Simulations of Interactions Through a Game Model

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April 5, 2004

Abstract

This work examines social interaction through a game model. Similar to how Erving Goffman's model of dramaturgical analysis views social interaction through a dramaturgical metaphor, the game model views social interaction through a game metaphor. The model is shown to be applicable to nearly all interactions and disciplines including literature, economics, music, and diplomacy. By bringing to light evidence of the game model in sources ranging from Peirce to pop culture, the model is useful in provoking new ideas and avenues of thinking and serves additionally as a tool for exploring many root metaphors and paradigms.

Contents

Introduction

This work is essentially a case example or study of shifting mental points of view. Dealing with situational complexities is dependent on what one conceives, experiences, and processes in a situation among the infinite range of possibilities. One's thinking metaphor, perspective, and paradigm acts as a filter of possibilities and influences resultant actions and ideas. The filtering effect not only works on conscious and deliberate thought, but effects and is affected by the body and the instinct[1]. Reactions of mind (both conscious and unconscious) and body are intimately intertwined with paradigm and perspective.

Symbolic representation is critical influence to thinking about and interacting with situations. As anything conceived has a set of significances and meanings in a perspective, understanding the interaction between the significance of objects and situations is paramount to understanding how an interaction unfolds. The

[1] "The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor" (*Bourdieu, 53).*

range of possibilities and meaning experienced by the mind and body must be accounted for when considering perspectives.

The game model is one metaphor from the infinite variety of all metaphors. It was chosen because it is able to capture a very large set of situations, the outcome does not have to carry any serious weight, and to keep the use of this model as refreshing and fun as games themselves. To my experience, more people working together to simulate interactions with this model makes the results better. Getting into the metaphor with others while shifting player perspectives seems to bring out the "gamer" in all those involved. Their experience, cunning, and skills come to the forefront in a fusion of observation and being in the game that is as fun as it is useful.

Chapter 1

The Model

1.1 Player

When individuals are asked "what is crucial to a game?", many common answers surface. Rules, where and how to begin, proper moves, effective play techniques, what opponents are to be faced, and what equipment is available for use are all frequently used answers to the question[1]. Other than belonging to a game, all of these facets of games have one common theme: they are all seen through the perspective of a player. Thinking about a game situation though the perspective of a player is important because of the focus implied[2].

A player-centric view is a way for one to think about a game situation with

[1] This information is based on personal conversations with both Earlham College and Ball State University students.

[2] As will be demonstrated later, this model abstracts away from point of view. In addition, point of view can be represented to the degree desired see the Participant Abstraction, Teamwork, and Context and Setting sections for further information.

a minimal amount of overhead spent trying to shift perspective and thinking too far outside the familiar. This is an effective way to conceptualize the game model with a minimal learning curve as it is a method of thinking of game situations in the realm of general knowledge. Put simply, when one participates in a game, one is very likely to be in the role of a player.

By being based around the player, other aspects of the model emerge. Conditions used to define the status of a game such as victory, defeat, and stalemate are uncovered. Typically the set of conditions that lead to a status desired by the player are considered goals[3]. The environment in which the game is to take place is referred to as the setting. Resources are displayed in the props, equipment, and anything a player can make use of while performing a game action.

When goals, setting, and resources are taking into account, the actions or moves a player can perform can be predicted in a simple and marginally successful way[4]. The depth and breadth of possible moves can be reduced to a more manageable set by considering the context and scale of the game[5]. Matters become further complicated through the addition of teams to the pool of what is to be considered.

Although complex, the model thus far only considers matter through the eyes of the player and as such leads to very little of interest due to the invariability of

[3]Goals surface strongly in chess through conditions for check, checkmate, and stalemate.

[4]This can be seen in the roles that game play announcers play. They are constantly predicting and "playing from the sidelines" while they comment on the ongoing game.

[5]A chess player would certainly perform different actions in a tournament match than he would in a tutoring game.

the situation[6]. The only variance is rooted in the improvisation of moves provided by the player which is limited by the static nature of the resources, setting, and goals. Power, dynamics, and intrigue is added to the model when additional types of participants are involved.

1.2 Opponent

Just as in competitive sports, multi-player video games, job hunting and armed conflict, the player faces opposition when working towards goals. Opponents are key to playing games in that most games the difficulty is determined by the skill of the opposing player[7] while the difficulty of the game has influence on the actions of a player[8].

An opponent is defined in relation to the player. A participant whose actions required to obtain goals conflict with actions or goals of the player is considered an opponent. It should be noted that the relationship between player and opponent need not be binary. Often they both share the same set of goals along with respectively identical conditions from the outset of the game [9].

[6]When solitaire is considered, there are very few decisions one can make if the standard goal is implied. The pursuit of victory becomes very mechanical.

[7]This can be seen in various games that consist of one player and an opponent. The game of Go, for example, has a difficulty that is directly proportional to the ratio of skill levels between the player and the opponent.

[8]A case of difficulty determining actions is seen in the game of Starcraft when an out-matched player will resort to desperate tactics such as attacking with resource gatherers.

[9]In Track and Field competitions, all runners in a specific race start at the same time and have equal distances to cover. Shot-put and discus competitors have the same weight and size of shot-put or discus to throw. This equality seems to add a notion of fair competition.

Expanding the usefulness of the model through opposition of participants is powerful in that it opens up new avenues of thinking and gives new interactions to be considered. The situation can be further fleshed out by switching perspectives. If the opponent is seen as the player and the player is seen as the opponent, previously unexplored possibilities of moves, counter moves, and exchanges may be revealed. This method can be seen by the player as "putting oneself in another's shoes."

1.3 Goals

The goals that players work toward obtaining are crucial to the unfolding of the game situation. Along with defining conditions for victory (and conditions for defeat to a lesser extent), goals are an expression of the player's desires within the game. They are constructed by the rules, context, setting, and other players present but are not solely influenced by these factors[10]. In the context of the game model, goals are defined as conditions by which the player considers the situation successful.

The conditions defined by players are often congruent with the stipulations by which the rules of the game describe victory. However, in many cases goals are

[10]Random goals can be seen in a wide variety of games and seem to be based on virtually nothing. A school colleague and I created a random tactic generator using terms found in the Real-Time Strategy realm that can be applied to a more general case. We have put this generator in the public realm and was in broad use among our peers. Baseless strategy is also seen in both beginning and expert players. The former has baseless goals due to due to ignorance while the latter uses random goals for surprising tactics, a tool for finding new strategies, or just to spice up the game experience.

laid on a more complex foundation. Found often in real world scenarios such as corporate competition, success is defined by many factors other than rules. These other factors affect the scale of the conditions. For example, a poor company may enter a business venture and will define success by how much money the endeavor generates while a more wealthy company may judge success through prestige, market saturation, and publicity. The amount of capital gained may even be negative, but the other conditions may define the situation as successful[11].

1.4 Setting

The environment in which the game is set is of large importance. Attributes of the environment in which the game is taking place affects the game itself. Examples of these attributes are terrain, time of day, free resources, and the audience. As it applies to the game model, the setting is a combination of parts of the context and the environment of the instance of the game.

In order to gain a clearer understanding of the setting, one would benefit from learning how the setting and the context differ from one another. The reason for differentiating between context and setting is setting is a subset of context. They both contain location, time, number of players, available resources, ...etc. The context contains less information about game mechanics than the setting.

[11]The console system know as the X-box is sold by Microsoft who loses approximately $150 per unit sold. Although capital is lost, the X-box is considered a great sauces due to how deeply it penetrated a market new to the corporation (Koops)

Examples of things in the context and not in the setting would be player stylism, cultural ramifications and implications, ethical restrictions on game play[12], and how various outcomes will affect those involved during and after the game. These aspects of the context hold a powerful and profound impact on the rules of the game and what actions the players will choose to employ regardless of the rest of the game model.

Aside from the attributes that are not in the setting and in the context, the setting alone is integral to the game model. The starting conditions is one particular function of the setting that describes the initial properties of the game. As is mentioned in the resource section, starting conditions are not always equally advantageous to all players and helps define the early actions of the game[13]. The starting conditions give the players an idea of their chances for success.

Actions past early game can be heavily impacted by the setting. The terrain in which the game takes place is part of the setting with a large impact on how players decide what actions to employ[14]. The effectiveness of certain actions can be limited or amplified by the setting. Conditions of the setting may favor aggressive techniques over passive ones, for example. Players that are good at a

[12]The concept of honor is an example of an ideal found in many cultures that influences the way in which a player plays the game without being part of the setting. If a player is bound to be honorable, that player cannot perform certain actions that would increase the chances of success (e.g. cheating).

[13]Handicaps and unequal resource distribution are examples of starting conditions that shape the tone of the actions players take early in the game.

[14]The childhood game of “hide and seek” show how terrain can affect the actions of the players. Dark and obstacle laden terrain helps obscure those hiding and helps promote hiding actions in the players. If the terrain is well lit and open, the seeking aspect of the game is more prevalent as the game quickly turns into bouts of mad dashes away from the seeker.

game are generally experienced in how the setting will affect their actions and chances of success[15].

Although largely the same, context and scale have important differences. In this model, scale is the scope of the context and can be thought of as the degree of resolution. If the context is a certain game, the scope may be a set of games or a portion of game. Changing the scope of the model changes the players plans to achieve goals[16].

1.5 Resources

Resources are anything a player can use in a game and can range from money invested in the New York Stock Exchange, to the pool of available moves in checkers, to time[17]. Being both existing in and important to all games, resources are important because they are crucial to all other aspects of the model. The attainability of goals are set by resources. For example, the relative amount of resources one has when compared to the opposition limits what actions have the best chances of realizing the goal.

[15] Musicians in competitive marching bands know how to react to various settings. If the weather consisted of rain earlier in the day, the musicians know that extra caution when marching has to be taken to keep the set formations proper. Similarly, if performing in a building, a good marching band will know how to listen to and adjust their individual performances in regards to the ambient acoustics.

[16] Consider the coach of a basketball team as the player. If the scope of the game is to win a single game, pushing the best players to play as hard as they can may be feasible because they only need to be used once. If the scope changes to a tournament or a season, pacing the use of the best players and allowing the players on the bench some play time to improve their ability may be the better decision for the coach to make for the team to meet long term goals.

[17] Time is a crucial element to success in real time strategy games (SpaceDominator).

Just as resources have a critical influence on a game, they are also heavily dependent on other factors. The starting conditions of any game allocates an amount of resources to the participants. Resource limitations are typified by finite caps to some entity or action related to the game (like the number of cards dealt or the amount of Monopoly money distributed at the beginning of the game). The application of starting conditions to real world conditions complicate the concept. Resources are often distributed unequally in comparison to the total equality found in traditional game starting conditions[18].

Resources are focused and diffused by the setting. As starting conditions are part of the game setting, the setting naturally plays a large role in how resources are obtained and used. Properties of the setting are the layout of available resources and how useful each resource will be[19]. The quantity of a resource available in the setting determines how much value or emphasis is placed on the resource. When multiple resources are included in the setting, the scheme is enriched in that resources become tagged with "relational worth"[20].

Akin to the ideals of capitalism, resources take on aspects of capital as the

[18] In games such as basketball, football, and hockey, teams start with the same score and the same amount of players on the field. In comparison, competing for a job against other applicants has the potential for a wildly skewed resource distribution profile as applicants can have arbitrarily much education and job experience. The difference in job obtaining resources among applicants is very unequal.

[19] The resource of water is much more valuable in a game that takes place in a desert setting than water in the same game that takes place in a setting that includes an easily accessible well of fresh water

[20] The relational worth of a resource is often determined by a combination of degrees of usefulness and rarity. Usefulness and rarity increase the value of a resource while uselessness and over abundance decrease the value.

complexity of the game increases. The phrase "you've got to spend money to make money" holds true with resources. One must wisely deploy resources to ensure continued access to further resources[21]. When the setting permits, some resources become exchangeable for other resources. In some cases when a resources is globally valuable to all players in the game, the resource develops into currency[22]. Such currency has many qualities of real currency in that it is subject to inflation and counterfeiting[23]. Resources are also subject to consumerism as some players take the role of merchant and try to barter resources with other players to gain resources advantage (or turn a profit). Some situations result in complex economies developing to satiate the players' wants for resources. When a team aspect is considered with the game capital, players can union together and create groups that show aspects of businesses or corporations.

1.6 Attributes

By representing what participants perceive in the various game conditions, attributes tie in the crucial notion of what meanings and values are present in the players' minds. Without expressing internal representations, this model would be little more than an algorithm or plotted data. The addition of attributes opens

[21]The spending of resources to obtain further resources can be seen clearly in economy. A factory or office may be expensive to build, but will turn a profit over time.

[22]The Stone of Jordan developed as a currency in the Diablo II community as a result of being a high-profile and universally preferred item in exchanges ("Item Auction").

[23]As a result of the Stone of Jordan's currency status, many individuals began to develop ways of counterfeiting. The outbreak of counterfeiting effected the economy in a potent way and caused massive inflation.

up a level past mere objective perspective and begins to account for factors such as player history and experience. With such considerations, the model's power and depth are increased considerably.

In what is described in a physical sense, attributes and the setting overlap in domain. Put simply, attributes are the recognition of physical setting the mind of the participants. The physical environment described in the setting is imperfectly mirrored in attributes. Due to the distortion of perspective, objects in reality are likely to have skewed significance to a game participant. As seen in a game context, the distortion of attributes is often labeled as misinformation, lack of knowledge, and/or lack of experience when compared to the common, developed metaphor surrounding a game[24].

Consider a common game situation that involves the exploitation of terrain in battle. A player, who had previously been trounced by an opponent because the battle was fought with the opponent having the advantage of higher ground, loses the game. In successive games, the same player is apprehensive when fighting around high ground and avoids doing so which affects the tempo and events of the game. It would be almost impossible to predict the player's apprehension of high ground without taking his game history into account. In this case, high

[24]Final Fantasy XI was released in Japan fourteen months before the worldwide debut of the game. The strategies, interactions, and knowledge base developed by the Japanese players during the time gap between the two releases was canonized by virtue of the advantage gained through game capital and expertise over the new players. As the new players mingle with each other and the existing players, the create their own play styles. If a player develops a style that is not in accordance with the lauded Japanese techniques, the player is denounced as a "noob" (a derogatory term for a new player) and the new style is declared "noobish".

ground terrain has the attribute of making the player apprehensive.

1.7 Connections and Actions

As the interactions between elements and attributes, connections and actions are the play that happens among the entities of the game model. They describe actions that could take place with a certain set or subset of the entities in the game model. This is where all the factors of the game model come into play. All other entities in the model converge to create a set of actions from which a player is likely to chose. The closer the perspective metaphor is to matching the metaphor of the modeller, the more useful the results will be.

Actions add a sense of temporality to the model. When considering a set of decisions a participant may choose, one must take into account the current state of the model while taking care to include the actions of other participants and the impact of those actions on all entities of the model. An interesting array of interactions arises when a participant acquires information pertaining to the actions of other participants. Such information may have a bearing on the actions a participant will employ. This is further compounded when information is thought of as reconnaissance. By controlling information and misinformation, participants can shape each others' perceptions in an attempt to sway the game actions chosen. This can be seen as exploiting the experience of other players by sending information that leads to a conclusion normally encountered in the experience of the player to be tricked. Through relying on standard reactions forged by experience, a clever player is able to perform actions to which the duped player is oblivious[25].

1.8 Teams

Teams of players are alliances of participants who are aligned through similar goals, rules, or larger context. The complexity of the game model is additionally increased by the the concept of teams in several ways. Team formation, team dynamics, synergy of the actions of team members, and member locality are all factors adding dynamism to the model.

As teams grow in size, they are likely to form player hierarchies. As coordination among members becomes muddled do to the complexities of team strategy, leaders are often chosen (or develop) from the team members. Leaders serve the function of abstracting away from the details of every individual action in order to observe the game in a larger scope. Some contexts and sets of rules allow for teams large enough that additional levels of abstraction and leadership are required[26]. Extreme cases (such as governmental institutions) require many lay-

[25] The Hallucination ability of the High Templar unit in Starcraft creates illusionary units that look real to hostile players. Illusions of a particular unit in a force will skew the unit balance perceived by hostile players. This can have a significant effect on other players' actions such as causing them to avoid the army augmented by illusionary units or to create a counter force specifically designed to combat the force with illusionary units (they take the illusionary bluff as if the illusionary units were real). If done well, the illusionary units will demand a counter that is weak against the mix of non-illusionary units causing the game to swing in favor of the controller of the illusions (Raptor).

[26] An example of an additional layer of hierarchy is found in Final Fantasy XI. The basic

ers of leadership and extraction. In these cases, acquiring leadership positions becomes a strategy and game in itself.

In many game situations, the efficacy of players' actions are increased just as the number of feasible actions are increased. This aspect of synergy can make both actions concentrated on one goal or several different goals either more or less likely to achieve those goals. Depending on the specific game and its circumstances, concentrated effort may be overkill or may drastically reduce the efficiency of the team. In a different set a circumstances, the same strategy may have a beneficial effect on the team's actions[27].

team unit is a party of six characters. When six characters are inadequate, three teams can form an alliance of up to 18 total players. Each party has a leader and often a leader for the alliance is chosen.

[27]A well-known battle tactic used to increase the efficiency of a confrontation in Warcraft III is to "focus-fire". As the name suggests, all actions are focused on one goal (in this case having all units focus their attacks on one enemy unit) in order to diminish the opposing player's resources as quickly as possible.

Chapter 2

Supportive Ideas in Social Science

As this method of exploring interactions was inspired by a union of the work of many social scientists and a plethora of everyday interactions, similar ideas and supportive discourse are available in many forms from many different sources. Since the model is a metaphor for understanding and conjecturing about social interaction, there is very little in social science that is not applicable to the game model. This powerful metaphor can (and is intended) to be a cognitive key used to unlock avenues of thought of both general and specific natures[1]. By using other metaphors and ideas as tools to unlock the potential of the game model,

[1] "But once one has the keys of the root metaphors and their categories in his pocket he is . . . able to unlock the doors of . . . cognitive closets. Some closets may be hard to open. It is not always clear how many locks they have, or in what sequence the keys must be used . . . And if one carries about with him they keys . . . he will be able to get into any of the other closets built to date" (Pepper 149).

a set of ideas from social scientists have contributed greatly to the generality, applicability, and usability of the game model. Three such social scientists are C.S. Peirce, Erving Goffman, and Pierre Bourdieu.

2.1 Peirce

The tumultuous and independent C.S. Peirce was an heir to large amounts of intellectual and academic capital. His status enabled him to regularly meet and have discourse with the leading figures of many disciplines. This allowed Peirce to develop ideas of a fundamental and interdisciplinary nature. Among his many theories across many disciplines, his theory semiotics are very beneficial when considered with the game model[2].

When all things are considered to be composed of signs (to the extent that Peirce believes the universe quite possibly is made of signs)[3], play happens in the sign structure and is mirrored through the actions in the game model. The relationships between the signified, the signifier, and the interpretant in each separate instance of the triadic sign leaves room for such play. In a universe built with and on signs, the history of sign formation and modification has a great influence on signs to be created (just as the experiences of and significances

[2] Corrington, 1-24

[3] "It seems a strange thing, when one comes to ponder over it, that a sign should leave its interpreter to supply a part of its meaning; but the explanation of the phenomenon lies in the fact that the entire universe - not merely the universe of existents, but all that wider universe, embracing the universe of existents as a part, the universe which we are all accustomed to refer to as 'the truth' - that all this universe is perfused with signs, if it is not composed exclusively of signs. [CP 5.44n]" (Corrington, 56)

to participants influences their actions). The significance of the signified object depends on the semiotic history of the interpretant; "any given sign will be an interpretation of a previous sign"[4]. The variability of interpretation of signs in the form of all game entities is the play the game model thrives on.

Peirce's notion of time is modal in that the past present and future all have different modes of operation but keep synechism[5]. Being closed and immutable, the past inerringly acts on the present making its determined presence known. This is analogous to the effect of player history and context on game actions. Operating with only the constraint of what the present could possibly make it, the future is as free and open as the range of actions a player may choose to employ. The present is the struggle to constitute a future (or to infer a future intuition from past intuition) from the foundation of the past and is similar to how players struggle to constitute game actions. The urgency to create a favorable future outcome from the limits of the past through practice in the present[6] is crucial to actions in the game model. This expresses the fundamental motivation for participants to play the game and achieve their goals.

Scale, resolution, and context are conceptually linked to the concepts of orders and sign regression. In the spirit of recursive algorithms, the order n is made from order $n-1$. The integration of regressed signs continues until the base case or

[4] Corrington, 82

[5] "The term 'synechism' denotes the connectedness or continuity between and among elements in the world" (Corrington 51).

[6] Corrington, 57-8

first order sign is reached. This regression is present in the game model as an individual game can be the base case and the the sign and regress to portions of the game, team decisions, or even to each action. Resolution works in this manner and ties in another of Peirce's ideas: infinite sign regression. There is no limit to the resolution one can use in the game model just as infinite recursion occurs when there is no base case. Just as a sign can be made from a sign which, in turn, can be made from a sign, resolution can integrate and derive infinitely.

2.2 Goffman

Erving Goffman's work is of large importance to the game model. From the insights gained from socially constituted selves to "Strategic Interaction," the game model is strengthened greatly by his unique and varied theories. Evidence that a strong and usable paradigm could be garnered from games came in the form of results from the research of of Real-Time Strategy (RTS) games through the theories and ideas learned from study of Goffman. As correlations, similarities, and parallels were drawn between RTS games and dramaturgical analysis, the shape of a model of interaction based on game began to take a shape that was broadly similar to Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor.

Many of the metaphors used by Goffman have direct pseudonyms in the game realm Actors are abstracted players who perform actions according to the roles they are playing[7]. Both metaphors have a setting aspect that describes the environment. Props are resources and their presence influences the performer's actions. Actions are similar to facets of an actors performance[8]. Games may not have an audience or other participants, but the need to play is still present like the self-distanced actor[9].

The bulk of the differences between the two metaphors lie in the difference of how elements are partitioned and conceptualized. The concept of goals is very prominent in the game model and is it vital to understand the goals of the participants in order to model their interactions. Dramaturgical analysis can be goal-oriented[10], but is much less reliant on goals than the game model (to which goals are essential). This reliance puts the model's conscious and deliberate attitude toward interaction on display in order to bring to light aspects of the case being studied that would be easily over-looked[11]. The urgency to act, perform

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[7]The line between player and actor is blurred to a large extent in MMORPGs (Massively Multi Player Online Role Playing Games). Those who play MMORPGS are immersed in a fantasy world in which they have to both play the game in defeating evils and monsters along with role playing by interacting with the denizens and other players of the world. Subcultures emerge from players know as guilds and clans. These player organizations develop their own power structures, themes, codes of conduct, rules for playing in the organization's style, and provide support for other organization members. They add another level of commitment and involvement to the player's experience with the game which serves to engage the player not only on a game level, but on a personal level that involves continued relationships that lead to a sense of attachment to the organization.

[8]Much like an actor decides how to perform while improvising, a player decides on what actions to take based on the given situation.

[9]The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, 81-2

[10]In Goffman's definition of "performance team", there is an implicit goal to which the team cooperating to achieve through a single routine (The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, 79).

[11]This is especially true when actions in a particular situation have been ritualized. An example can be seen in instrumental musicians. Many instrumentalists have practiced methods of preparing to play (or warming up) and use those methods every time before playing even though they were first learned when the musician was a novice. The warm ups are played because they are ritual and not because they have a specific and practical purpose.

rituals, and play a game are one in the same.

The largest and most important difference between the two metaphors is the game model's notion of resources. This expanded influence was intended to ensure the game model would be potent but still have the feel of a game. If more importance were placed on goals, the model could become a "climbing-the-corporate-ladder" model or a war model. The light-heartedness of games is to be used as a way to keep experimentation alive. When the consequences are not dire, why not experiment to find something new and interesting?

2.3 Bourdieu

As "a persistent inventor of rare methods" and someone who "thinks of Goffman as a kin of sorts,"[12] Pierre Bourdieu is an interesting social scientist. Bourdieu's book, *The Logic of Practice*, contains many ideas that coincide with the game model. Among these are his critique of objectivity and subjectivity. Scientific models and simulations are generally mechanistic and objective. Rarely is there any notion of play past the strict and conscious variation allowed by the simulation's structure. Studying and mapping human systems using a similarly objective approach fails to genuinely comprehend what is being studied because a scientist is doing the analysis[13]. The understanding synthesized from data and

[12] Lemert, xii

[13] "The distance the anthropologist puts between himself and his object - institutionalized in the division between anthropology and sociology - is also what enables him to stand outside of the game, along with everything he really shares with the logic of his object. Probably the

knowledge gathered by a study is duly faulty due to the distance of the observer. The first fault lies in the data collected. By being an observer, the sets of data chosen from all data present to be collected is the data interesting or serves the self-interests of the observer. Further more, the data collected and recorded from the veins of information deemed important by the observer is a subset tainted by the observer's learned objectivity[14]. A second fault lies in the analysis and results of extrapolated from the collected data. Objective, structured analysis is limited in the same way the initial data collection is limited: the results are skewed to what the observer's education, experience, and interests demand[15].

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clearest example of this separation, which prevents social scientists from putting into their scientific practice the practical understanding they have of the logic of practice, is what Voloshinov call philologism, the propensity to treat words and texts as if they had no other *raison d'être* than to be decoded by scholars. Nothing is more paradoxical, for example, than the fact that people whose whole life is spent fighting over words should strive at all costs to fix what seems to them to be the one true meaning of objectively ambiguous, overdetermined or indeterminate symbols, words, texts or events which often survive and generate interest just because the have always been at the stake in struggles aimed precisely at fixing their 'true' meaning." (Bourdieu, 17)

[14] "participant observation is, in a sense, a contradiction in terms (as anyone who as tried to do it will have confirmed in practice); and that the critique of objectivism and its inability to apprehend practice as such in no way implies the rehabilitation if immersion in practice. The participationist option is simply another way of avoiding the question of the real relationship of the observer to the observed and its critical consequences for scientific practice." (Bourdieu 34)

[15] "To slip from *regularity*, i.e. from what recurs with a certain statistically measurable frequency and from the formula which describes it, to a consciously laid down and consciously respected *ruling (reglèment)*, or to unconscious *regulating* by a mysterious cerebral or social mechanism, are the two commonest ways of sliding from the model of reality to the reality of the model. In the first case, one moves from a rule which, to take up Quines distinction (1972) between *to fit* and *to guide*, fits the observed regularity in a purely descriptive way, to a rule that governs, directs or orients behaviour - which presupposes that it is known and recognized, and can therefor be stated - thereby succumbing to the most elementary form of legalism, that variety of finalism which is perhaps the most widespread of the spontaneous theories of practice and which consists in in proceeding as if practices had as their principle conscious obedience to consciously devised and sanctioned rules. As Ziff Puts it:

'Consider the difference between saying "The train is *regularly* two minutes late" and "As *a rule*, the train is two minutes late" ... There is the suggestion in the latter case that that the train be two minutes late is as it were in accordance with some policy or plan ... Rules connect

Objectivity may have flaws, but subjectivity is fundamentally flawed. "The Imaginary Anthropology of Subjectivism"[16] has the same objectively distanced observer as objectivity and carries with it all of objectivity's problems. This leads to subjectivity though of as being almost identical to objectivity with the only difference in that the object and subject are the same person[17].

The approach of the game model is similar to the resolution of the problems inherent in objectivity and subjectivity. Parts of the model, such as connections, attributes, context, and setting, depend heavily on the history, habitus, and symbolic capital of the participants in the game situation. Studying game situations with objectivism that includes the logic of practice, valuable results can be gained[18]. The game model is an application of such objectivity to develop a way of perceiving situations using the logic of practice of game players along

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with plans or policies in a way that regularities do not . . . To argue that there must be rules in the natural language is like arguing that roads must be red if they correspond to red lines on a map' (1960: 38)" (Bourdieu 39-40)

[16] The title of the second chapter of the book I of *The Logic of Practice* (Bourdieu).

[17] "subjectivism universalizes the experience that the subject of theoretical discourse has of himself as a subject. A professional exponent of consciousness committed to the illusion of 'consciousness with out inertia', without a past and without an exterior, he endows all the subjects with whom he decides to identify - that is, almost exclusively the projective 'populace' (*le peuple*) born of this 'generous' identification - with his won experience as a pure, free-floating subject." (Bourdieu 46)

[18] "To understand ritual practice, to give it back both its reason and its *raison d'être*, without converting it into a logical construction or a spiritual exercise, means more than simply reconstituting its internal logic. It also means restoring its practical necessity by relating it to the real conditions of its genesis, that is, the conditions in which both the functions it fulfills and the means it uses to achieve them are defined. It means describing the most brutally material basis of the investment in magic, such as the weakness of the productive and reproductive forces, which causes a life dominated by anxiety about matters of life and death to be lived as an uncertain struggle against uncertainty. It means trying to name, even if one cannot really hope to make it felt, this collective experience of powerlessness which is at the basis of a whole view of the world and the future . . . and which is the practical mediation through which the relationship is established between the economic bases and the ritual actions or representations." (Bourdieu 97)

with developing and refining the understanding of the metaphors employed by game practitioners. As such, the play not found in lone objectivity is a critical part of the actions and attributes in the game model.

Chapter 3

Real World Evidence of the Model

3.1 Chain Restaurants

A common place where social interaction takes place is at restaurants. Far from fast food establishments that parcel out food with as little interaction as possible, restaurants involve prolonged interaction between the customers and various restaurant employees. The customers are looking for food and a dining experience while those who are employed by the restaurant wish to capitalize on the customers' desires. This arrangement of interactants and the exchange of services for wealth provides an interesting set of interactions to explore with the game model.

The context of this customer/employee interaction revolves around chain restaurants in an American city. All restaurants (nationally and possibly internationally) in these chains have similar or identical menus, names, decorations, special deals, employee dress codes, and rituals that take place when a customers visit during their birthday. These establishments provide a consistent, if not formulaic, dining experience throughout the chain which has resulted in the normalization of customers and employees[1]. While each chain has unique rules, feel, and procedures that every constituent restaurant must follow, the chain themselves show only enough variation to be distinguishable from one another[2]. Employees of these restaurants are typically paid wages (cooks, hosts), salaries (management), and a low wage with customer tips (servers). Their incomes (especially that of the servers) depend on customer satisfaction[3]. Being served and satisfied is a factor that draws customers to chain restaurants over other food services such as fast food or supermarkets. The experience of being served, eating good food, and drinking good beverages is sought for by a large portion of the customers. The context is of an exchange of capital for food services between customers and the employees.

[1]One employee, who seemed to be particularly adept and normalized to the role of waitress, makes a point of working for many restaurants for varying periods of time. This person has build both and impressive resumé and skill set geared toward serving customers in the chain restaurant. She uses these resources as capital to maximize the income from both wages and customer tips.

[2]The appetizers, entrees, and desserts offered show a clear example of the way restaurants chains strive to be simultaneously unique and uniform. The same appetizers (chips and salsa, sliced potato dishes, and onion dishes) appear on nearly every chain's menu. Entrees represent the largest variance by offering the gimmick "specialty" of each restaurant while simultaneously offering the standard cheeseburger and french fries meal.

[3]Satisfied customers are valued for their potential to become repeat customers. These customers provide consistent business along with larger tips for good service

Often decorated with vintage objects, old pictures, sporting equipment, street signs, regional artifacts, and stylistic light fixtures, the individual objects the comprise the physical setting in chain restaurants are varied but provide a consistent theme throughout the chain. The themes are usually linked with distinguishing factor of the chain[4]. Restaurants have various regions: the kitchen, waiting area, dining area, smoking/non-smoking areas, and a bar area. These serve functions linked to their titles. Non-smoking areas segregate those customers who wish to smoke from those who do not. Waiting areas provide a space for potential customers and customers who are not yet served to bide time. The kitchen doubles as both an area for food preparation and serves as the backstage for employees. In the dining area, proximity to locations that may diminish the dining experience of customers (too close to the noisy kitchen or too near to smokers) can have a direct impact on customer satisfaction. Another commonly found addition to the setting that helps to set the theme is background music. Complementary music set at a strategic volume[5] helps to keep the theme coherent and intensifies the dining experience.

Music, in this case, is as much a resource as it is part of the setting because it is strategically employed to affect the experience of the customers. The better

[4]Sportsbar-themed restaurants are often adorned with many televisions showing sports games, pictures of legendary sports heros, and sports memorabilia. Similarly, southwestern-themed chains display cacti and preserved animals (lizards and armadillos) as decorations.

[5]Some restaurants vary the volume of the background music to cover the ambient noise of the restaurant. If the restaurant is busy and producing large amounts of noise, the volume is increased to cut the chance customers will notice clanking plates or other customers ordering from servers.

the music is handled, the more likely the customer will enjoy the trip to the restaurant. The efficacy of the server is a major resource to both the server and the employees in general. As the direct interactant with the customers during a majority of the interaction, the skill level of the server has a large influence on the customers. The service skill manifests itself in demeanor and actions. Greeting customers in an effective and adaptable manner (an example of which is being flirtatious with customers of the opposite sex) sets a precedence for the remaining interactions. Another key resource controlled by the restaurant's employees is food. Given that the interaction is an exchange of food for money at a basic level, an the equally important counter part of food is the capital of the customer. The overriding goal of the restaurant is to get as much of the customers' money as possible. To this effect, prices becomes a strategic resource. By lowering the price of food, the restaurant may attract more business. If the price is too low, money may be lost due to the cost of logistics. To help offset the loss of money due to lower prices, a distinction is drawn between appetizers, drinks, entrees, and desserts. Restaurants may make one part of the menu more profitable than other parts. Examples would be lowering the cost of entrees while raising the profit on drinks and appetizers or to hold "happy hours" where drinks and appetizers are less expensive while the desserts and entrees pull in the profit.

The typical outline of a customer/employee interaction in this context and setting sets the stages for the participants' actions. The interaction starts when the customers arrive at the restaurant and are greeted by the host near the front door. Here the customers' party is sized up by the restaurant staff. The customers are then placed in the waiting area to be served. After waiting for resources to become available, the customers are placed in the dining area. This is the point in the interaction where the employees decide on the action of where to seat the customers (brining up the benefits and consequences of proximity to other areas). The employee interacting with the customers is then shifted to a server who then arrives and introduces herself. As this is the first impression of both the server to the customers and the customers to the server, this initial interaction sets the precedence for further interaction. After a self-introduction, the server may recommend certain menu items and begins to take the customers' drink and appetizer orders. This interaction is very important in that the server gets the opportunity assess how easily the customers will part with their money. If they all order cheap drinks, the server may spend more time at a table that looks more profitable or, if they all order expensive alcoholic drinks, the server may spend a larger slice of time with the party. After a short delay as the initial orders are prepared and served, the server takes the order for the main course. Time management plays a major role in the delay between the ordering and the serving of the main course. If the meal arrives too soon after it is ordered, the customers may feel that they are being rushed through the process. If the meal arrives after too long of a delay, the customers will assume the quality of the service is bad and will be less satisfied. As the food is served to the customers, it is the customers turn for appraisal and action. The food must be accepted and mis-cooked or misordered food must be replaced or modified to the satisfaction of the customers. This opens a window of opportunity for clever customers to get a free or reduced price meal by acting unsatisfied by the quality of service or food. After the food is accepted and the customers begin to eat, the server queries the table for drink refill requests and ascertains the status of the customers. The attentiveness of the server can influence how the customers rate the service and how much of a tip is to be given to the server. The last chance for the server to increase the amount customers spend is through dessert. A clever server may leave a dessert menu on the table after taking orders for the main course in hopes of boosting the chance that the customers will order from the menu. After dessert is handled, the checks are passed to the customers. The checks serve the dual purpose of allowing the customers to pay and sending them a signal to leave. This is another important delay for the server for the reasons the delay between ordering and receiving the main course; this makes the customer feel like they are being cycled through the restaurant and leaves an unsatisfied, impersonal impression. The moment of truth for the server and the restaurant the last interaction of receiving the customers' payments.

3.2 Literature Rulebooks

Some texts explain the rules, techniques, and practice of playing certain games. A strong example is found in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Laertes is about to leave the house of his father (Lord Polonius) in order to set sail and make his way in the world. His father leaves him with these words:

> Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame!
> The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
> And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with thee!
> And these few precepts in thy memory
> See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
> Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
> Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
> Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
> Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
> But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
> Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware
> Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,
> Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.
> Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;
> Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
> Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
> But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
> For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
> And they in France of the best rank and station
> Are of a most select and generous chief in that.
> Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
> For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
> And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
> This above all: to thine ownself be true,
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.
> Farewell: my blessing season this in thee![6]

This fatherly advice is a set of guidelines for Laertes to use when he is playing the game of becoming an independent adult outside of his father's influence. Lord Polonius is attempting to give his son a head start in learning the logic of practice needed for his future.

[6]From act 1, scene 3 in Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (Shakespeare).

A larger and more detailed set of rules and practices can be found in Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. The thirteen chapters mirror many of the considerations one would think of when employing the game model from a player's perspective. Laying plans, attack by stratagem, tactical dispositions, weak points, strong points, maneuvering, variation in tactics, terrain, and the use of spies are all chapters that dictate rules for success in war scenarios. Even though the game model purposely allows for conditions other than unconditional victory, the ideas presented in *The Art of War* work well in a many game situations[7].

3.3 Symphonic Composition

In a broad sense, music as a communicative tool plays into the game model just as any game where the goal is to allow others to see through a certain perspective. To this end, the composers of symphonies use the setting of a concert hall in the context that includes an audience willing to listen to a symphony. The general goal of audience members is to enjoy the composition, though a variety of other goals will be present[8]. A few important resources a composer has at his disposal are his ability to compose music, his previous knowledge and experience at communicating through music, his learned demeanor as a conductor (if he is

[7] Of particular interest is the last chapter in *The Art of War*, "The Use of Spies". The tactics of information gather, spying, reconnaissance, and counter-intelligence are largely in tune with the game model and are found in many of Goffman's works (Sun Tzu).

[8] Audience members may have a variety of goals that pertain to games being played in other arenas. Critiquing the music, taking a date to a symphony, and keeping up an artistic appearance are just a few examples.

indeed conducting his own symphony), the physical attributes and layout of the concert hall (lighting, acoustics, size), the hype created by publicity surrounding the performance, the ability of the orchestra, and the audience members' ability to absorb communication through music. The stage is set for the game actions to take place.

The *Symphonie Fantastique*, Op. 14, composed by Hector Berlioz, works toward expressing his *idée fixe*, or his real world obsession, as a continually haunting, recurring melody[9]. Berlioz's goal was to tell a fantasy version of the story of his life. As the forum of a symphony cannot rely upon spoken or written text, he was restricted to using his talents as a composer as the sole form of communication. The first movement, *Daydreams, Passion*, conveys his loss of spirit caused by unrequited love through the unrelenting *idée fixe* which varies to convey sudden rage, jealousy, tender, tears, and religious consolation. Finding himself in the second movement, *A Ball*, he experiences beautiful sights and people in the form of a rondo, but is still haunted continually by the *idée fixe*. Hope returns in the third movement (*Scene in the Countryside*) as he conceives the idea of being with his love in an aimless, allegro joy. The *idée fixe* returns in part four, *March to the Scaffold*, in which he overdoses on opium in his despair. He dreams that he has slain his love and is a witness to his own execution. A march proceeds as he walks down the scaffold while tension leads to the eventual and deadly fall followed by the *idée fixe*. The cruel afterlife is characterized in the *Dream of a*

[9]Thomas, 1

Witches' Sabbath, the last movement, by the *idée fixe* loosing all good and noble qualities and is abandoned to a vulgar dance tune in which "shades, sorcerers, and monsters of every kind come together for his funeral" accompanied by a "roar of delight at [his love's] arrival ... as she joins the diabolical orgy"[10].

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