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CMS.608 / CMS.864 Game Design
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Simulation and Abstraction

- what do you want to abstract in a game?
 - complex maneuvers – physical stunts
 - different characters
 - health
 - “world” – limits and characteristics
- what do you get for free?
 - say you’re playing a LARP
 - playspace
 - character movement, traits
 - physics
- complex metaphors can be made with visual representation
 - see the movement of the character in Passage
 - time becomes horizontal movement
- is there a game that abstracts celebration?
 - 52-card pick up!
 - probably a good representation, bad game
- every time you abstract something, you’re limiting the player’s understanding
- do simulations need to be numerical?
 - without abstraction, you don’t know what’s allowed in the game
 - abstractions define possibilities
 - allows you to skip over the boring stuff, or make the boring stuff more interesting, or make hard things easy
- abstractions also make certain things morally acceptable – destruction of cities, war
- things that should be simulated
 - conflict – economical, territorial, knowledge
- puzzle games are hard to fit in the simulation model
 - what is Bejeweled simulating/abstracting???
- what is the collection of mechanics that makes a system behave the way it does?
- some games can try to make you forget it’s a game...but that’s not really the point – not necessarily engaging
- Milgram experiment
 - was more about submitting to authority
 - real as simulated pain and punishment
- feasibility
 - what’s practical? What needs to be abstracted?
 - it’s just more practical to abstract
- Philip’s Theory on Game Design Concerns
 - separation
 - taking out the boring/awkward bits
 - information
 - having/lacking game knowledge
 - competition/conflict

- verisimilitude
 - immersion, the appearance of reality
- verisimilitude is completely at odds with separation