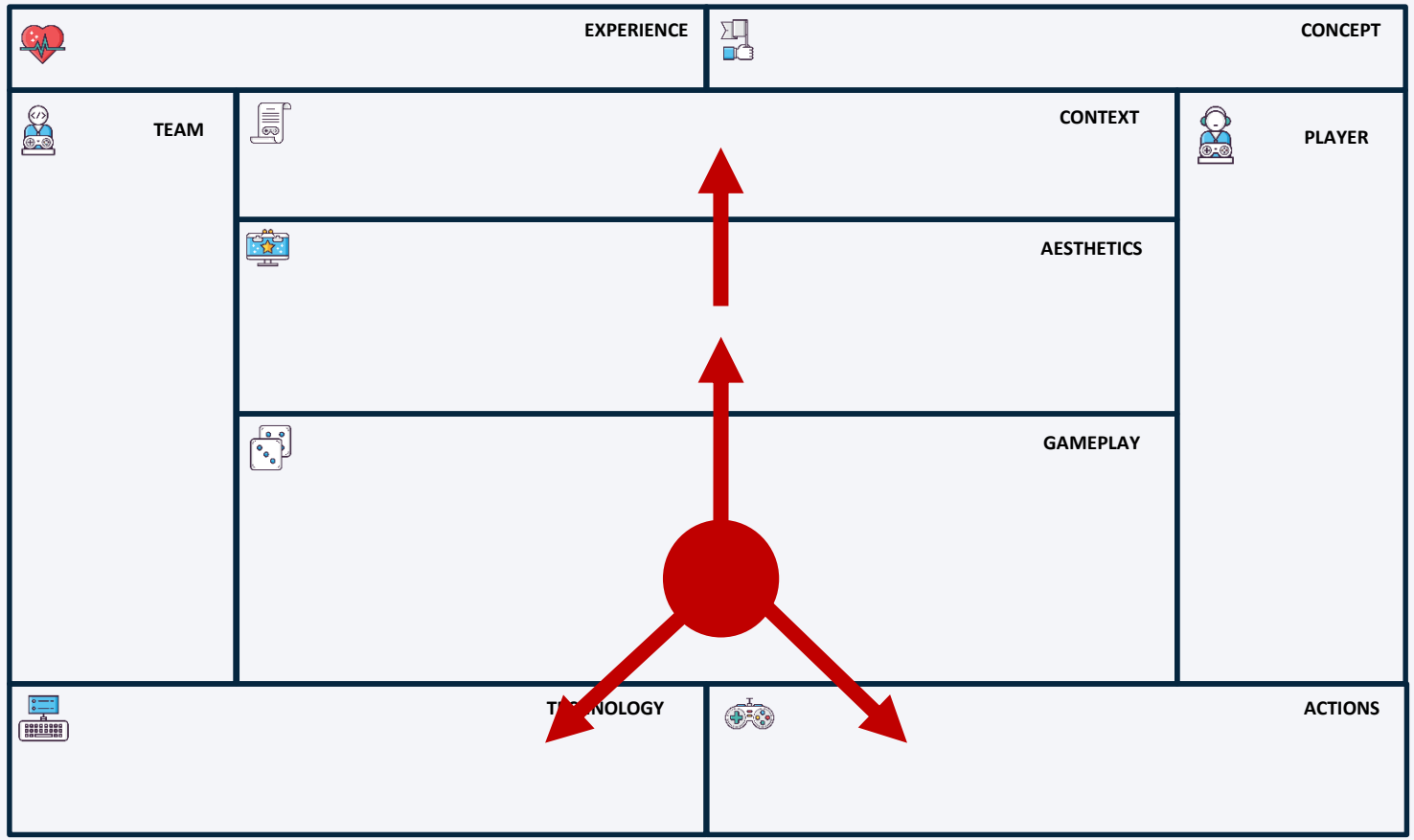

- Game design idea

  based on the gameplay

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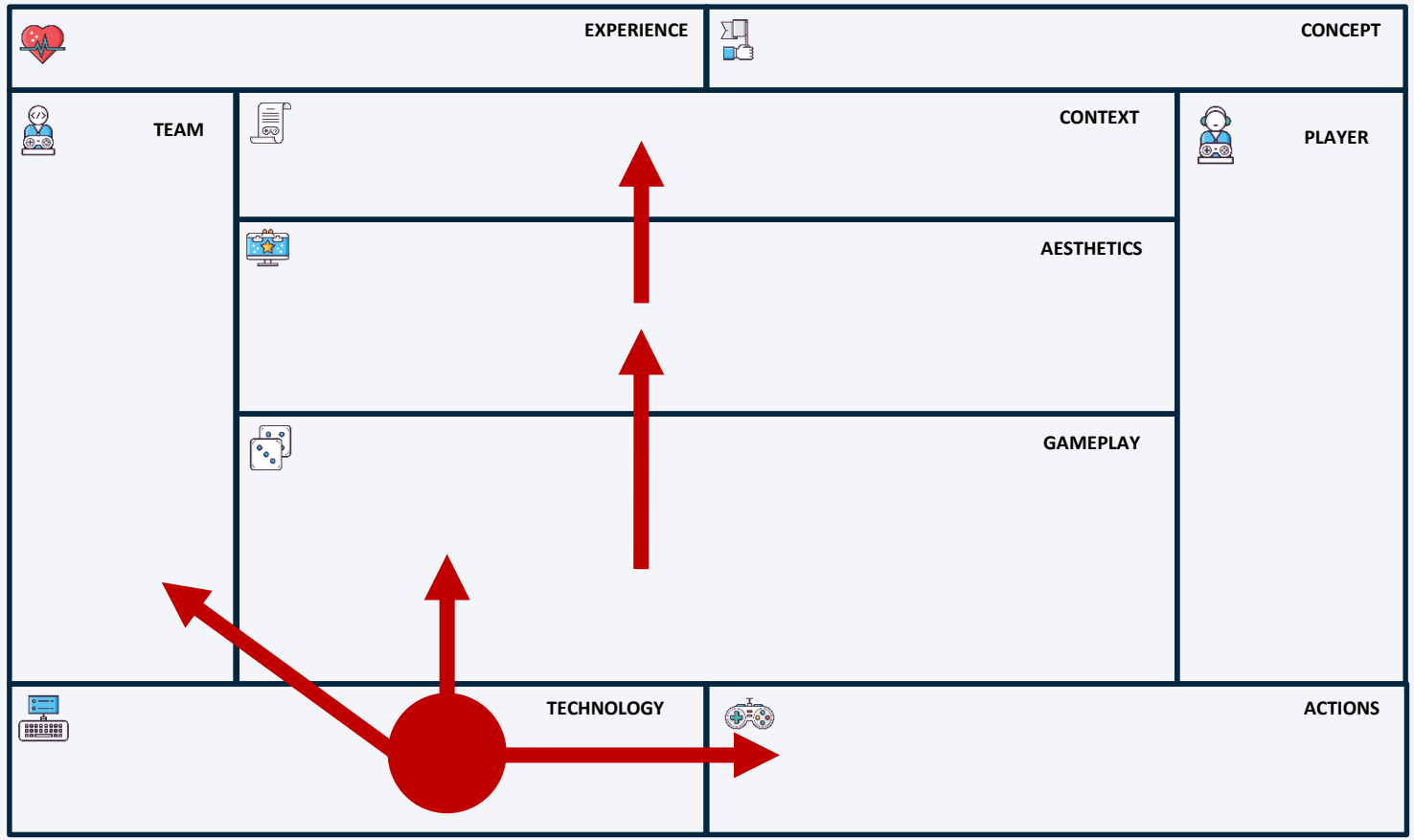

- Game Design based on the technology

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Qui Cung

THE CREATIVE CYCLE

- Think of an idea
- Try it out
- Keep changing it and testing it until it seems good enough
  - This true for games, but also for GUIs: **evaluation cycle**.
- **Infinite inspiration**. Look everywhere!
- Listen to your subconscious

FROM THE INSPIRATION TO THE DESIGN

- State the problem
- Advantages
  - Broader creative space: look at the problem and not at the solution
  - Clear measurement: how well ideas solve the problem?
  - Communication
- Often the problem constrains the 4 elements

BRAINSTORMING THE IDEAS

- Write or type answers
- Sketch
- Toys and physical objects
- Change perspective
- Empathy with consumers
- Don’t be frugal
- Write on the wall + space remembers
- Write everything
- Number lists (instead of bullets)
- Mix and match categories (elemental tetrad)
- Talk to yourself
- Find a partner

The iteration

GOD OF WAR

The game

The prototype

CHOOSING AN IDEA

- Take a decision
- Think about it and develop it
- Be ready to reverse wrong decisions
  - **Do not fall in love with your ideas**

8 FILTERS TO VALIDATE IDEAS

1. Does the game feel right?
2. Will the intended audience like the game enough?
3. Is the game well-designed ? (Experience?)
4. Is this game novel enough?
5. Will this game sell? Use tools like **Steamspy**!
6. Is it technically possible to develop this game?
7. Does this game meet our social and community goals?
8. Do the playtesters enjoy the game enough?
9. Your additional or alternate filters

THE LOOP

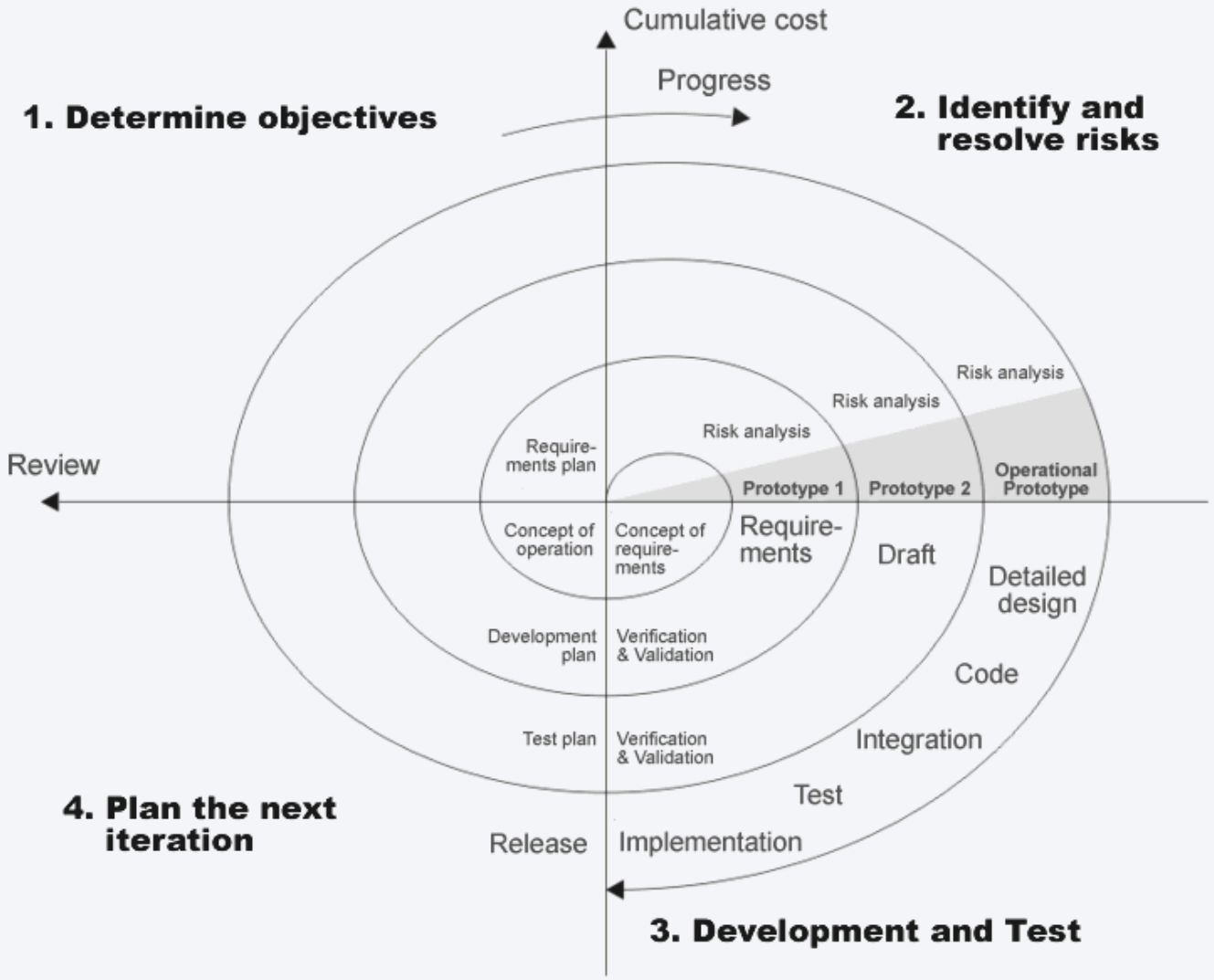
- An absolute truth in informatics (in life?): test and improve
- Expensive, not always applicable more and more times
- **How can I make every loop count?**
- **How can I loop as fast as possible?**

LOOPING MODEL

- Different models (e.g. Waterfall)
- **Boehm**

1. Basic design
2. Figure out greatest risks
3. Build prototype mitigating those risks
4. Test them
5. Come up with a more detailed design based on what you learned
6. Return to step 2

BOEHM'S MODEL



COLLABORATIVE EXAMPLE

We invent a concept and we try to analyze it.

- **Gameplay**
- **Technical problems**
- **Artworks & story**
- **Marketing problems**

RISK MITIGATION

- Stop thinking **positively**!
- What could keep this game from being **great**?
- How can we stop that from happening?

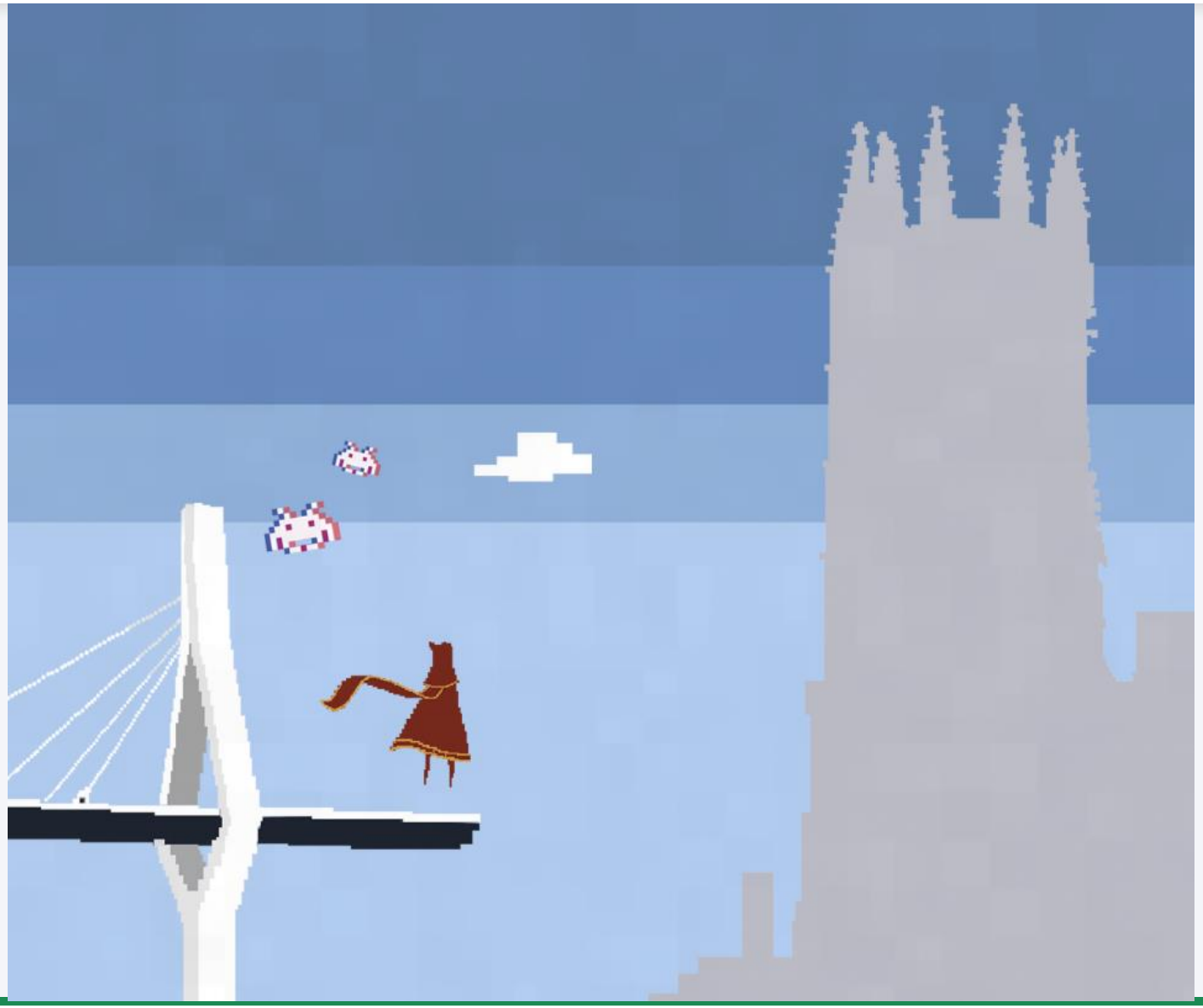
8 TIPS FOR PRODUCTIVE PROTOTYPING

1. Answer a question
2. Forget quality
3. Don’t get attached
4. Prioritize your prototypes (biggest risks first)
5. Parallelize prototypes
6. It doesn’t have to be digital
7. « Fast loop game engine » (e.g.. Script instead of code)
8. Build toys first (and select funny ones)

TO WRAP UP

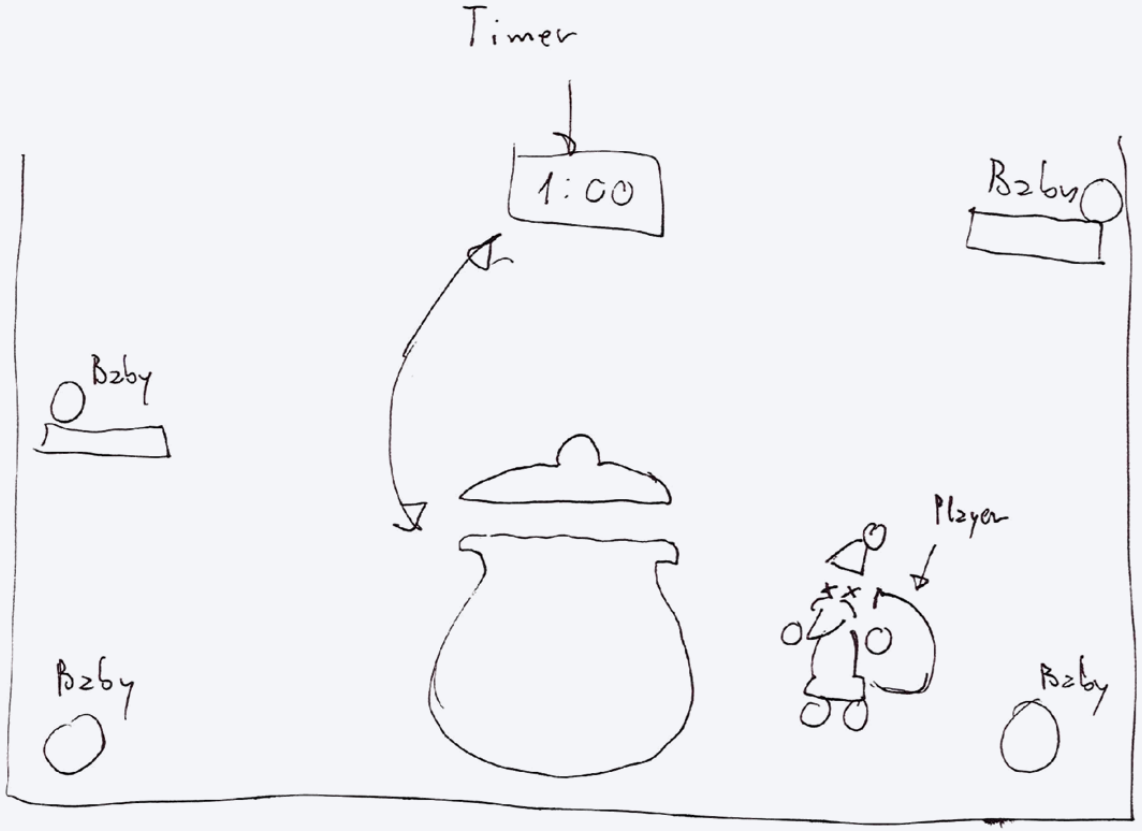
1. State the problem
2. Brainstorm solutions
3. Choose a solution
4. List the risks of using it
5. Build prototypes to mitigate risks
6. Test them. If they are good, stop.
7. State the new problem and go to step 2

Ideas @ lvlup game jam 2016



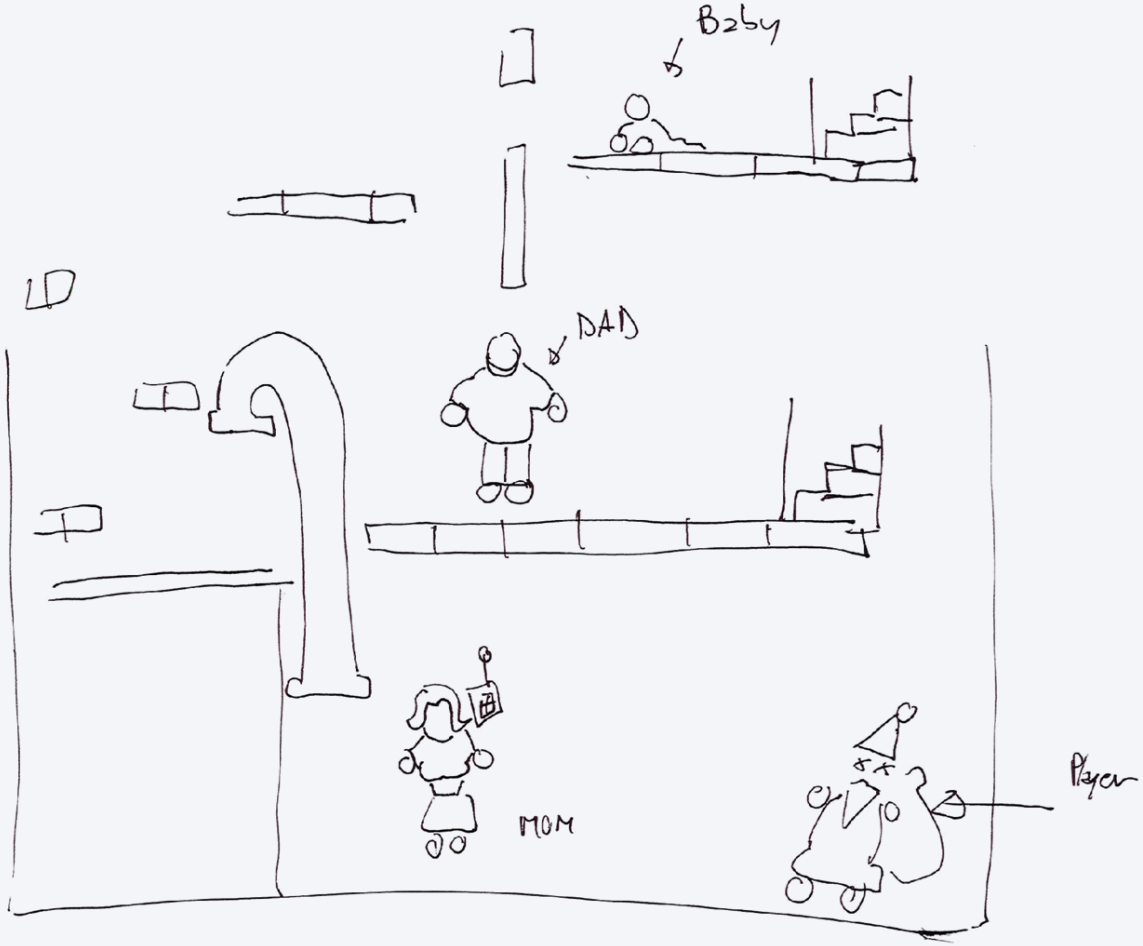
LVLUP GJ 1

Platform - Puzzle



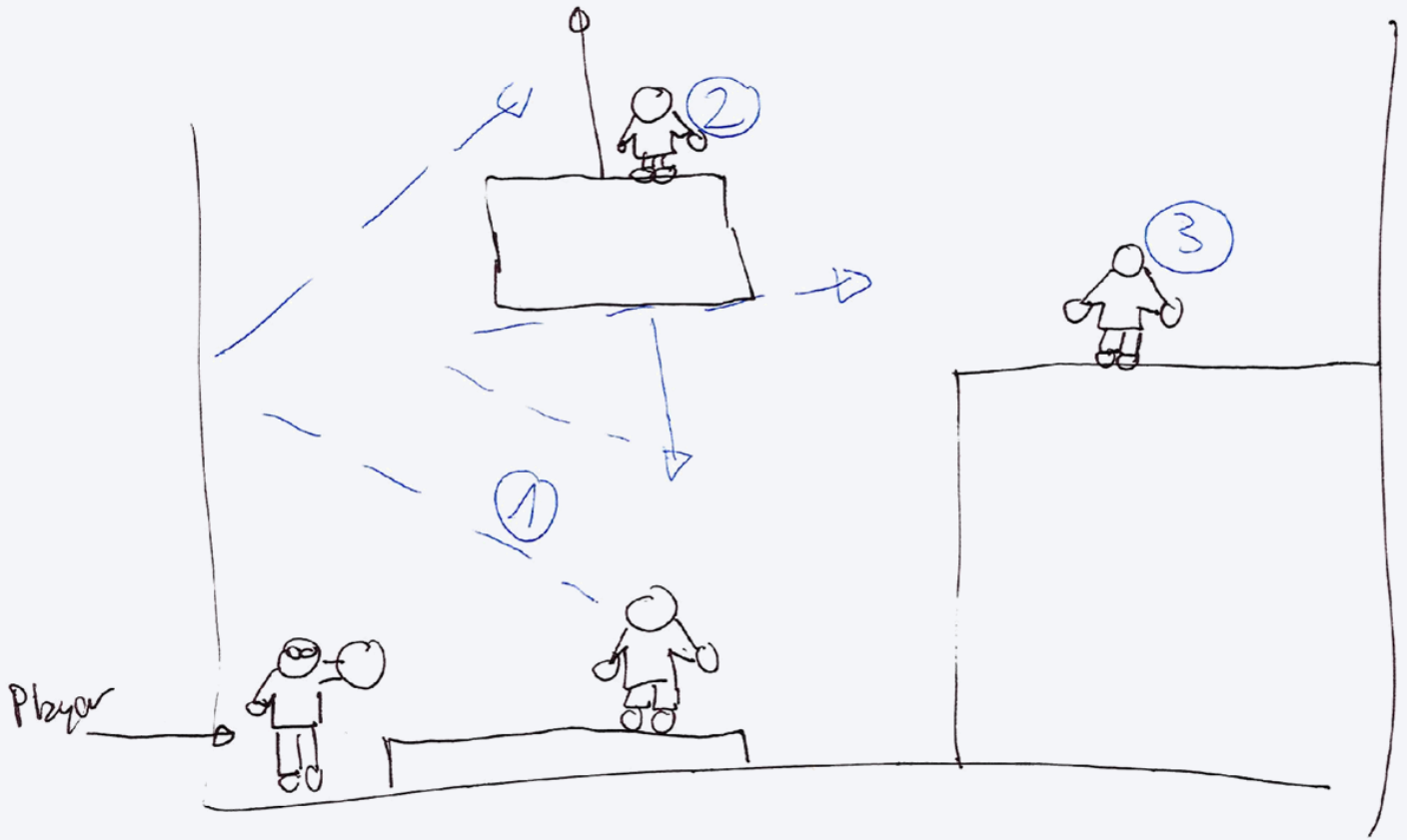
LVL UP GJ 2

Sketch



LVLUP 3

Moving HB

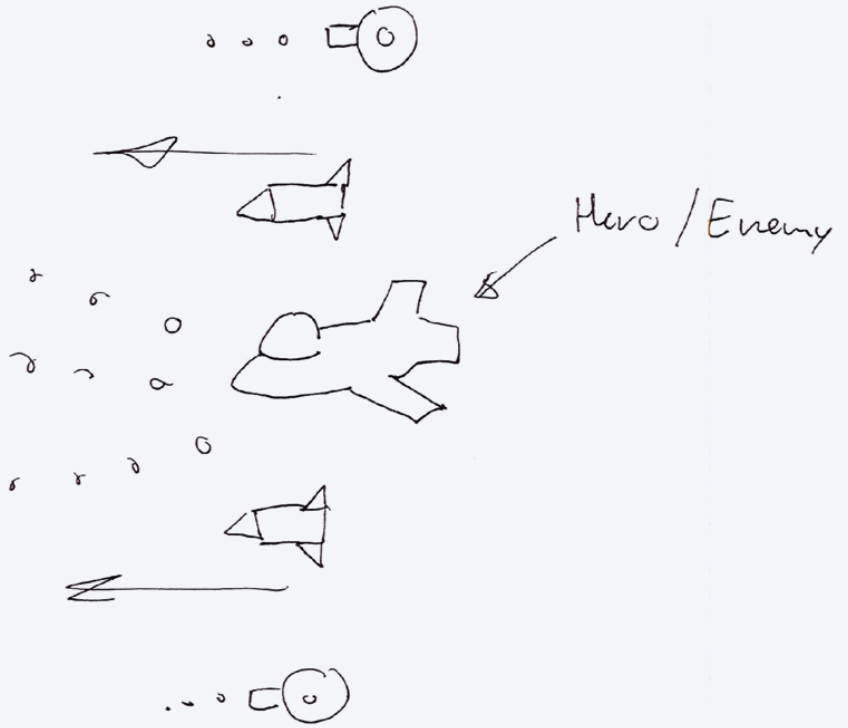


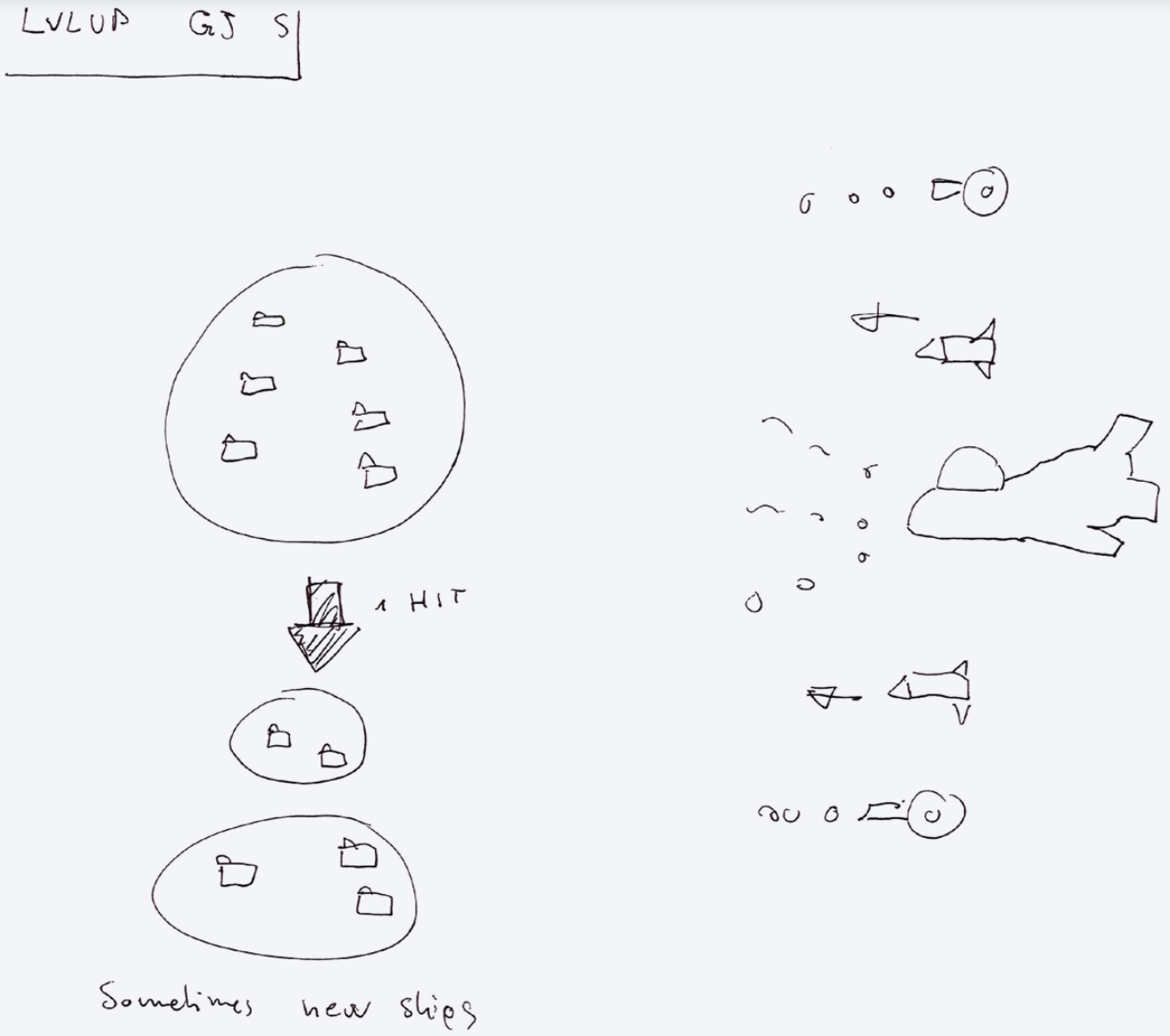
LvLUP GJ 4

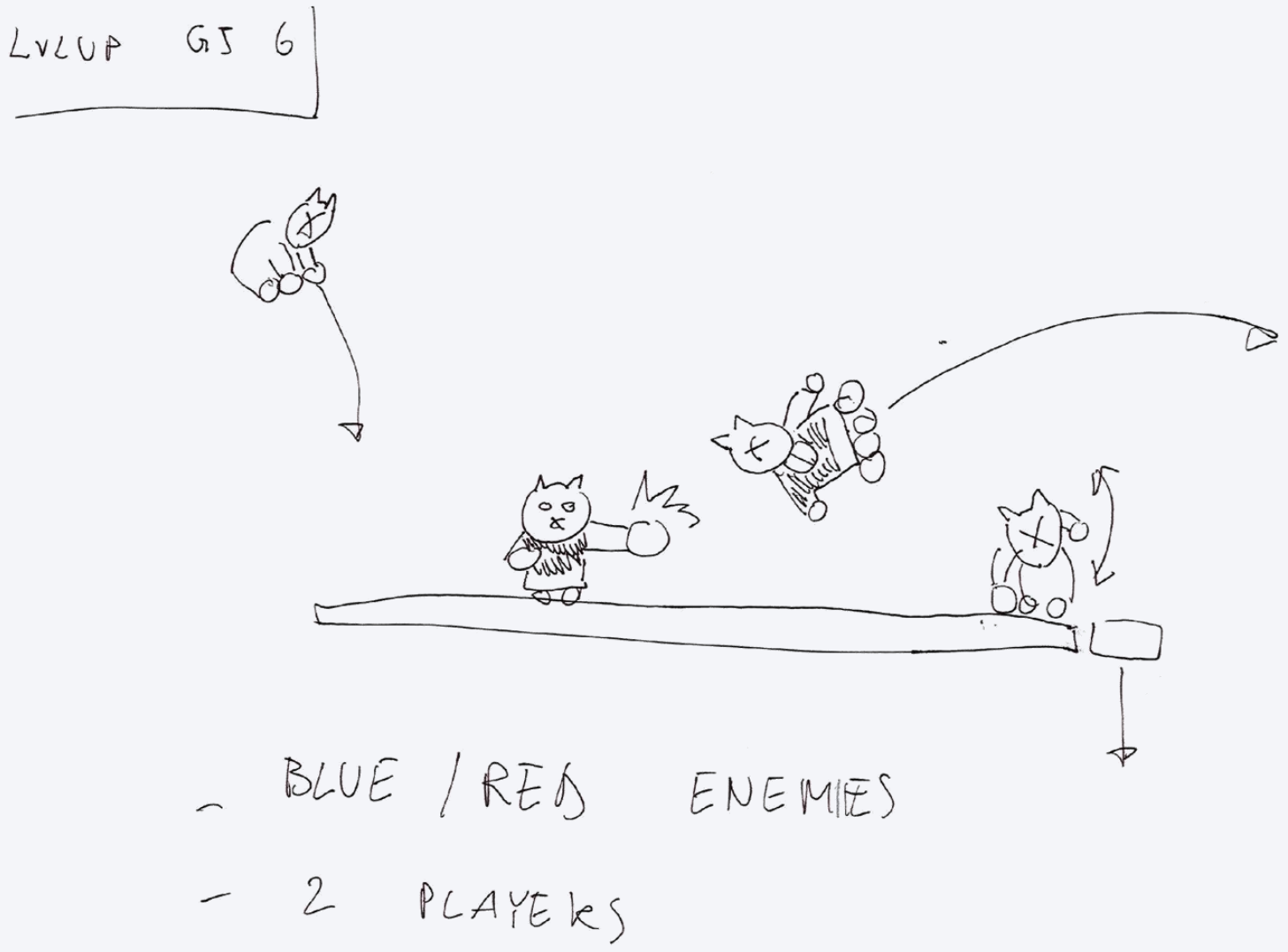
Shooter

player

- ∞ ships
- when you are under attack, change of ship
- if hit 3 times, game over




LVLUP GJ S
1 HIT
Sometimes new ships


LVLUP GJ G
- BLUE / RED ENEMIES
- 2 PLAYERS

Next act: who is the player?

QUESTIONS?