

What I'm going to present to you today is a basic outline of the methodology I've been following, then some of the experiments I've been doing together with analysis.

So the methodology I've been following is something I've called 'errant gaming'. It's a way of exploring the relationship between jokes and what I'm very crudely calling anomie. By anomie I just mean zones of indeterminacy, areas outside of social norms or formal rules. And by jokes, well, the rough formulation I'm working with is nonsense that makes sense, or mistakes that work. So something crazy which seems to have coherence, or taking it less linguistically, it could be when you kick a broken computer and it starts working.

Anyway, this diagram divides these interactions into two 'zones'. The first is jokes as agents of subversion, of detournement. But what I want to focus on is joking as a means of dealing with indeterminacy. If you think about it, once the rules break down, nothing you do is going to be right so you need some other strategy, and joking represents one of them.

So errant gaming tries to generate these zones of anomie in game contexts, in such a way they can be resolved by the players using different means. A errant game therefore needs two properties – it needs a hole, it needs indeterminacy, but it also needs a way of being shifted or changed to run, there have to be forces outside the game you can bring in.

So my first conception of an errant game was a card game I called 'Anomie'. It's a card game whose dominant feature is that playing the joker that lets you do *anything*. So you could burn the cards, eat the deck, whatever. And in one game where I tested it, this card really became the point of the game – no one could follow what was happening, but everyone wanted a chance to do something silly.

My second experiment was quite different. It's called 'automata chess' - it's played like normal chess, but each time you take a piece you set it a rule – almost pseudo-computationally – which governs its movements. They're the pieces with the blue thimbles on them. And here are the rules at this point. The main thing to note with the game was the sheer level of mental exhaustion caused by having to constantly invent rules – and how this caused us to start cross referencing rules in order to retain sanity. Now, at this particular moment of the game we had a bit of a weird situation – I'm in check, but automata 1 will block my check at the end of the move. So do I have to move out of check? We had no way of resolving this, and in the end had to resort to a randomised system – guessing what colour counter was in her hand.

So those two, and other minor tests, constitute what I call the basic model for Errant Gaming. And I'm now moved to working on the temporal model – which is an attempt to introduce this indeterminacy into game time. Why the shift to time? Well, partly this is to help me, some way down the road, to unfold some of the political dimensions what I'm dealing with. For instance, the State of Exception, which is a particular of of anomic zone, is justified in terms of time – the idea of an *immediate* threat. But also it allows me to think of regularity and anomie in a different way, looking at the way models of time produce their own regularity that could be subject to disruption. For instance, if we think about meal-times – instead of eating when we're hungry, we eat at set

times. And we work the same amount all year round even though it might not be effective to do so. (think about SAD for instance)

So my next set of experiments, which I did last Sunday, involved introducing three types of game time to Chess, and Rummie as it happened, to see if I could construct an errant game out of any of them. I think constructing a temporal errant game is actually very challenging, so this are just early steps.

This is the first – now what's going on here is that players pump up balloons and attach them to party whistles, and while the party whistles are inflated, players are able to make as many moves as they want. Now, we can see here that the game is starting to break down a little – but there still seems to be some sort of decorum at work here. But a couple of games later this has completely dissolved, forcing us to change the games rules so you can only make one move while the whistle is inflated.

And this is a game of Rummie which has all three time systems running on it. Jon is wearing a pulse meter and has to burn three calories to take a turn. Sian, on the other hand, has her turns regulated by the computer into standardised time periods. I need to analyse this to see if players are self-regulating to return to ordinary game time. What's interesting here is that right at the end, it emerges that two out of three players have been breaking the rules – but because of the unusual time structures, this is ignored – you're expected to make mistakes, in a sense the rules of the game have changed.

Now this is a chess game. I'm on the pulse meter, and have to burn three calories, while Kirsty is just Now, despite this, I think we're running roughly at one turn each, and again I'm not sure how much this has to do with self-regulation. And there were other breakdowns – the need for me to monitor my own pulse count for instance. But what I found more interesting here is the intervention and interactions of the non-players, who assist both Me and Kirsty and different points – suggesting moves to Kirsty, or bringing a step in to help me exercise more effectively.

I think if there is anything really interesting here it's actually going to be on a micro level, so I need to subject this all to quite some scrutiny. And then see if I can conceive a true temporal version of an errant game. But I also need to consider whether the game construct is limiting – whether it's a vehicle for a kind of liberal rationality – and whether I should shift focus to an errant something else, using the insights gained here.