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CMS.608 / CMS.864 Game Design
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A bit of the history of the classification of Games

- Callois, French anthropologist, studied games and came up with classification systems
- Helpful to differentiating game activities with leads to good design
- **Agon** – conflict, competition, not necessarily against other players
- **Alea** – chance, random events
- **Mimicry** – imitation, storytelling, theatre games
- **Ilinx** – games of “vertigo”, eXtreme sports
- And perpendicular to these categories, an axis of Ludus <-> Paidia
- **Ludus** – rules you need to follow to win
- **Paidia** – unregulated manipulation of rules
 - “There’s a difference whether you shoot the prostitute after sex, or you have to shoot the prostitute after sex.”
- Examples:
 - Russian Roulette: Alea, Elinx
 - D&D: Mimicry, Agon, Alea
- Given context, even chess could be Alea. “grandmaster getting a divorce”
- Context affects everything ...like how anything can be turned into a drinking game.
- Like psyching out your opponent
 - Trash talking ...is that cheating? Or just playing in the bigger context?
- Historically, “railroad games” take into account the context of players (on a train) constantly coming and going at uncontrollable times.
- Psychology is a big part of how games are played.
- How many games of pure Alea are there?
 - Not that many. Not even the lottery. People pick in clusters, like dates, and it turns into a game of statistics.
- Games of pure chance aren’t really fun.
- What’s the appeal of Bingo?
 - Social “old people hanging out”
 - Simple
 - A bit of skill “alertness”
 - Suspense-and-release “yelling BINGO!”
 - Creating superstitions
- Humans are pattern recognizing machines.
- A lot of games hinge on that, whether or not it’s logical.
- What is the origin of games of chance?
- Soothsaying, fortunetelling, Oracle of Delphi, religion
 - Decision making, thanks to self-fulfilling prophesies and confirmation biases
- Tarot cards etc. separate the decision making from the religion – “privatizing” fortunetelling
- Fortunetelling is basically storytelling; a Tarot deck is a story generator
- Games of chance don’t leave decisions to the players
- Predispositions are key

- EXERCISE: Build a game on pure chance. See how fun it is.
 - It's actually pretty boring.
 - What little fun is there?
 - Sensory gratification
 - Personal investment
 - Suspense build-up
 - But all these games are broken.
 - Random is not fun.
- Beware of random! Random is all too easy in videogames.
- EXERCISE: Add some choice to your chance game.

- Final lesson: LESS RANDOM MORE GUNS!