Hans-Joachim Backe

Foundations of Play and Games

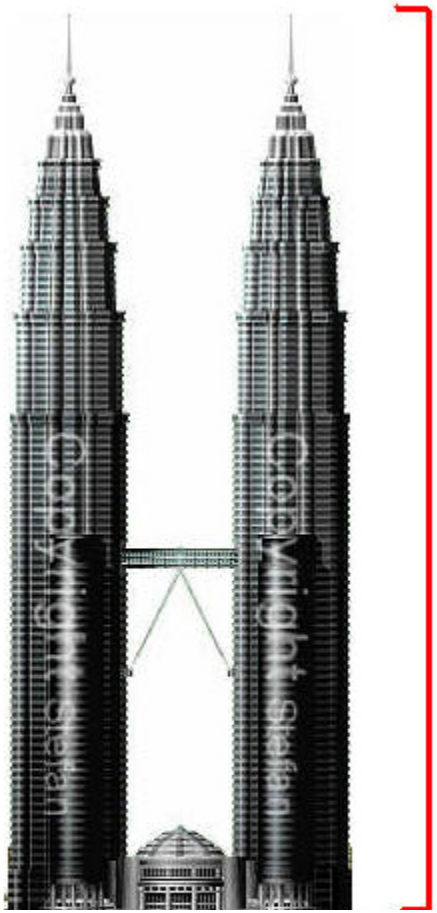
Introduction

August 25 2015

IT UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

The Why: Foundations for what exactly?

Foundations for Design



Structure
1483 ft (452m)

https://briscoesblog.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/structure22.jpg?w=435

Foundations for Research

… and just because

The Who: Who we are, and who you are

Teachers and TAs

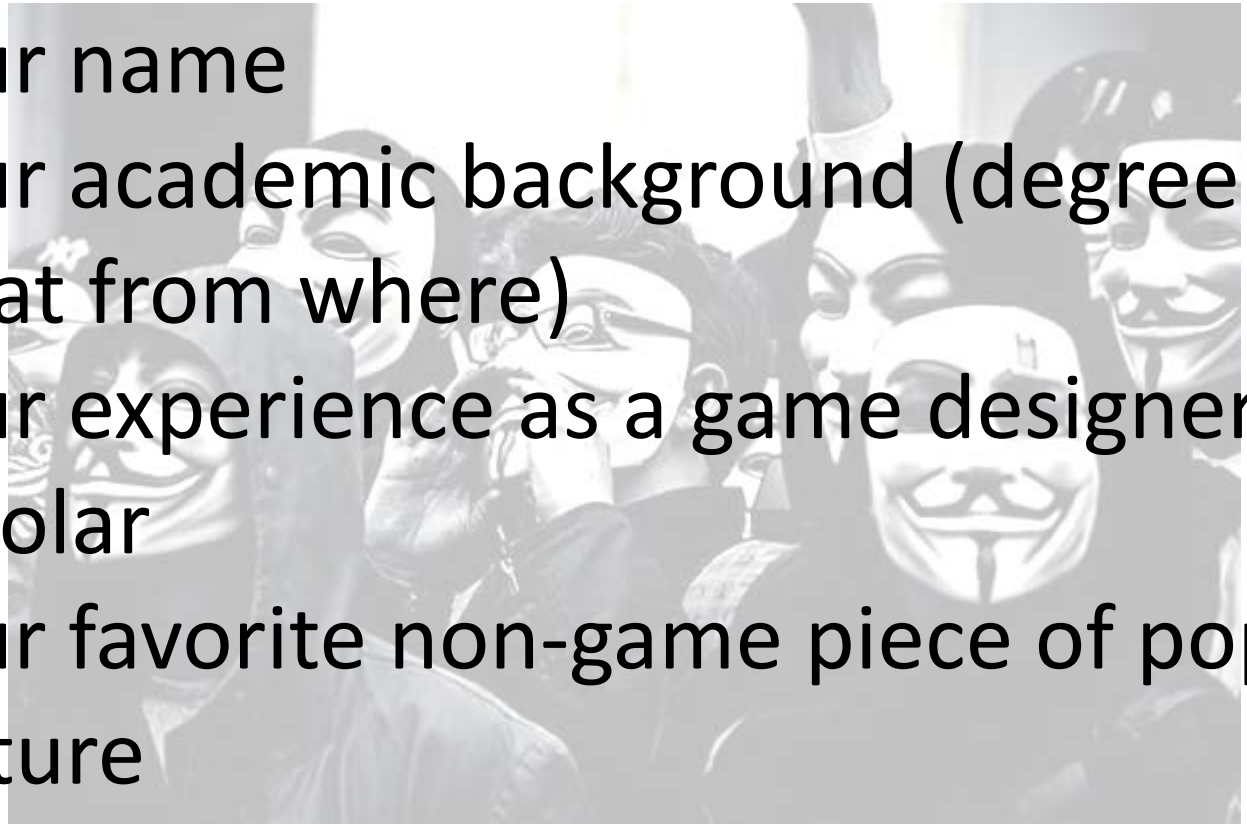
Course Responsible
Hajo Backe, hanj@itu.dk

Additional Teacher
Mike Debus, msde@itu.dk

Teaching Assistants
Miruna Vozaru, mivo@itu.dk
Paul Ziehmer, pazi@itu.dk

Don‘t try to be …

Tell us …



- your name
- your academic background (degree in what from where)
- your experience as a game designer or scholar
- your favorite non-game piece of popular culture

The When: Schedule and Deadlines

Times and Rooms

Tuesdays, 12h–14h: Lecture in Auditorium 4
Tuesdays, 14h–16h: Exercises in 2A52

Thursdays, 14h–16h: Lecture in Auditorium 4
Thursdays, 16h–18h: Exercises in 3A52

Schedule, part 1

Week 1
Tuesday August 30
Introduction and Definitions

Thursday September 1
Play Session

Week 2
Thursday September 6
Predigital Theories of Games

Tuesday September 8
Game Analysis Tools

Week 3
Tuesday September 13
Taxonomies and Typologies

Thursday September 15
Semiotics, Mechanics, Procedurality

Week 4
Tuesday September 20
Medium-Independent Narratology

Thursday September 22
Fiction and Games

Compulsory Assignment 1: DYI Typology (Monday, Sept. 26, 14 h; the date in the compendium is wrong)

Week 5
Tuesday September 27
Space

Thursday September 29
Time

PnP RPG Session

Schedule, part 2

Week 6
Tuesday October 4
Avatar, Character, and Agency

Thursday October 6
Representation/Culture Studies

Week 7
Tuesday October 11
Quest Theory

Thursday October 13
Research & Writing Primer

Week 8 (Oct. 17 – 21)
Fall Break – No classes

Compulsory Assignment 2: Narrative Analysis (Monday, Oct. 24, 14 h)

Week 9
Tuesday October 25
Transmedia and Crossmedia

Thursday October 27
Players and Fans

Week 10
Tuesday November 1
Games and Learning

Thursday November 3
Problem Gaming

Schedule, part 3

Week 11
Tuesday November 8
Casual Play

Thursday November 10
Ubiquitous Play

Week 12
Tuesday November 15
Platform Studies

Thursday November 17
Analog Games

Compulsory Assignment 3: Term-Paper Research Proposal (Monday, Nov 13, 14 h)

Week 13
Tuesday November 22
Audio and Interface Aesthetics

Thursday November 24
Ideologies of Play

Week 14/15
November 28 – December 9
Mandatory Supervision Sessions

Term Paper Deadline: Monday, Dec 19, 14 h

The What: Game Definitions

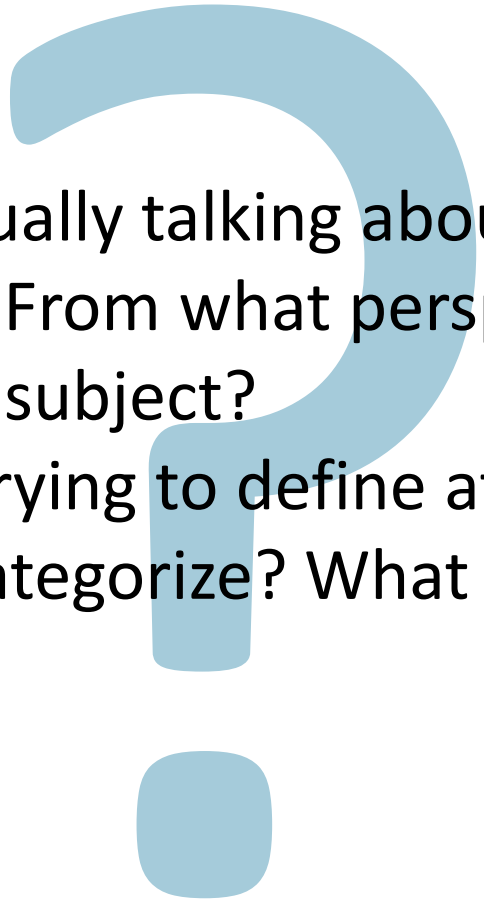
Huizinga, 1992 [1938]

Play is a free activity standing quite consciously outside ‘ordinary’ life as being ‘not serious’ but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings that tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress the difference from the common world by disguise or other means.

Meier, 2012

A game is a series of interesting choices/decisions.

No search for an answer, but for the right questions



- Are people actually talking about the same things?
- Who are they? From what perspective do they approach their subject?
- Why are they trying to define at all?
- How do they categorize? What is their context?

Avedon & Sutton-Smith, 1971

A game is an exercise of voluntary control systems in which there is an opposition between forces, confined by a procedure and rules in order to produce a disequilibrial outcome.

Suits, 1978

Playing a game is the voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles.

Kramer, 2000

Games are objects which consist of components and rules and have certain criteria: rules, a goal, always changing course; chance; competition; common experience; equality; freedom; activity; diving into the world of the game; and no impact on reality.

Costikyan, 2002

A game is a form of art in which participants, termed players, make decisions in order to manage resources through game tokens in the pursuit of a goal.

Salen/Zimmerman, 2003

A game is a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules, that results in a quantifiable outcome.

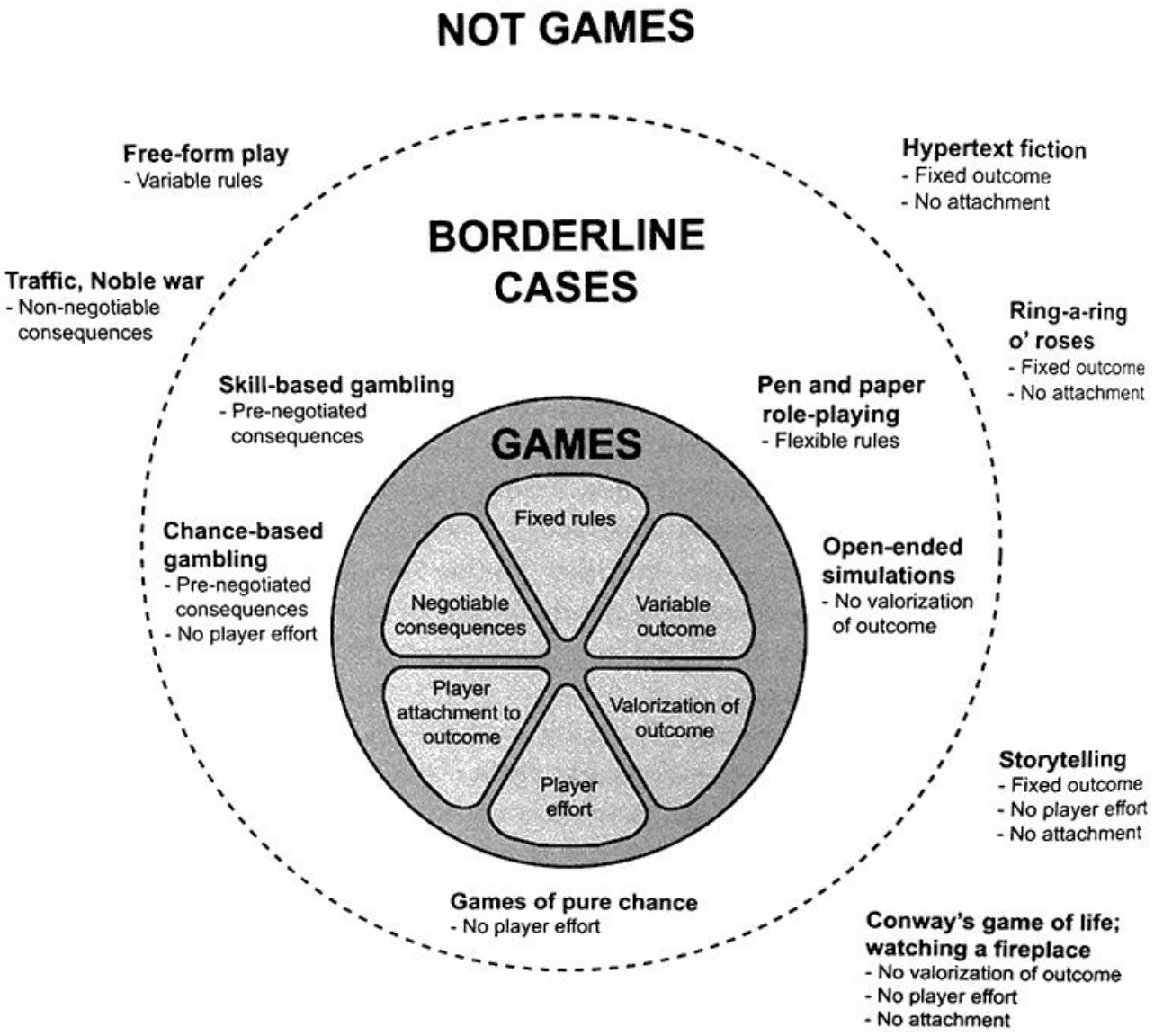
Anthropy, 2012

A game is an experience created by rules.

Juul, 2003

A game is a rule-based formal system with a variable and quantifiable outcome, where different outcomes are assigned different values, the player exerts effort in order to influence the outcome, the player feels attached to the outcome, and the consequences of the activity are optional and negotiable.

Juul's Classic Game Model



Brathwaite & Schreiber, 2008

A game is an activity with rules. It is a form of play often but not always involving conflict, either with other players, with the game system itself, or with randomness/fate/luck. Most games have goals, but not all (for example, *The Sims* and *SimCity*). Most games have defined start and end points, but not all (for example, *World of Warcraft* and *Dungeons & Dragons*). Most games involve decision making on the part of the players, but not all (for example, *Candy Land* and *Chutes and Ladders*).

Sources

- Anthropy, A. (2012). *Rise of the Videogame Zinesters: How Freaks, Normals, Amateurs, Artists, Dreamers, Drop-outs, Queers, Housewives, and People Like You Are Taking Back an Art Form.* New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Avedon, E. M. & Sutton-Smith, Brian (1979). *The Study of Games*. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing.
- Brathwaite, B., & Schreiber, I. (2008). *Challenges for Game Designers.* Boston, MA: Course Technology.
- Costikyan, G. (2002) I Have No Words & I Must Design: Toward a Critical Vocabulary for Games. In F. Mäyrä (Ed.), *Proceedings of Computer Games and Digital Cultures Conference*. Tampere: Tampere University Press.
- Huizinga, J. (1992). *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture.* Boston: Beacon Press.
- Kramer, W. (2000). What Is a Game? http://www.thegamesjournal.com/articles/WhatIsaGame.shtml
- Salen, K., & Zimmerman, E. (2004). *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals. Cambridge,* MA: MIT Press.
- Suits, B. (1978). *The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.