

Intro to Game Studies:

- “Ludology”
- Games and History
- Game Development
- Game Theory
- Game Cultures



“Le Bateleur,” or “The Magician,” the Marseilles and Rider-Waite Tarot cards

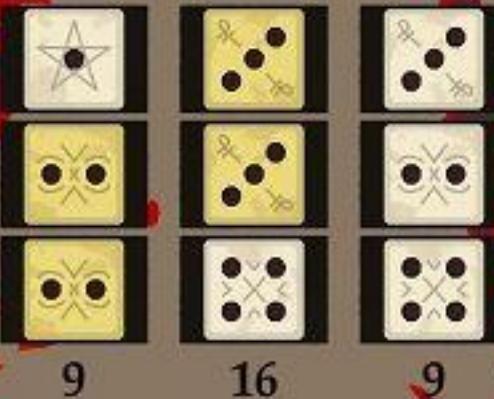
Gaming/play "... is older than culture, for culture, however inadequately defined, always presupposes human society, and animals have not waited for man to teach them their playing." - Huizinga

Who "invented" dice?

An orthostat depicting people playing knucklebones from Carchemish (c. 8th century BC); European talus bones (Peter Bruegel detail of children's games, 1560); Māori children playing kōruru (Gottfried Lindauer, 1907); Mongolian shagai pieces



"Games don't matter. Like in the old fable, we are the fools looking at the finger when someone points at the moon. Games are the finger; play is the moon." Sicart, 2



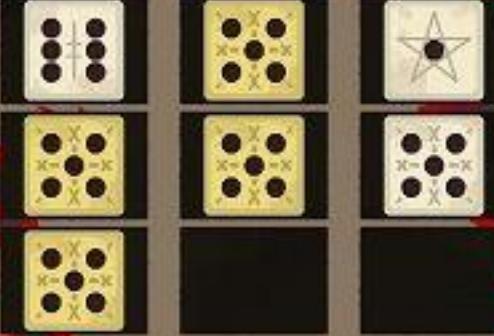
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The Lamb

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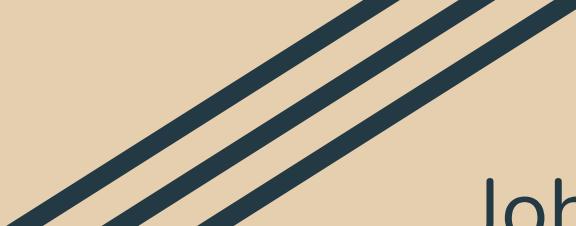
Shrumy

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Don't concentrate on the finger...



Johann Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: The Play Element in Culture*, 1938



Chapter 1 Question:

What is PLAY?

Ludic (adj.) and *Ludology* (n.):

Of or pertaining to undirected and spontaneously playful behaviour.

1940-

- 1940** This excess-energy must be expended (without purpose) in some way, most usually in play-activity, called *ludic* activity.

L. E. Hinsie & J. Shatzky, *Psychiatric Dictionary* 323/2 ...

Summary

A borrowing from French.

Etymon: French *ludique*.

< French *ludique*, < Latin *ludēre* to play.



Historical/Cultural analysis example:

Peter Bruegel the Elder,
Children's Games,
1560



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Recognizable children's play: playing with dolls;
tug-of-war, riding hobby-horses; playing with tops



Other forms of play:
“hunting” (shooting an owl with a water pistol); exploring your body (urinating); investigating nature (playing with excrement);
“mumbly-peg” (knife games); rough-housing





Huizinga's ideas regarding "Play as ritual": mock wedding ceremonies and baptismal sacraments; mask play; liturgical play; mock processions

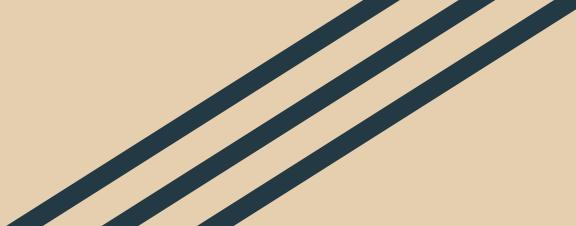




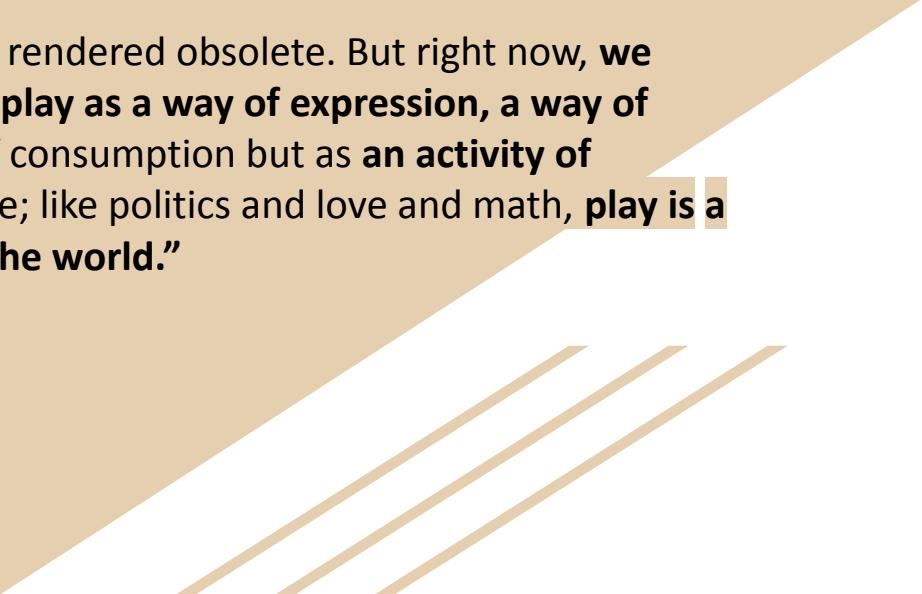
Miguel Sicart, “Play Is,” in *Play Matters*, 2014

Chapter 1 Part 1 Question:

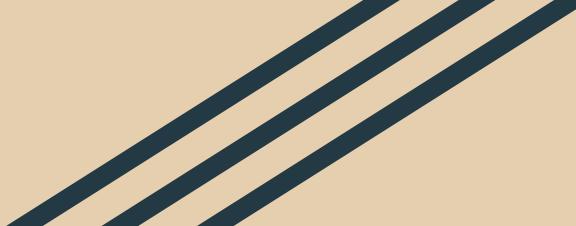
- What is PLAY?
 - How is Sicart’s definition different from Huizinga’s?
- 



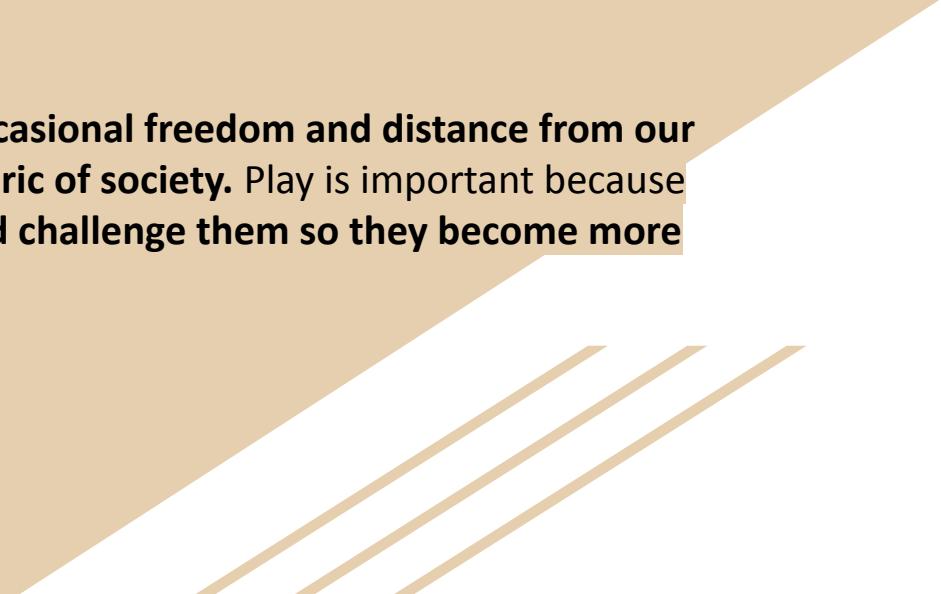
"I write this theory of play as a reaction to the instrumentalized, mechanistic thinking on play championed by postmodern culture industries. This is a theory that acts as a call to playful arms, an invocation of play as a struggle against efficiency, seriousness, and technical determinism.



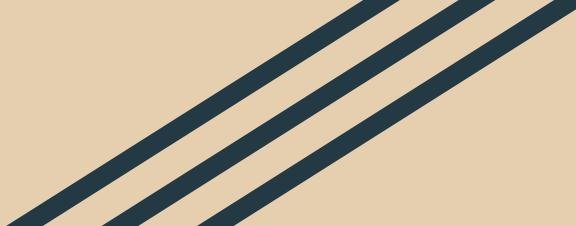
"If and when this era passes, my theory will be rendered obsolete. But right now, we need to think about play matters and reclaim play as a way of expression, a way of engaging with the world—not as an activity of consumption but as an activity of production. Like literature, art, song, and dance; like politics and love and math, play is a way of engaging and expressing our being in the world."



“In fact, play is a fundamental part of our moral well-being, of the healthy and mature and complete human life. Through play we experience the world, we construct it and we destroy it, and we explore who we are and what we can say. Play frees us from moral conventions but makes them still present, so we are aware of their weight, presence, and importance.



“We need play precisely because we need occasional freedom and distance from our conventional understanding of the moral fabric of society. Play is important because we need to see values and practice them and challenge them so they become more than mindless habits.”



"We play because we are human, and we need to understand what makes us human, not in an evolutionary or cognitive way but in a humanistic way. Play is the force that pulls us together. It is a way of explaining the world, others, and ourselves. **Play is expressing ourselves—who we want to be, or who we don't want to be. Play is what we do when we are human."**

(Sicart, 5-6)

