

CART 411

Assignment: Mapping Chess to Corporeal Movement

The idea: take the moves of a chess game. Interpret the moves as corporeal movement, physical action. This is not so much choreography as a design of action translation. Your assignment is to make a well-defined, deterministic mapping from the game of chess to some activity that includes human corporeal movement. Deterministic means that any game of chess can be translated using your scheme into movement.

On Monday Sep 24, each working group will come prepared to work on during studio, and present, one or both of the following games listed below. Bring all the supplies you need to do your enactment. Each enactment must be less than 120 seconds. This excludes setup and post-performance discussion. Each person in the team will get a common grade for (1) logic of the mapping (e.g. whether its rules are indeed regular and deterministic, and (2) cleverness or creativity of the enactment. You may opt to present a different fragment of a real chess game. so long as it takes less than 120 seconds to enact.

This will be graded. You will individually receive two grades -- one for the **action exercise** on Monday Sep 24, and one for a brief **written exercise** due Oct 1:

Action exercise. For the studio part of the class **Sep 24**, for a a median grade (B / B-) you just need to be competent. For the exercise this means the enactment must work in principle on any game of chess, including a game that I will supply on Monday. For a superlative grade (an A / A-), you must do something extra, an extra cleverness in the mapping or execution, or interpreting a more interesting game of chess, or the the less well-defined "game" from Lewis Carroll (see below).

Written exercise. Due by the beginning of class, **Oct 1**, each student must also supply an individual 2 page response to the Wittgenstein reading with respect to these questions:

(1) What is a game? What is play that is not game? And how so? (2) According to Wittgenstein, are there rules in the world? According to Wittgenstein, do we follow rules in life, in games, in play? (3) In light of Peter Brook's essay, do designers of events -- e.g. directors, or interaction designers -- follow rules in Wittgenstein's sense of rule? How does experience sediment in a designer?

For a median grade, you must demonstrate that you have read the Wittgenstein, Brook (or Derrida). Provide page references. For an A/A-, you must demonstrate some extra research or relatively fresh insight into the reading, or relate the assigned text to other texts.

Two inspirations for this exercise are:

(1) A thought experiment by Wittgenstein in Philosophical Investigations:

§ 200. It is, of course, imaginable that two people belonging to a tribe unacquainted with games should sit at a chess-board and go through the moves of a game of chess; and even with all the appropriate mental accompaniments. And if we were to see it we should say they were playing chess. But now imagine a game of chess translated according to certain rules into a series of actions which we do not ordinarily associate with a game - say into yells and stamping of feet. And now suppose those two people to yell and stamp instead of playing the form of chess that we are used to; and this in such a way that their procedure is translatable by suitable rules into a game of chess. Should we still be inclined to say they were playing a game? What right would one have to say so?

§ 201. This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here.

and

(2) Lewis Carroll, Alice Through the Looking Glass

White Pawn (Alice) to play, and win in eleven moves.

1	Alice meets R.Q.	132	1	R.Q. to K.R's 4th	137
2	Alice through Q's 3d (by rail-way) to Q's 4th (<i>Tweedledum and Tweedledee</i>)	139 141	2	W.Q. to Q.B's 4th (<i>after shawl</i>)	160
3	Alice meets W.Q. (<i>with shawl</i>)	160	3	W.Q. to Q. B's 5th (<i>becomes sheep</i>)	164
4	Alice to Q's 5th (<i>shop, river, shop</i>)	164	4	W.Q. to K. B's 8th (<i>leaves egg on shelf</i>)	168
5	Alice to Q's 6th (<i>Humpty Dumpty</i>)	168	5	W.Q. to Q.B's 8th (<i>flying from R. Kt.</i>)	185
6	Alice to Q's 7th (<i>forest</i>)	180	6	R. Kt. to K's 2nd (ch.)	189

Assignment 1: Chess to Movement

7	W. Kt. takes R. Kt.	191	7	W. Kt. to K. B's 5th	200
8	Alice to Q's 8th (<i>coronation</i>)	201	8	R. Q. to K's sq. (<i>examination</i>)	202
9	Alice becomes Queen	201	9	Queens castle	207
10	Alice castles (<i>feast</i>)	210	10	W.Q. to Q. R's 6th (<i>soup</i>)	213
11	Alice takes R. Q. & wins	215	11		

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

(as arranged before commencement of game)

WHITE

PIECES	PAWNS
Tweedledee	Daisy
Unicorn	Haigha
Sheep	Oyster
W. Queen	Lily
W. King	Fawn
Aged man	Oyster
W. Knight	Hatta
Tweedledum	Daisy

RED

PAWNS	PIECES
Daisy	Humpty Dumpty
Messenger	Carpenter
Oyster	Walrus
Tiger-lily	R. Queen
Rose	R. King
Oyster	Crow
Frog	R. Knight
Daisy	Lion

PREFACE

“As the chess-problem, given on the previous page, has puzzled some of my readers, it may be well to explain that it is correctly worked out, so far as the *moves* are concerned. The *alternation* of Red and White is perhaps not so strictly observed as it might be, and the “castling” of the three Queens is merely a way of saying that they entered the palace; but the ‘check’ of the White King at move 6, the capture of the Red Knight at move 7, and the final ‘checkmate’ of the Red King, will be found, by any one who will take the trouble to set the pieces and play the moves as directed, to be strictly in accordance with the laws of the game.”

– Lewis Carroll