HOW TO CHEAT WITHOUT CHEATING

CASUAL CONNECT

29TH MAY, 2019

PROF. RICHARD A. **BARTLE**

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

- PRETTY WELL **EVERYONE** HERE WHO PLAYS GAMES WILL HAVE **CHEATED** AT THEM
  - YOU MAY INDEED DO SO **ROUTINELY**
- WHETHER YOU **KNOW** YOU'RE CHEATING IS ANOTHER **MATTER**, OF COURSE
- THE THING IS, WHAT **YOU** REGARD AS CHEATING, **OTHER** PLAYERS MAY THINK OF AS BEING PERFECTLY **ACCEPTABLE**
  - **YOU** ARE SOMEONE ELSE'S "**OTHER** PLAYERS"
- **THEY** MAY CONSIDER YOU TO BE CHEATING WHEN **YOU** DON'T

- THE **FIRST** THING I SHOULD NAIL DOWN IS WHAT I MEAN BY "**CHEATING**"

- THE **BEST** DEFINITION I'VE COME ACROSS IS ONE FROM 1978 BY **BERNARD SUITS**

- HE CONSIDERS A PLAYER'S **ATTITUDE** TO GAMES BASED ON **TWO** FACTORS:
  - WHETHER THEY WANT TO **WIN** BY THE GAME'S **OWN** DEFINITION OF WINNING
  - WHETHER THEY **PLAY** BY THE **RULES** OR NOT

- WE CAN **DRAW** THIS ON A CONVENIENT 2-AXIS **GRAPH**

PLAYS TO WIN

CHEATER

PLAYER

DOESN'T PLAY BY RULES

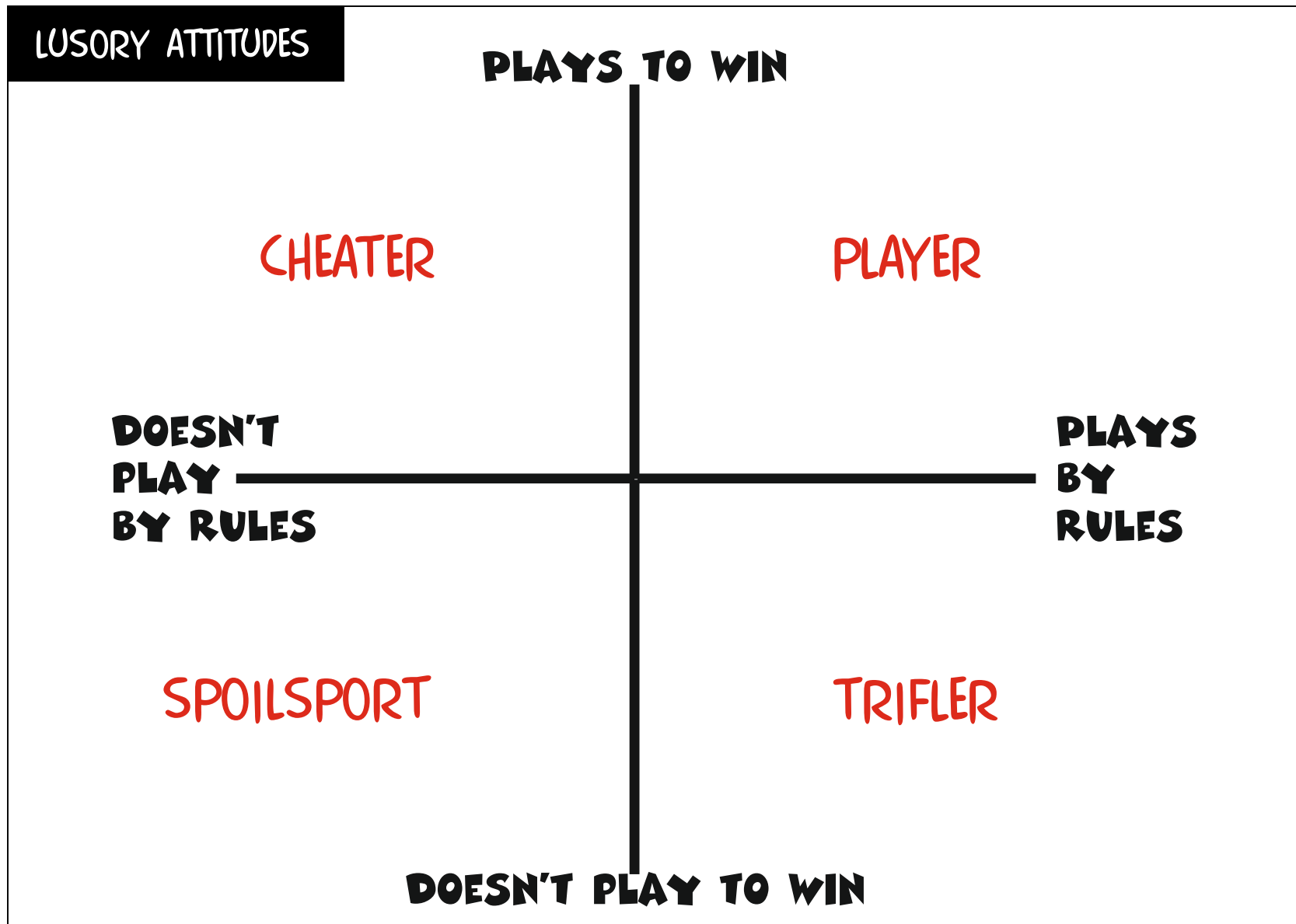PLAYS BY RULES

SPOILSPORT

TRIFLER

DOESN'T PLAY TO WIN

- **SCUNTHORPE** IS A STEEL-MAKING TOWN GRACING THE LINCOLNSHIRE LANDSCAPE

- THE PART OF THIS I'LL BE **LOOKING** AT CONCERNS THE **RULES** OF THE GAME

- GAMES ACTUALLY HAVE **THREE** TYPES OF RULES:
  - 1) ONES DETERMINED BY **PHYSICAL** LIMITS
    - I CAN'T KICK A BALL THAT'S 5 METRES FROM ME
  - 2) **WRITTEN** ONES
    - FOULS LEAD TO FREE KICKS
  - 3) **UNWRITTEN** ONES
    - "UNGENTLEMANLY CONDUCT" CATCH-ALLS

- THESE ARE TREATED **DIFFERENTLY** FOR COMPUTER GAMES THAN FOR **OTHER** GAMES

- IN **NON-COMPUTER** GAMES:
  - PHYSICAL RULES ARE CODED IN BY THE PHYSICS OF THE UNIVERSE
  - WRITTEN AND UNWRITTEN RULES WORK THROUGH SOCIAL **NORMS** SUSTAINING A **MAGIC CIRCLE**
- IN **COMPUTER** GAMES:
  - PHYSICAL AND WRITTEN RULES ARE CODED IN **DIRECTLY**
  - UNWRITTEN RULES DEPEND ON THE **INDIVIDUAL**
- PLAYERS CONSTRUCT THEIR **OWN** UNWRITTEN RULES, EXPECTING OTHERS **ALSO** FOLLOW THEM

- WHEN YOU PLAY **CHESS** IN **RL**, WHY DON'T YOU TAKE YOUR OPPONENT'S **KING** WITH YOUR **QUEEN** ON THE **FIRST** TURN?

- YOU **DON'T** BECAUSE IT'S A **GAME** WHICH ONLY **EXISTS** WHILE YOU FOLLOW THE RULES

- **COMPUTER** GAMES ARE **DIFFERENT**

- YOU DON'T DO IT IN **COMPUTER** CHESS BECAUSE THE COMPUTER **WON'T LET YOU**

- COMPUTER GAME DEFAULT: ANYTHING NOT **CODED OUT** IS BY DEFINITION **ALLOWED**

- THERE ARE **MANY** THINGS YOU **CAN'T** CODE OUT THAT ARE AGAINST "THE RULES"
- THEY DON'T EVEN HAVE TO BE GAMEPLAY-RELATED
  - AOL'S **SCUNTHORPE** PROBLEM
- SOME ARE **DIFFICULT** TO POLICE
  - MULTI-BOXING
- SOME ARE **IMPOSSIBLE** TO POLICE
  - ONLINE WALK-THROUGHS
- PLAYERS IN RL **TRUST** EACH OTHER TO STICK TO THE RULES, BUT BEYOND A CRITICAL MASS..?

- I'M PERHAPS **BEST** KNOWN FOR MY WORK ON **PLAYER TYPES**,
  - I THEREFORE FEEL THAT I NEED TO GIVE YOU YOUR MONEY'S WORTH...
- THIS CAME OUT OF MY WORK ON **MMOS**:
  - **ACHIEVERS** LIKE ACTING ON THE WORLD, TREATING IT AS IF IT WERE A GAME
  - **EXPLORERS** LIKE INTERACTING WITH THE WORLD
  - **SOCIALISERS** LIKE INTERACTING WITH OTHER PLAYERS
  - **KILLERS** LIKE ACTING ON OTHER PLAYERS, IMPOSING THEMSELVES ON THEM

ACTING

KILLER

ACHIEVER

WORLD

GAME

SOCIALISER

EXPLORER

INTERACTING

- PEOPLE PLAY GAMES FOR DIFFERENT **REASONS**
- **ASSOCIATED** WITH EACH OF THOSE REASONS ARE **SETS** OF **UNWRITTEN** RULES
- PLAYERS **FOLLOW** THOSE UNWRITTEN RULES
  - BUT **ONLY** THE ONES FOR THE **DIMENSION** OF PLAY THEY INDIVIDUALLY WISH TO **EXPERIENCE**
- THEY REGARD **BREAKING** THESE RULES AS **CHEATING**
- KEY POINT: THEY DO **NOT** REGARD BREAKING THE RULES OF **OTHER** TYPES AS CHEATING!

- ACHIEVERS FOLLOW A **MERITOCRACY** RULE
- THEY FEEL THAT IF SOMEONE HAS **STATUS**, IT SHOULD BE BECAUSE THEY **EARNED** IT
- THEY ARE **HORRIFIED** IF PEOPLE CAN GET AN ACHIEVEMENT SOME **OTHER** WAY
  - THE *MONOPOLY* EXAMPLE
- TO THEM, IT'S LIKE BUYING A **PHD** OR A **WORLD RECORD** – IT'S **CHEATING**
- YET **OTHER** TYPES SEE **NOTHING** WRONG IN PAYING FOR AN IN-GAME ADVANTAGE

- EXPLORERS WILL **READILY** PAY TO GAIN ACCESS TO NEW CONTENT

- FOR THEM, **FIGURING OUT** CONTENT IS PARAMOUNT

- THEY WANT TO **UNDERSTAND** THE GAME MORE THAN OTHER PLAYERS DO

- THEY ARE **ANGERED** BY WEB SITES THAT "**GIVE AWAY**" SOLUTIONS

- USING THEM IS, TO AN EXPLORER, **CHEATING**

- YET OTHER PLAYERS DO IT **ALL THE TIME**

- SOCIALISERS DON'T RATE THE **GAME** ITSELF
- THEY'LL **HAPPILY** USE OUT-OF-GAME METHODS TO ACHIEVE IN-GAME SUCCESS
  - THEY JUST WANT TO **HANG** WITH THEIR FRIENDS
- THEY VALUE **PEOPLE** AND **CONNECTIONS**
- THEY **DESPAIR** AT **LFG** MECHANISMS AND THEIR MEANINGLESS, TRANSIENT RELATIONSHIPS
- COMMUNITY-FREE GROUPING THAT **BYPASSES** FRIENDSHIP AND LOYALTY IS **CHEATING**
- NO **OTHER** TYPES FEEL THAT WAY, THOUGH

- KILLERS GET FUN FROM **HURTING** PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T **CONSENT** TO THAT POSSIBILITY

- ANYTHING THAT **INTERFERES** WITH THIS AIM IS **CHEATING**, IN THE KILLER'S VIEW:
  - **COMPLAINING** ABOUT BEING ATTACKED
  - DEMANDING SOME KILLER-FAVOURITE ABILITY BE **NERFED**
  - RUNNING TO THE PROTECTION OF NPC **GUARDS**
  - CALLING IN HELP FROM **FRIENDS**

- ALL THESE ARE **FINE** IN OTHER PLAYERS' VIEWS

- NOT **ALL** CHEATING IS LIKE THIS

- SOME OF IT IS **ACCIDENTAL**
  - YOU DON'T KNOW THAT THE RULE YOU'RE BREAKING EXISTS

- SOME OF IT IS **META-GAMING**
  - YOU'RE NOT PLAYING *SW:TOR*, YOU'RE PLAYING **ONE-UPMANSHIP** WITH YOUR RL FRIENDS

- SOME OF IT COMES FROM **FRUSTRATION**
  - "THIS GAME IS TOO HARD!"

- SOME OF IT COMES FROM **BOREDOM**
  - "THIS GAME IS TOO EASY!"

- IN THE EXAMPLES ON THE PREVIOUS SLIDE, THE PLAYER **ACCEPTS** THAT THEY CHEATED

- HOWEVER, FOR **MUCH** OF THE CHEATING THAT GOES ON THEY **DON'T** ACCEPT IT

- THEY REALLY DON'T SEE THAT IT **IS** CHEATING!

- THE **REASON** FOR THIS IS THAT FOR THEM, IT **ISN'T** CHEATING

- THE ENTIRE **F2P** BUSINESS MODEL IS BASED ON **EXPLOITING** THIS **FRICTION** BETWEEN PLAYER TYPES

- IF YOU ARE TARGETING A GAME AT A **PARTICULAR** PLAYER TYPE, BE **AWARE** OF WHAT THAT TYPE CONSIDERS **CHEATING**

- THIS IS WHY **F2P** WITH **ANY** P2W IN IT WORKS BEST FOR **CASUAL** GAMES
  - HARD-CORE (ACHIEVER) GAMERS **LOATHE** IT

- IT'S WHY FOR **COMMUNITY** GAMES, YOU SHOULDN'T STREAMLINE OUT OR ABSTRACT AWAY **CONNECTIONS** BETWEEN PLAYERS
  - MOST OF TODAY'S "SOCIAL GAMES" **AREN'T** SOCIAL!

SUMMARY

- THE **ONLY** COMPUTER GAME RULES THAT YOU CAN **RELY** ON ARE THE ONES **CODED IN**
  - AND **MAYBE** REAL-LIFE LAWS TOO
- ALL OTHER RULES ARE **OPTIONAL**
- PEOPLE PLAY GAMES FOR DIFFERENT **REASONS**
  - THEY THINK THE GAME IS "ABOUT" DIFFERENT THINGS
- THEY RARELY BREAK THEIR **OWN** IDEA OF THE RULES BUT HAVE **NO CONCEPTION** OF OTHER PLAYERS` IDEAS OF THE RULES
- THUS, THEY CHEAT **WITHOUT CHEATING**