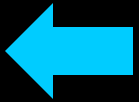
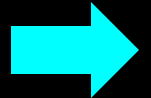


LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD



Limits of Conceptualism, Games as a "Medium"
Anthropy: The Problematic History of Videogames



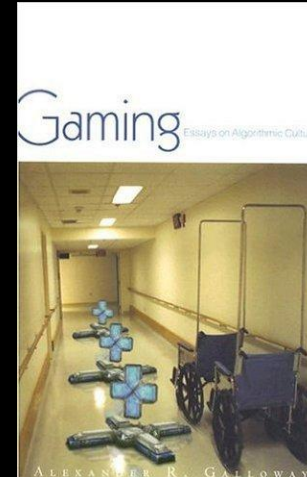
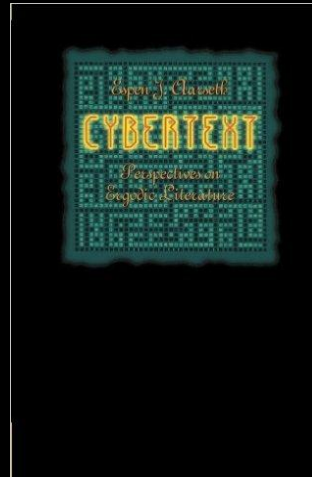
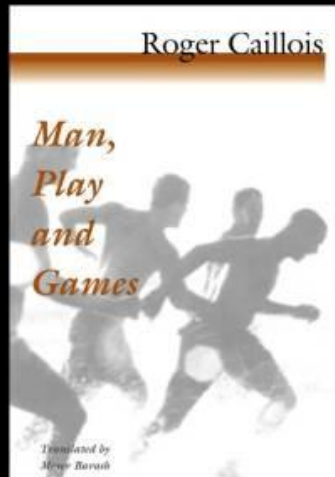
Rethinking "Gameplay" w/ *Dear Esther*
Electron Dance on Exploration

RETHINKING “GAMEPLAY,” 2

wherein we resist the lure of actionism

TOOLBOX: KEY TERMS & IDEAS, 2

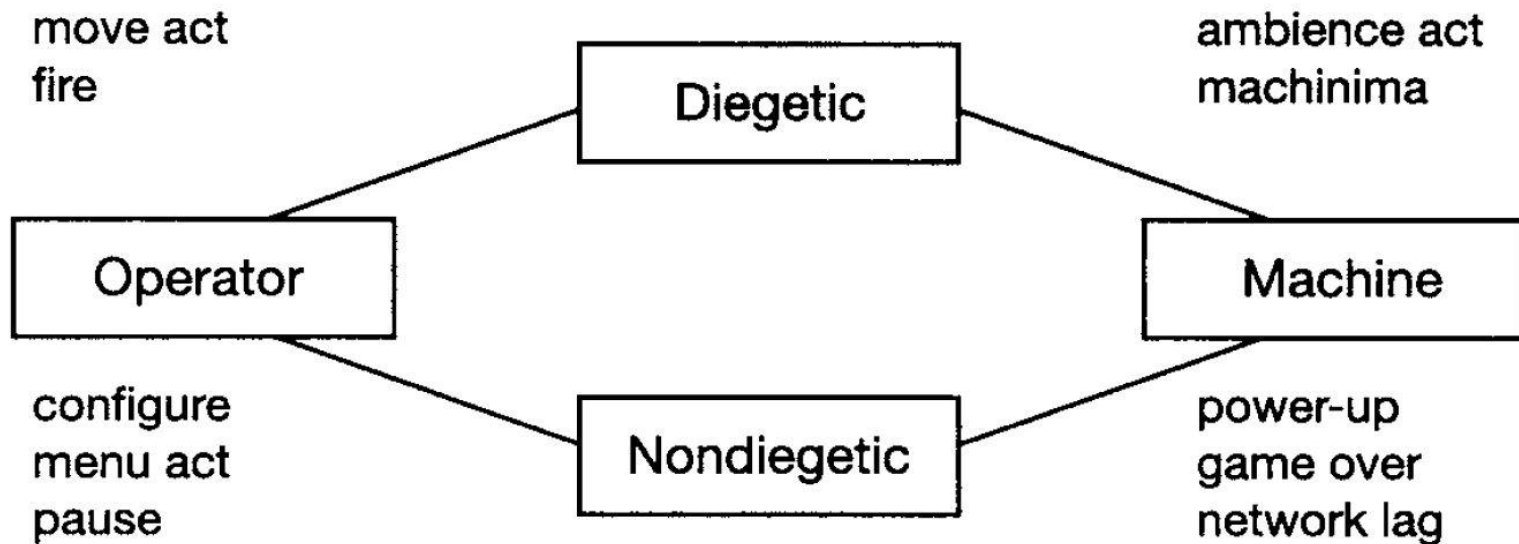
1. ~~RECAP: Paidia / Ludus~~ (Roger Caillois)
2. ~~Ergodics~~ (Espen Aarseth)
3. "Gamic Action" (Alexander Galloway)



TOOLBOX: KEY TERMS & IDEAS, 2.3A

Gamic Action, Four Moments

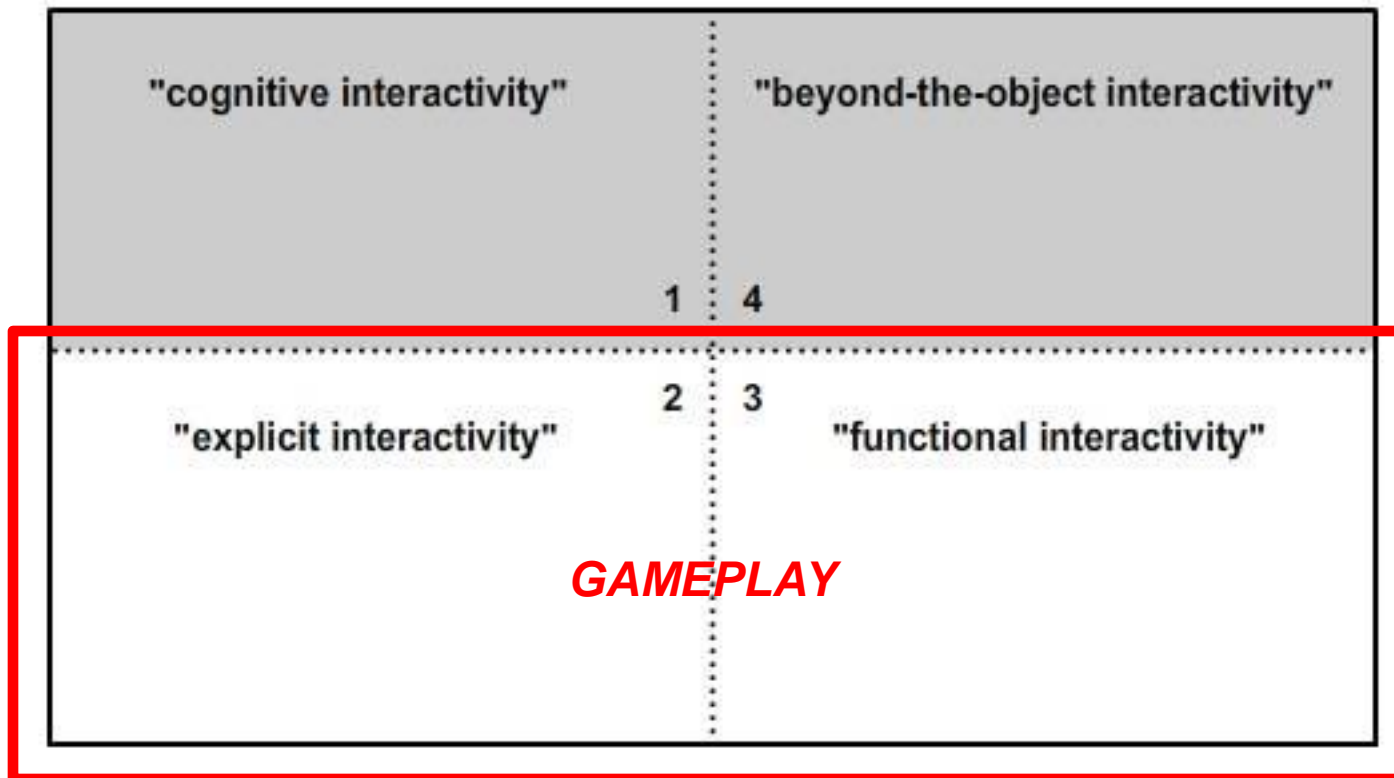
37



Galloway's "Gamic Action"

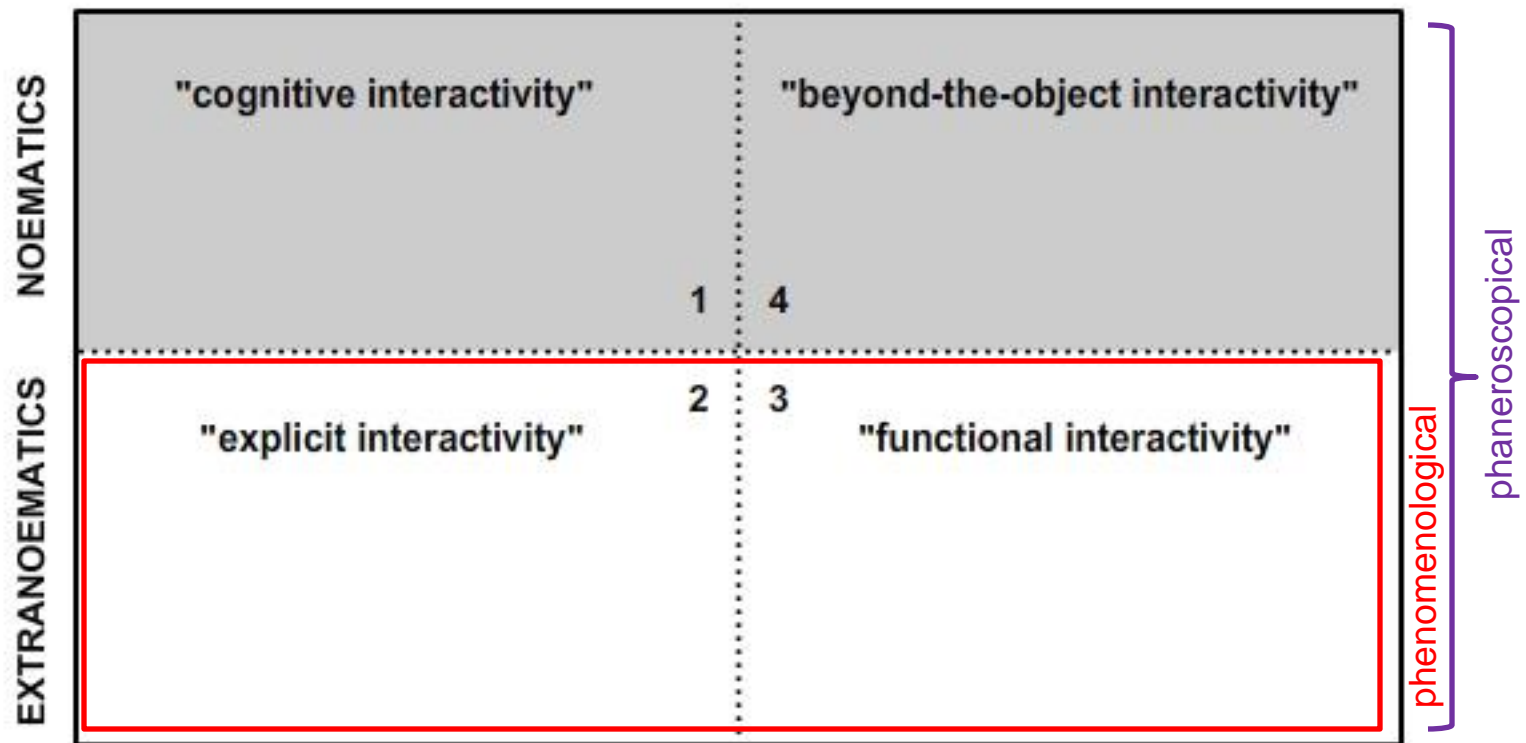
(2 Agents, 2 Semiotic Domains)

2.3B – “ACTIONISM”



A "PHANEROSCOPICAL" PERSPECTIVE

Multimodal View of Gameplay



adapted from Salen & Zimmerman, *Rules of Play* (2003), Ch.6 "A Multivalent Model of Interactivity"

DEAR ESTHER

A reading of the game as a “musement machine”

CO-INCIDENCE & CORRELATION

Dear Esther

A deserted island... a lost man... memories of a fatal crash... a book written by a dying explorer

The stones in my stomach will weigh me down and ensure my descent is true and straight. I will break through the fog of these godforsaken pills and achieve clarity. All my functions are clogged, all my veins are choked. If my leg doesn't rot off before I reach the summit, it will be a miracle. There are twenty-one connections in the circuit diagram of the anti-lock brakes, there are twenty-one species of gull inhabiting these islands, it is twenty-one miles between the Sandford junction and the turn off for home. All these things cannot, will not, be a co-incidence.

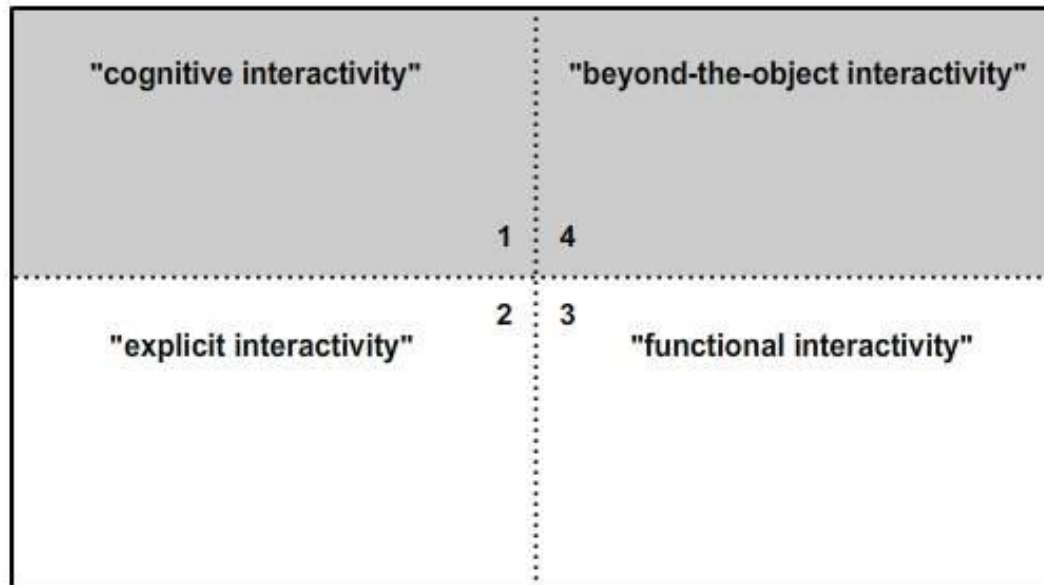
co·in·ci·dence

/kō'insədəns,-dens/ 

noun

1. a remarkable concurrence of events or circumstances without apparent causal connection.
"it's no coincidence that this new burst of innovation has occurred in the free nations"
synonyms: accident, chance, serendipity, fortuity, providence, happenstance, fate; a fluke
"too close to be mere coincidence"
2. correspondence in nature or in time of occurrence.
"the coincidence of interest between the mining companies and certain politicians"
synonyms: co-occurrence, coexistence, conjunction, simultaneity, contemporaneity, concomitance [More](#)

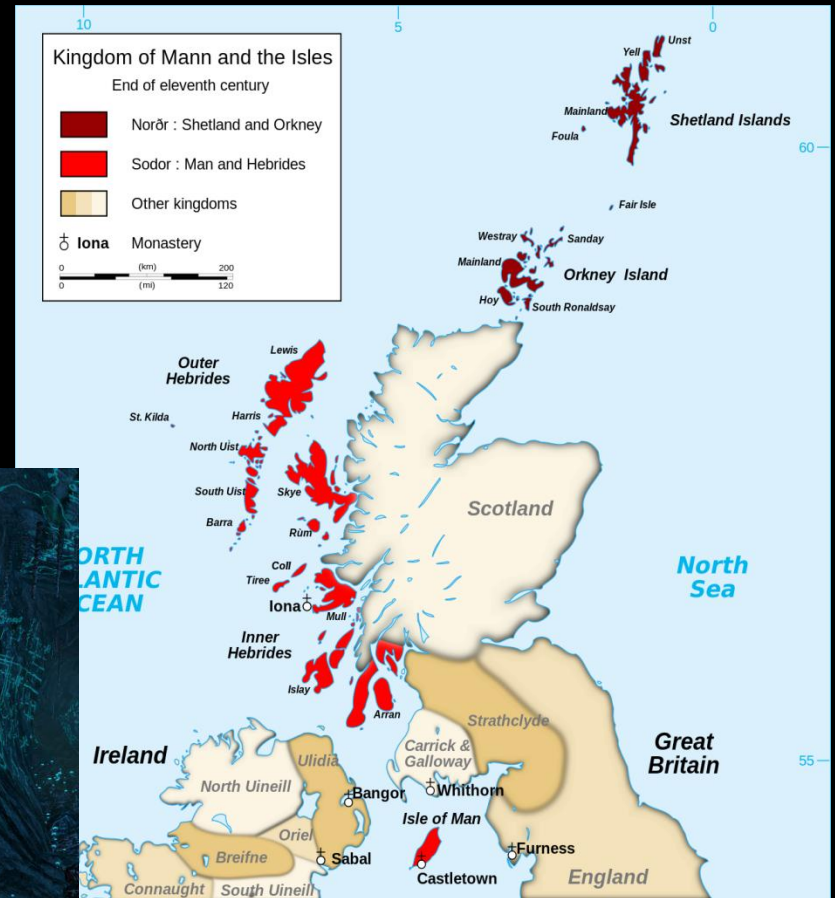
SUBVERTING ACTIONISM



How do the cognitive & beyond-the-object modes of interactivity contribute to our understanding?

SOME EXPRESSIVE ELEMENTS

1. Allusion: Damascus / **Damascene Conversion** of Saul of Tarsus (St. Paul)
2. History: Hebridean Islands
3. Chemical diagrams & Electrical maps



CHARACTERS / INFERRED PERSONS

1. The Narrator – (?)
2. Esther – addressee; victim of car accident (?)
3. Donnelly – an 18th century historian
4. Paul – a pharmaceutical salesman
5. Jakobson – a Scandanavian goat herder
6. The Hermit – a holy man

[Narrator / Esther / Paul] [Hermit / Donnelly / Jakobson]

DEAR ESTHER : MUSEMENT MACHINE

1. Amusement vs Musement
2. Educes the creative intelligence of the narrativising mind *by design*; the creativity of the player for meaning-making
3. Humanity: Reason, Cause / Trauma, Memory

The stones in my stomach will weigh me down and ensure my descent is true and straight. I will break through the fog of these godforsaken pills and achieve clarity. All my functions are clogged, all my veins are choked. If my leg doesn't rot off before I reach the summit, it will be a miracle. There are twenty-one connections in the circuit diagram of the anti-lock brakes, there are twenty-one species of gull inhabiting these islands, it is twenty-one miles between the Sandford junction and the turn off for home. All these things cannot, will not, be a co-incidence.

DEAR ESTHER : MUSEMENT MACHINE

The point here is *not* to argue that you ACTUALLY EXPERIENCE a state of musement by playing *Dear Esther*, but that the game facilitates this state *by design*.

1. This is an *argument*
2. To arrive at this claim you must first care to develop understanding of the game as an artwork, a designed thing
3. The *value* of this argument is not whether it explains everything or represents every gamers' experience (both impossible, pointless), but that others can FOLLOW YOUR THINKING and build on it reliably