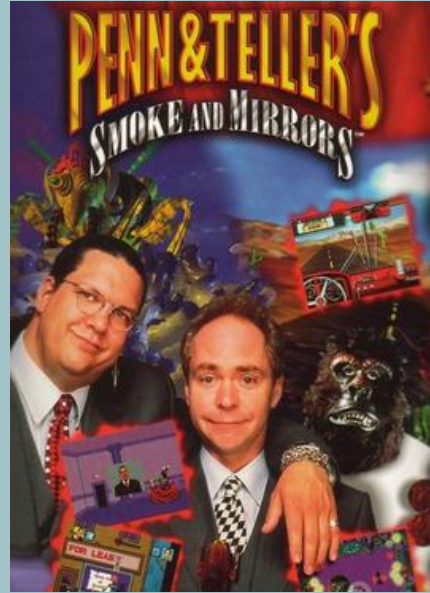



Intro to Game Studies:

- Different definitions of “play”
- Game Analysis
- “Ludology” vs “Narratology”




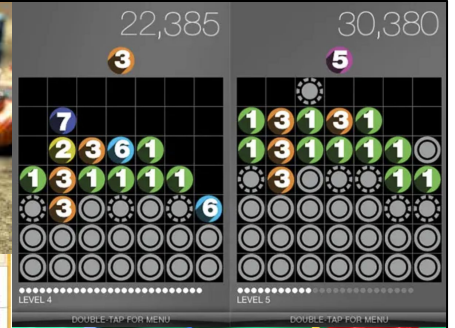
Penn & Teller's "Smoke and Mirrors," including the infamous "Desert Bus" minigame



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

Chapter 1 Part 2 Question continued:

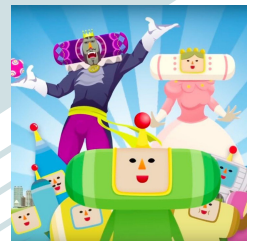
- What is PLAY?
 - What are Sicart’s 7 essential characteristics of play?
- 



“For a long time, my day has been structured around play. Lego bricks and toy cars precede my breakfast, as *Drop7* and *SpellTower* lull me to sleep; *Noby Noby Boy* helps me wait by the printer, and *Desert Bus* accompanies me in academic meetings. My life takes place in the time between play. This is perhaps the reason I believe that play articulates time—that a day, a week, a month, and a year are just arbitrary segments that we use to keep track of the times we play.” (6)



Noby Noby Boy, [Keita Takahashi](#), 2009



ANNALS OF TECHNOLOGY

DESERT BUS: THE VERY WORST VIDEO GAME EVER CREATED



By Simon Parkin

July 9, 2013



Morgan van Humbeck completed his shift in front of the television and passed out. Ten minutes later, his cell phone woke him. “Morgan, this is Teller,” said a small voice on the other end of the line. “Fuck off,” replied Morgan in disbelief. He hung up the phone and went back to sleep.



Penn & Teller's "Smoke and Mirrors," including the infamous "Desert Bus" minigame


Simon Parkin, "Desert Bus: The Very Worst Video Game Ever Created," New Yorker, 2013

	Horse ebooks @Horse_ebooks I m shy Retweeted by lauren Expand	13 Mar
	Horse ebooks @Horse_ebooks Thankfully, I realized Retweeted by lauren Expand	9 Jan
	Horse ebooks @Horse_ebooks In my experience, Retweeted by lauren Expand	22 Feb
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	Horse ebooks @Horse_ebooks our entire bodies have always been the most powerful form of visual expression. Expand	28 Aug
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@horse_ebooks Twitter account

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse_ebooks



Miguel Sicart, "Play Is," in
Play Matters, 2014

1. Play is contextual. (6)

1. Play is contextual. (6)

"...But context is more complicated; it's a messier network of people, rules, negotiations, locations, and objects. Play happens in a tangled world of people, things, spaces, and cultures." (6)




Basketball vs. Basketball (or: NBA vs. Pickup)

examples: think of how sports games change depending on the context. NBA vs a game of pick-up basketball in the park.

How do we know play is happening? Sicart mentions visual cues: uniforms, masks, etc.

Rules are only ONE aspect to the context of play. (8)



Miguel Sicart, "Play Is," in
Play Matters, 2014

1. Play is contextual. (6)
2. Play is carnivalesque. (11)


2. Play is carnivalesque. (11)

How is "carnavalesque" different from "fun"?

- play can be dangerous, have tension
- example: Grand Theft Auto, or B.U.T.T.O.N.



Grand Theft Auto V, Rockstar Games



Miguel Sicart, "Play Is," in
Play Matters, 2014

1. Play is contextual. (6)
2. Play is carnivalesque. (11)
3. Play is appropriative. (11)

3. Play is appropriative. (11)

Appropriative / Appropriation:

To take for oneself. Consider appropriation in art: Marcel Duchamp's *Readymades*, for example:

<https://www.moma.org/collection/terms/dada/marcel-duchamp-and-the-readymade>

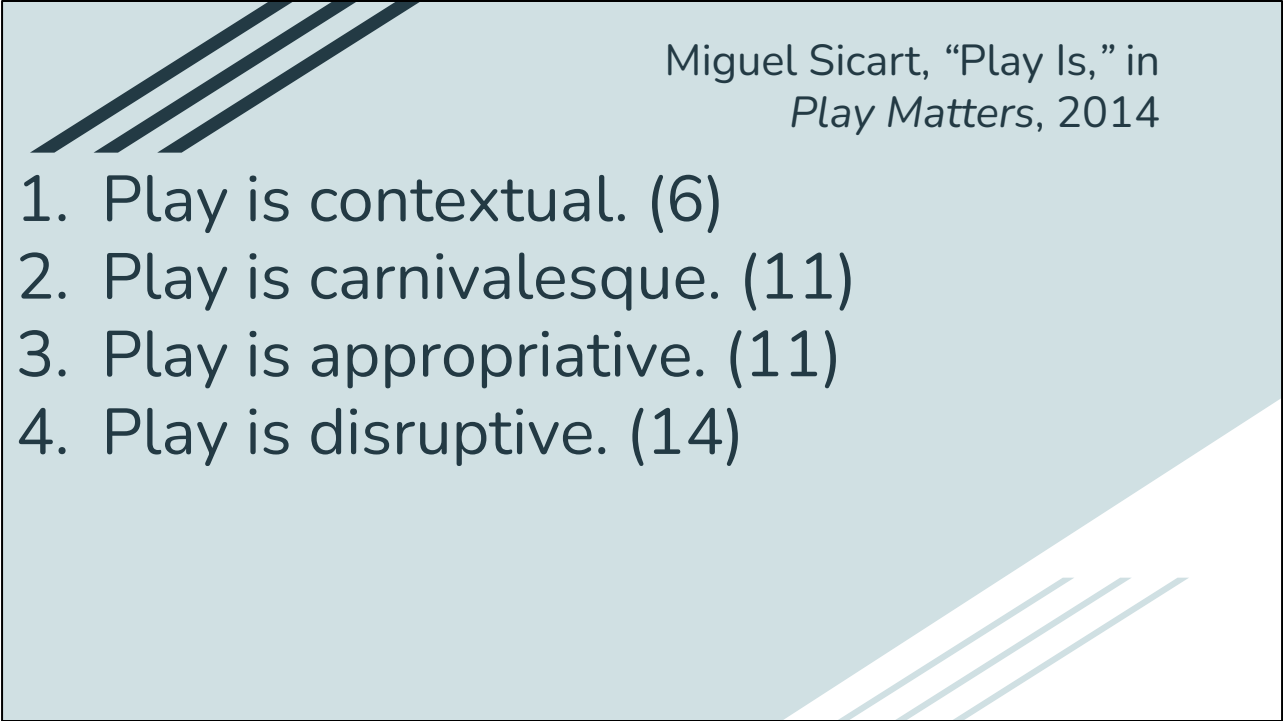
"Two physical games can serve as example: the game Ninja is often played in public spaces, from parking lots to the common areas of schools and dorms. The rules of Ninja are simple: players make a circle, staying at arm's length from each other. At the count of three, players make a ninja pose, palms extended. The goal of the game is to hit any other players' open palms, and only the palms. If you're hit, you have to leave the game. The game continues until only one player is left.

"The catch? It's a turn-based game, and only one swift move of attack and defense is allowed—no stopping, no flurry of gestures, just one move to attack or to defend in each turn. Ninja makes players take over a location, forming a circle that soon loses its form and spreads around the space, effectively conquering it. But Ninja also appropriates the space in a sociocultural way: what used to be a parking lot becomes a battlefield, reclaiming the ground for pleasure. And in the public space of a school or a workplace, Ninja can reclaim the importance of laughter to survive the long days of work and obligations. Ninja appropriates the spaces it takes place by means of its sprawling nature."





Johann Sebastian Joust, 2011



Miguel Sicart, "Play Is," in
Play Matters, 2014

1. Play is contextual. (6)
2. Play is carnivalesque. (11)
3. Play is appropriative. (11)
4. Play is disruptive. (14)

4. Play is disruptive. (14)

- How are all the earlier examples disruptive?

GERMANY GERMANY

Camover, The Anti-CCTV Protest Game To Take Down Surveillance Cameras

WORLD CRUNCH

January 28, 2013


DER SPIEGEL (Germany), **THE GUARDIAN** (U.K)

Worldcrunch

BERLIN - This is not your daddy's "video game."

Privacy activists in Berlin are protesting against surveillance video cameras by destroying and debilitating them, as part of a social game where you earn points for every CCTV taken down.

The Guardian spoke to the anonymous creator of the so-called "Camover" movement. "Although we call it a game, we are quite serious about it: our aim is to destroy as many cameras as possible and to have an influence on video surveillance in our cities. We thought it would motivate inactive people out there if we made a video-invitation to this reality-game."



Miguel Sicart, "Play Is," in
Play Matters, 2014

1. Play is contextual. (6)
2. Play is carnivalesque. (11)
3. Play is appropriative. (11)
4. Play is disruptive. (14)
5. Play is autotelic. (16)

5. Play is autotelic.

Autotelic = an activity with its own goals and purposes, with its own marked duration and spaces and its own conditions for ending

example: Vesper.5

autotelic (adj.):

Having a self-contained goal or purpose.

1864–

1864 There are, then, voluntary, involuntary, and spontaneous or reflex actions in the body; autocratic, automatic, and autotelic actions.

H. Doherty, *Organic Philosophy* vol. I. 125 ...

Formed within English, by compounding; modelled on a Greek lexical item.

Etymons: **auto-** *comb. form*¹, **telic** *adj.*

< **auto-** *comb. form*¹ + **telic** *adj.*, after **ancient Greek** *αὐτοτελής* ending in itself, complete in itself, perfect, self-sufficing.

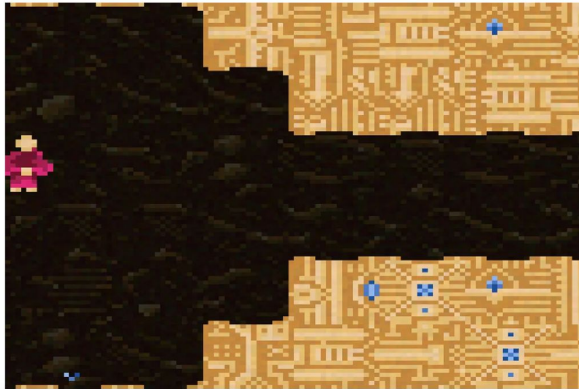
4. Play is autotelic.

Autotelic = an activity with its own goals and purposes, with its own marked duration and spaces and its own conditions for ending

example: Vesper.5

GAMING / PLAY THIS

Play this: 'VESPER.5' is a maddening exercise in patience



VESPER.5

/ VESPER.5 was created by Michael Brough for a ritual-themed Super Friendship Club contest and requires the player to spend at least 100 days playing in order to beat it.

By [Kimber Streams](#)

Via [Pippin Barr](#) | Source [Michael Brough \(Blogspot\)](#)


Aug 14, 2012, 1:52 PM CDT | [0 Comments](#)



Pippin Barr is responsible for the creation of quite a few wonderful games like Pongs and Epic Sax Game, but has also raised awareness about many other great independent titles. Barr's latest pick is VESPER.5, a game created by Michael Brough for a ritual-themed Super Friendship Club contest that requires the player to spend at least 100 days playing in order to beat it. While the game's premise is simple — explore the area and find the end — *VESPER.5* has a catch: you can only take one step each day. In Brough's original game concept, you'd be forced to return to the beginning if you missed a day, but thankfully he decided that would be "cruel," and scrapped the mechanic. *VESPER.5* is free and available now for download on both Mac and PC. If you start today, have the patience to play every day, and make no missteps, you can reach the end of the journey by late November.

Pippen Barr - indie gamemaker, writer, and artist: <https://pippinbarr.com/games/>

Michael Brough - videos, blogger, gamemaker: <https://www.smestorp.com/>



Miguel Sicart, "Play Is," in
Play Matters, 2014

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4. Play is disruptive. (14)
5. Play is autotelic. (16)
6. Play is creative. (17)

6. Play is creative.


- Think of how you develop tactics for a game—it's often spontaneous, it can be personal.

Rimworld, Tynan Sylvester (Ludeon Studios), 2018


Rimworld community mods (below)




How can playing a game be creative?



Miguel Sicart, "Play Is," in
Play Matters, 2014

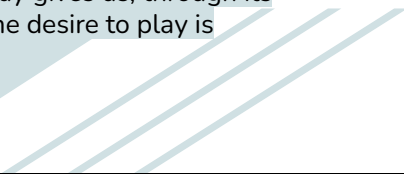
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 6. Play is creative. (17)
 7. Play is personal. (17)
- 




“Play is finding expression; it is letting us understand the world and, through that understanding, challenging the establishment, leading for knowledge, and creating new ties or breaking old ones. But ultimately whatever we do in play stays with us. Play is a singularly individual experience—shared, yes, but meaningful only in the way it scaffolds an individual experience of the world. Through play, we are in the world.

“Play is like language—a way of being in the world, of making sense of it. It takes place in a context as a balance between creation and destruction, between adherence to a structure and the pleasures of destruction. Playing is freedom.

“Play is being in the world, through objects, toward others. We play not to entertain ourselves or to learn or be alienated: we play to be, and play gives us, through its characteristics, the possibility of being. As Sartre put it, ‘The desire to play is fundamentally the desire to be.’” (18)





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

Chapter 2: THE PLAY-CONCEPT AS EXPRESSED IN LANGUAGE

- How does language affect how we think about/play games?
- 