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Precise Emotion Notes
CS377G

Antiquated perspective: Fun is learning (Raph Koster)

Divergence between game makers and players
- (e.g.) *Sim City*
    - Educators believed Sim City was fun *and* educational
        - Teaches about waterways, city management, development, etc.
    - Children thought Sim City was fun but *not* educational
        - Desired something more educational

Proposed perspective: "Fun [isn't] one emotion – it [is] a process between multiple emotions."
- Fun is an affective state that is emergent out of multiple emotions

SOPHIA
- SOPHIA is the cognitive process by which we convert fear to happiness through surprise
- "The game-learn emotion"
- (e.g.) The second genome: there's millions of microbes living on our eyelids, in our body, etc… Gross, right? But they are actually essential in keeping us alive and healthy. They're like a coral reef! Much better, less scary!
    - Microbiome inside of us — numbers 10 to 1
   - Illustrated fear to happiness through surprise
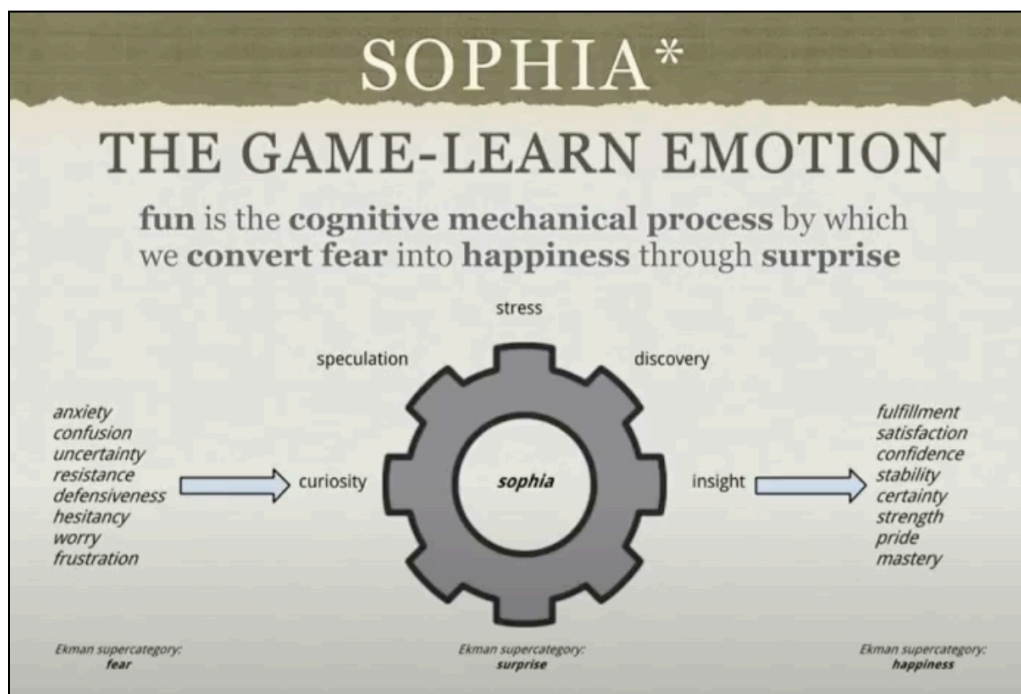
Hoffman's visualization of SOPHIA, the game-learn emotion.

Meaningful Games
- Meaningful games have a connection to the *real world*
- They involve creating order out of chaos
- Create a feeling of mastery of that chaos which elicits a feeling of understanding
- (e.g.) Candy Crush is **not** a meaningful game :(
- **Meaningful game doesn't speak about the quality of a game, but rather the effect is has on the player**
- Newest example of meaningful games:
    - *Complicity genre*: Elicits complex emotion of initial engagement, then mastery of a system, and subsequently an "*Oh shit, what have I done?*" moment.
    - (e.g.) *Papers Please!*

Mechanics:
- Individual mechanical connections form the heart of a game
    - Mechanics unify a core emotion throughout a variety of games — can be applied to a multitude of different games
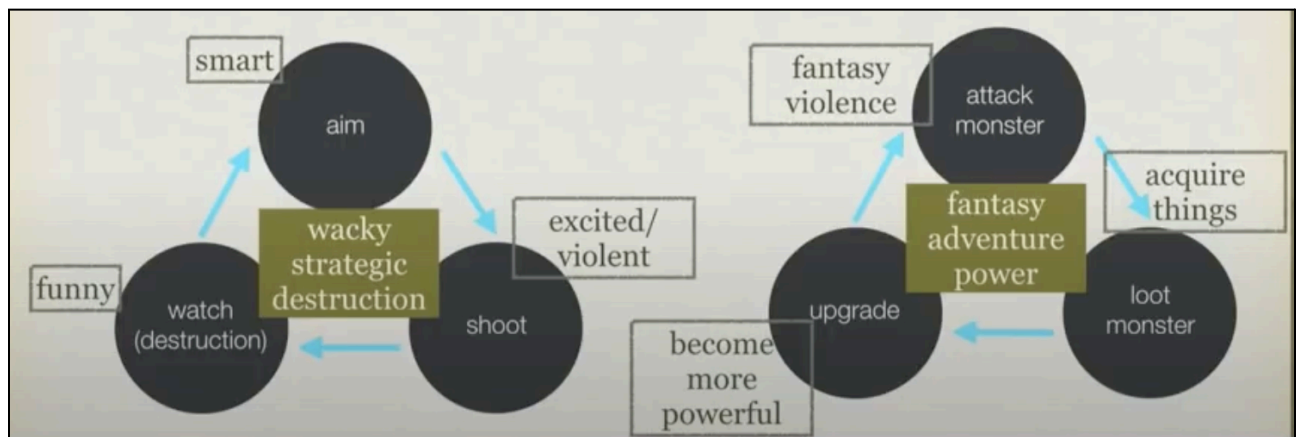
Certain mechanics (or combinations of mechanics) elicit certain emotions. How can these be wielded for different purposes and games?

Learning games:
- The player should be able to perform something that they could not perform before they played the game
- **Oftentimes it's not effective and not emotional**
- It's difficult to have emotional progression within a learning game

- How do we balance learning with fun?
- *Problem*: We (game designers) need to articulate the *why*
    - *Why it is more important to learn Pascal's Triangle over slaying a dragon*

SOPHIA is a lens through which we can view games
- Adjacent to ideas of ludonarrative dissonance
- Analyze: what if your core emotion isn't the emotion you hoped for your player to feel?
- A lot of times, there is not enough surprise preceding satisfaction
- If you don't illuminate the *fear* and the *why*, it feels flat and can lead to loss of retention for learning games

Q&A:
- What does the player still crave after receiving insight?
- The choice between *what* you do is what makes experiences interesting
- Create an emotion profile, run those gears over the terrain of your game, and "swap out those gears"
    - Leads to new things and new emotions

Note: Submitting a PDF since I am unable to upload photos to Mechanics of Magic. Error message I'm receiving is below.

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The server cannot process the image. This can happen if the server is busy or does not have enough resources to complete the task. Uploading a smaller image may help. Suggested maximum size is 2560 pixels.