Recurring Issues

• What are, can-be or should-be the goals of game design?
• What (new) kinds of things can we do with video games?
• What (new) kinds of games do we need to do them?
• How do games make meaning?
• What kinds of meanings can games make?
• What should we mean by the term “game literacy”?
• How can design, production and critique make us literate?
• How can they help us understand:
  – the nature (specificity) of game as media?
  – the (actual/potential) role of gaming in society and culture?
Braid

Passage

The Marriage

Every Day the Same Dream
“In these games [Braid, Passage, The Marriage (Every Day the Same Dream?)], expression arises primarily from the player’s interaction with the game’s mechanics and dynamics, and less so in their visual, textual and aural aspects.

…

In artgames like the three in question, a procedural rhetoric does not argue a position, but rather characterizes an idea. These games say something about how an experience of the world works, how it feels to experience or be subject to some sort of situation: marriage, mortality, regret, confusion and so forth.

…

Proceduralist games are oriented toward introspection over both immediate gratification … .”

Bogost: HTDTWVG Ch. 1: Art
Rethinking Our Games
Aesthetics

- Does our game engage the player’s intellect, as well as his/her emotions?
- Does the game leave actions, events, objects and references ambiguous and open to multiple interpretations?
- Will the gameplay encourage the player to reflect on the meaning or purpose of the game after the game session is over?
Rethinking Our Games

Originality

• What existing games are similar to our proposed game?
• Is our proposed game different from each of them in some important way?
• Is our game fundamentally different from all of them?
• How can we modify our game to make it more original?
The Lens of Surprise

Illustration by Diana Patton

Surprise is so basic that we can easily forget about it. Use this lens to remind yourself to fill your game with interesting surprises. Ask yourself these questions:

- What will surprise players when they play my game?
- Does the story in my game have surprises? Do the game rules? Does the artwork? The technology?
- Do your rules give players ways to surprise each other?
- Do your rules give players ways to surprise themselves?
Rethinking Our Games
Feasibility

• What minimal set of features is sufficient to fulfill our design objectives?
• Are all the proposed dynamics necessary?
• Are all the proposed mechanics necessary?
• Are all the proposed sprites, sounds and levels necessary?
Is a Game a Work of Art?

(Paradigm of developing an unanswerable question.)