The rise to prominence of games in recent years, particularly online digital games, has attracted new scholarly, policy-making, and popular attention, both to games as a cultural form and to play itself. One of the most important developments has been the way in which this explosion in games, together with the increasing recognizability of game-like elements in other domains of experience, has challenged the longstanding distinction between work and play. It has become difficult to deny that play is often productive and that work, rather than always a matter of routine, can be shot through with the open-endedness we most often associate with play. Along the way, it has also become more difficult to sustain claims that play is essentially about “fun,” “pleasure,” or other positively charged sentiments. While it is obvious to anyone who has studied gambling that playing games can be powerfully compelling without being fun, this realization is starting to make its way through the rapidly expanding scholarship on games and play.

I suggest, however, that it is surprising that this questioning of our ideas about games and play has taken so long and especially surprising that my own field, sociocultural anthropology, did not lead the way many years ago. That field’s hallmark has always been a willingness to move past Western preconceptions. It is characterized by an unflinching interrogation of inherited, seemingly foundational concepts, leading to the demonstration of their situatedness in Western modernity. Its work on such concepts as family, identity, race, and illness may constitute anthropology’s greatest contribution to the academy over the course of the twentieth century. But with a few important exceptions, play was, for the most part, left out of this critical project as anthropology on this issue stayed firmly within the modern tradition.

In what follows, I outline the tendencies of twentieth-century anthropological work on play and argue that anthropology, despite its ostensible neglect of the matter, nonetheless has much to offer the current aim of rethinking play. I begin by suggesting that, while the ingredients of a more useful conception of play as a disposition (as opposed to an activity)
were always present, and even found expression on occasion, the field as a whole stressed only two viable possibilities: play as nonwork and play as representation. Departing from this pattern prepares us to recognize a better model for thinking about play, one that draws ultimately on the pragmatist philosophers’ portrayal of the world as irreducibly contingent. On this view, play becomes an attitude characterized by a readiness to improvise in the face of an ever-changing world that admits of no transcendentally ordered account.

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In one sense, the trajectory of the anthropological study of play during the twentieth century is a familiar one: it falls more or less neatly into a divide between followers of primarily materialist and primarily representationalist approaches. The first treated play as an activity defined by its lack of productivity; that is, by its status as nonwork. This presumed lack of stakes in play was reflected in its relatively meager treatment in the anthropological literature. The analysis of social activities, such as games, that are associated with play (here seen as a supercategory of activity) were dwarfed in scale by treatments of work. This treatment of work as stake-filled and play as stake-less was also bolstered by support from an important writer about play who, while not a Marxist, reiterated the materialist work/play distinction. As Roger Caillois put it, “Play is an occasion of pure waste.” The echoes of this unhelpful assertion continue to resonate through some scholarship on games to this day.

One can still recognize this logic in the professional structure of sociocultural anthropology. The American Anthropological Association, the largest professional organization for anthropologists in the world, contains under its umbrella many “sections,” suborganizations reflecting research interests in subdisciplines (archaeology, linguistics, medical anthropology), regions, and topics. One of its sections is the Society for the Anthropology of Work, which like all such organizations, supports research on work through awards, panels at national meetings, and a publication (in this case, a regular newsletter). By contrast, the anthro-

pology of play never found as strong an institutional footing, this despite efforts by Brian Sutton-Smith, who served as president of the Anthropological Association for the Study of Play (founded in 1974; now simply the Association for the Study of Play, an interdisciplinary organization). This is consistent with an era in which (especially on the western side of the Atlantic) anthropology strongly displayed the influence of Marx, an influence that itself built on a materialist emphasis dating back to the salvage anthropology of the turn of the century. In certain high-profile
university departments, a materialist conception of culture predominated, and in it, there was little room for plays of meaning.

Around the same time, however, there arose a discipline-shaking answer to all materialist treatments of culture, in the form of the writings of Clifford Geertz. Geertz brought an approach to culture strongly influenced by the ideas of Max Weber in which there was room for meaning-making as something other than epiphenomenal. Strikingly for our purposes here, one of his essays—perhaps the one best known beyond anthropology—was about a game and about play: “Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight.” Geertz imbued the occasion of a cockfight with the highest stakes of all, that of a culture’s meaning in a grand sense: the cockfight becomes the portrait that the Balinese culture paints for itself. Yet these grand stakes coexist with a strange blunting of more proximate consequences:

Much more is at stake than material gain: namely, esteem, honor, dignity, respect—in a word, though in Bali a profoundly freighted word, status. It is at stake symbolically, for (a few cases of ruined addict gamblers aside) no one’s status is actually altered by the outcome of a cockfight; it is only, and that momentarily, affirmed or insulted . . . It is in large part because the marginal disutility of loss is so great at the higher levels of betting that to engage in such betting is to lay one’s public self, allusively and metaphorically, through the medium of one’s cock, on the line. And though to a Benthamite this might seem merely to increase the irrationality of the enterprise that much further, to the Balinese what it mainly increases is the meaningfulness of it all. And as (to follow Weber rather than Bentham) the imposition of meaning on life is the major end and primary condition of human existence, that access of significance more than compensates for the economic costs involved. Actually, given the even-money quality of the larger matches, important changes in material fortune among those who regularly participate in them seem virtually nonexistent, because matters more or less even out over the long run.

To be sure, Geertz’s response to materialist approaches to culture was desperately needed, and it formed the vanguard of a productive connection between sociocultural anthropology and the humanities that continues to this day. What should interest us about this treatment of a game, however, is the way it trades one kind of reductionism for another. In his zeal to trump whatever material stakes were in play with the different stakes of meaning-making, Geertz eliminated from consideration any consequence beyond the affirmation of meaning. On his view, games become static appraisals of an unchanging social order; and thereby, one element that is vital for any understanding of the experience of play is lost. That element is the indeterminacy of games and the way in which, by being indeterminate in their outcomes, they encapsulate (albeit in a con-
trived fashion) the open-endedness of everyday life. As I have presented elsewhere, an approach to games that acknowledges this indeterminacy looks quite different from its past treatments. It connects games to other domains of experience by showing how they contain the same kinds of unpredictabilities and constraints that saturate our experience elsewhere, albeit combined in a contrived fashion. Viewed this way, games assume a powerful relationship to human practice and social process. What is more, this view allows us to see how games may be related to a particular mode of experience, a dispositional stance toward the indeterminate. This is an aspect of experience that disappears from view when practice is left out in favor of materiality or representation.

There have been sporadic attempts by anthropologists to pursue this line of thought, notably the beginning efforts that were made by some of the anthropologists of play mentioned above to move beyond the work/play distinction. While the status of work as an analytical category continued largely unquestioned through the 1970s, the anthropologists of play, while proceeding from the same assumption, began to confront and think about its limits. The published proceedings of their meetings in that era began to point to the limits of a work/play distinction. A number of human societies, they found, simply did not make a distinction between “work” and “play,” even when pressed by researchers to do so. The case of the Kpelle was representative. As David Lancy showed, the Kpelle, while differentiating in relative terms between hard and light work, refused to see “play” as a separate category. Upon coming to understand the researchers’ concepts of work and play, the Kpelle contacts maintained that, in those (imported) terms, they felt both must be present in all human action. At the same time, and also in the same collection of essays, Phillips Stevens was prompted by this empirical trouble to push hard on the issue; he went further than anyone else had done in his little known essay “Play and Work: A False Dichotomy?” There he made a vital point that game researchers (and social scientists generally) are still prone to forget: if by “play” we are trying to signal a mode of human experience—a way of engaging the world whatever one is doing—then we cannot simultaneously use it reliably as a label for a form of distinct human activity (something that allows us to differentiate categorically between activities that are play and those that are not).

More recently, a few anthropologists have sought to examine games and play without falling prey to either the materialist or the representationalist monism. For the most part, these works have criticized the work/play distinction or abandoned it entirely and have concentrated instead on situating the cultural form of games in specific cultural historical moments. (In this, they resemble those anthropologists throughout the twentieth century who examined the cultural form of ritual
without subjecting it in every case to a litmus test of whether it brought about transcendent experience.) Sherry Ortner directly targeted the limitations of the work/play distinction in her book about Himalayan mountaineering, Life and Death on Mt. Everest. Observing that each era of Everest ascents reflected the cultural logic of its time (military-style assaults in the 1930s and 1940s, “identity”-driven campaigns in the 1970s and 1980s, consumerist tours in the 1990s), Ortner proposed the term “serious games” (no connection to the Serious Games initiative) to get around the pernicious assumption that in games nothing is at stake that really matters. Ellen Oxfeld explored how deeply the playing of mahjong by expatriate Hakka Chinese in Calcutta shed light into their distinctive entrepreneurial ethic. Rather than contradicting their capitalist efforts, gambling at mahjong reflected their practical commitment to the uncertainties of the market itself. My own study of game-playing in a Greek city was offered in a similar vein. Most recently, Paul Festa, in his study of mahjong in Taiwan, showed how game practice was intimately connected to the position of young Taiwanese men in a nation-state characterized by martiality. Online games are also starting to draw anthropological interest.

This work most powerfully suggests that, when the work/play distinction is left behind, we see instead in ludic practice a more useful contrast between a cultural form (a game-like activity, no matter how playfully engaged in) and a mode of cultural experience (a playful disposition towards activities no matter how game-like). This experiential dimension, which may be found in any of a number of circumstances, is to this point understudied in the anthropological literature, but the contours of a useful account of it are there to be found. Anthropology did see a contribution in this vein from a landmark thinker in the area of play, Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi. In 1971, he coauthored with H. Stith Bennett an article on play in American Anthropologist stating explicitly that play should be seen as a state of experience. Specifically, play for them is “a state of experience in which the actor’s ability to act matches the requirements for action in his environment.” They zero in on the issue of possibility (what I would term, following philosophical usage, contingency), and they contrast this play state with states of anxiety (too much contingency) and boredom (too little). It is true that the model they offer ultimately leans too heavily toward a “flow”-based model for play, wherein actors seemingly can be in a playful mode only when they enjoy complete mastery over a contingent situation. This disallows much experience that we might be interested in calling play, such as our experience of a similarly balanced mixture of constraint and possibility before any such mastery is attained. (The old saw about great games comes to mind: easy to learn, difficult to master.) But Csikszentmihalyi and Ben-
nett offered a different perspective on play at a time when few heeded it. We may usefully take from it the principle that play as a disposition is intimately connected with a disordered world that, while of course largely reproduced from one moment to the next, always carries within it the possibility of incremental or even radical change.

A similar argument was made by that most famous of play theorists, Johan Huizinga. Huizinga set the tone for much of the inquiry into games and society in the latter half of the twentieth century with his book *Homo Ludens*. This book bears much responsibility for fostering the unfortunate view, developed more rigidly still by Caillois, that games are activities, culturally sequestered and consequence-free. Still, here, as in many such midcentury works of cultural history, illuminating contradictions abound. As Huizinga’s argument develops, near the end of his text he focuses on something quite different: “Civilization is, in its earliest phases, played. It does not come from play . . . it arises in and as play, and never leaves it.” Huizinga is much more enlightening when he speaks of the “play-element” (just the type of experience or disposition that interests us here), rather than of “play” as a (separable, safe) activity. For him, the play-element—marked by an interest in uncertainty and the challenge to perform that arises in competition, by the legitimacy of improvisation and innovation that the premise of indeterminate circumstances encourages—is opposed above all to utilitarianism and the drive for efficiency. (Caillois likewise, despite his misleading claim that games are occasions of “pure waste,” recognizes the centrality of contingency in games.) Huizinga felt that the play-element had been on the wane in Western civilization since the eighteenth century, threatened by the drive for efficiency and the routinization of experience it brought.

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These tantalizing recognitions of the contingent nature of experience in the world direct us to sources and analogues in philosophical thought. American pragmatist philosophers broke from the Western tradition in their rejection of an ultimately ordered universe: for them, the universe was, as Louis Menand put it, “shot through with contingency.” The pragmatists were not alone in this insight. The phenomenologists also gestured toward it, notably in Martin Heidegger’s concept of “thrownness” (which was developed in anthropology by Michael Jackson). The ideas of “practice theory,” as Ortner described it, are also consistent with this picture of the world as an ongoing and open-ended process: Pierre Bourdieu, Marshall Sahlins, Michel de Certeau, and Anthony Giddens each have sought in different ways to overcome determinative
pictures of the world. Although the scope of this essay allows only a broad description of these connections, I suggest that we are at a point where, in recognizing these commonalities, we can begin to forge a useful concept of play that will inform our understanding of experience in a uncertain world.

What are the features of play as a disposition toward the world in all its possibility? First, it is an attitude that is totalizing in the sense that it reflects an acknowledgment of how events, however seemingly patterned or routinized, can never be cordoned off from contingency entirely. As the scientist James Clerk Maxwell put it, the “metaphysical doctrine that from the same antecedents follow the same consequents . . . is not of much use in a world like this, in which the same antecedents never again concur, and nothing ever happens twice.”24 The earthier popular sentiment in American English, “shit happens,” signals the same conviction. Second, the disposition of play is marked by a readiness to improvise, a quality captured by Bourdieu in his development of Marcel Mauss’s concept of the habitus.25 To be practically equipped to act, successfully or not, amid novel circumstances is the condition of being a social actor at all, Bourdieu argues. One can also note John Dewey’s argument that uncertainty is inherent in practice, and that it is in contrast to this practical open-endedness that theoretical claims to certainty seek to marginalize and denigrate practical knowledge.26 Finally, play is a disposition that makes the actor an agent within social processes, albeit in an importantly restrained way; the actor may affect events, but this agency is not confined to the actor’s intent, or measured by it. Rather, it allows for unintended consequences of action.27 This is consistent with Oliver Wendell Holmes’s “bettabilitarianism,” his answer to utilitarianism; every time we act, we effectively make a bet with the universe that may or may not pay off.28

We find the fullest expression of this playful mode in William James’s *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, where he spends some time specifically excluding it from his discussion.29 Endeavoring to find a working, if always imperfect, definition of religious experience—one that will roughly capture what is in practice a wide variety of historically situated religious experiences—he notes that one of its features is a totalizing attitude toward the world; but he has to concede that this also characterizes the nonchalant world view he finds in Voltaire and Ernest Renan. As James writes, “to call it a religious spirit would be odd. Yet it is for the moment [a] reaction on the whole of life.” He continues by quoting a long passage from Renan’s papers: “There are many chances that the world may be nothing but a fairy pantomime of which God has no care. We must therefore arrange ourselves so that on neither hypothesis we shall be completely wrong . . . *In utrumque paratus*, then. Be ready for
anything—that perhaps is wisdom. Give ourselves up, according to the hour, to confidence, to skepticism, to optimism, to irony, and we may be sure that at certain moments at least we shall be with the truth.” In a way, James’s exclusion of this attitude from an earnest inquiry into religion makes sense. Yet it is also surprising, given the similarities one may draw between this attitude and the sensibilities of several of the pragmatist philosophers in whose company James himself largely belongs. Menand most powerfully connects the pragmatists to a contingent worldview by showing the influence of both Darwinism and the chaotic American Civil War on their ideas. Darwin’s picture of the world was, as one critic put it, “the law of higgledy-pigglety,” and this abandonment of a world somehow ordered continued to ring through the thought of Holmes, James, Charles Sanders Peirce, and Dewey. James’s exclusion may perhaps be related to his ongoing attempt to reconcile his pragmatic skepticism of transcendent orderings with his conviction of the reality of transcendent experience. His identification of religious experience with “solemnity,” in contrast to the je m’en fichisme of Renan and Voltaire, marks him as not quite willing to give up on the modern contrast between the serious (work) and the unserious (play).

But despite his reticence on this score, James shows how pragmatism not only provides a foundation for thinking about the world as irreducibly contingent but also prompts us to imagine the relationship between game and play more usefully. A prominent journalist of technology, games, and online communities, Julian Dibbell, has suggested that James’s contributions on religious experience enable us to see religious experience as distinct from ritual as a cultural form. This is a vital insight going forward because it allows us to decouple playful experience from a determinate relationship with games, just as scholars of ritual (many of them anthropologists) have recognized ritual as a cultural form irrespective of whether it brings about religious experience. Thus we may say that a game may prompt a playful disposition, but then again, it may not. Playful experience is not irrelevant to games, on this view, of course. All the same, and just as with ritual, it is the power of the mode of experience associated with it that makes the deployment of the cultural form a tempting project for individuals and institutions. This way of thinking about games and play opens a powerful line of inquiry that situates them amid institutional interests and projects without stumbling over, or getting fixated on, any particular game’s ability to bring about play.

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While the echoes of materialism obscured the cultural import of play from anthropological view over the course of the past century, the elements of an approach that enables us to confront play’s greater prominence were there. These include attention to practice, the pragmatist’s claims about the open-endedness of the world, and the study of ritual as decoupled from religious experience. Anthropology is well positioned to connect these dots because its methodology has always put disciplinary practitioners in intimate relation not only with the (Geertzian) plays of representation, and the (Marxian) constraints and contingencies of materiality, but with social practice in all its exigencies. Practice is where the readiness to improvise finds expression, but the playful attitude that we may identify with it is easily obscured on any number of fronts. These include, on a methodological level, the excesses of dogmatic claims reducing experience to mere meaning or mere materiality; at a quite concrete level, they also include the routinization of human experience that has accompanied the rise of modern institutions. In its study of ritual, anthropology undertook with great success a similar project, whose enabling insights should inform our current inquiries into play not least with regard to the relationship of these institutions to a social form they are beginning to deploy for purposes of their own.

Attempts to use games by institutions are not entirely new, of course. The Olympic Games have long been a site for such gambits, and those in Berlin in 1936 are just the most salient example of a general condition. It is an instructive one, however, because it so clearly demonstrates the power and limitations of games when put to use by institutions. The Nazi state had already used ritual (and then-new media) to great effect, as encapsulated by Leni Riefenstahl’s *Triumph of the Will*, and the Games were to be another opportunity to display the power and legitimacy of Nazi ideals. This was to happen through their administration of the games but also through the outcomes on the field of play, where Aryan natural superiority was to be verified. The potency of a gaming context for such a claim to legitimacy may surprise us as incongruous; and yet it should not—precisely because of the way games, as outlined above, manifest a playful disposition that, seeming to lift them above institutional interests, can, by the same token, be seen to validate those interests impartially. Just as ritual provides a context for the experience of a transcendent order, so games provide a context for the display of a ready and capable disposition, one that acts amid the disorder of the game and, by extension, the disordered world itself. Meaning is generated amid practical experience in either case but in ways that are importantly distinct and that, moreover, retain an inherent capacity to baffle prediction and thus frustrate their instrumental use.
Witness Jesse Owens: he exploded the Nazis’ Olympic project in thrilling fashion, and his performance enables us to recognize the instructive difference between the cultural forms of ritual and game. Rituals, despite the fact that they can go wrong—the fact, that is, they are subject to contingency—aim to bring about determinate outcomes. That their individual and institutional sponsors mobilize meaning and other resources as part of their quests for legitimacy and status has been one of the lessons of the anthropological study of ritual. Games, while also a contrived cultural form and subject to similar kinds of sponsorship, are marked by the legitimacy of their indeterminacy, that is, their outcomes are supposed to be contingent. So while games, like foxhunting for example, have at times under the practical demands of their sponsors become transformed into confirmatory rites, games can also outfox their sponsors, outstrip the intention to control them, and run wild in their outcomes and implications.

The institutions making use of games today are increasingly the digital institutions that inhabit our computer-mediated world. My work has recently concerned Linden Lab, the makers of the virtual world Second Life, and in that work, I explore at length how Linden Lab has incorporated games into its attempts to govern its creation and itself. In making Second Life, Linden employees drew upon a number of techniques and elements from computer game design (a background that many of the developers at the company shared). The result was a creation that was designed, like a game, to balance a compelling mix of constraint and possibility for its users, who then would create objects and experiences in Second Life’s virtual world, retaining in the process the intellectual property rights to their creations.

But this intentional open-endedness of their product created a problem for Linden Lab, which was continually challenged to respond to the swiftly changing landscape of the world they had made. Top-down authority, whether bureaucratic or charismatic, was disallowed by what I have termed Linden Lab’s “technoliberal” ideology, which made generating legitimate decisions doubly difficult. One way out of this bind was a kind of corporate recursion: they turned to games internally, as tools with which to solve the problems their own game products had engendered. In one case, Linden Lab implemented a game that simulated chess matches into their internal decision-making process. An employee wrote a computer game that, on a Web site, pitted two company tasks against each other. Employees would choose from each matched pair a winner (by deciding which task was more “important”), whereupon two new tasks would appear in a new match. Over time, and via the incorporation into the code of a chess-ranking algorithm, the game generated a list of company tasks presumably ranked by their importance to the company as a whole.
Tellingly, these results lacked the legitimacy they were designed to have. The tasks were drawn from all over the company, which comprised at the time about forty-five people, and thus any pair of tasks presented for ranking was likely to be felt by the player as too heterogenous (in respects such as scale, or domain) to permit their being authoritatively and credibly judged: one memorable example pitted adding a urinal to the men’s bathroom against implementing an obscure computer server software update. The chess-ranking of tasks was eventually abandoned, and the Lindens continued to try other nonbureaucratic techniques to generate legitimate decisions.

As Berlin, so Linden: these diverse examples may lessen somewhat our concern about the degree to which games may be utilized by institutions as a kind, as it were, of domestic appliance. At all events, they reinforce my anthropological suspicion that the legitimate indeterminacy of games makes them, on the whole, somewhat less pliable than ritual in all its ordered spectacle. But there are other current examples that should still give us pause. Dibbell, for example, has written about the difficulties in nailing down an understanding of “gold farming” in China, an example of the phenomenon he calls ludo-capitalism. Gold farming is the name given to the number of ways in which people, usually in low wage economies, are paid to play an online game, such as World of Warcraft, to accumulate its in-world currency (“gold”), certain in-world items that confer advantages in play, or to “level up” a character in the game—accumulations any of which can then be sold over the Internet for “real” money to a player typically negotiating the deal from a privileged real-world niche in a high wage economy. How, Dibbell asks, should we make sense of being paid to play, albeit in a different and somewhat routinized way, a game that is compelling enough to attract more than ten million players worldwide? What are we to make of the fact that Dibbell found some of these workers playing their own World of Warcraft characters, on their own accounts, after work hours?

Another example will draw out more clearly certain implications of the emerging divide between the institutional makers of digital games (and game-like environments) and their human player-users; it will illustrate, as well, how these are concerns not limited to virtual worlds. This example is the online code-writing contest located at TopCoder.com. TopCoder hosts contests (weekly, with a larger one biannually) to code (for example, write software for) solutions to complex real-world problems. TopCoder owns the code submitted to them in the competitions, paying out a one-time cash award for each, although “rated” members having proved themselves can join a development team to receive some royalties for commercial uses of their work. Here, game design forms the incentive to voluntary participation, specifically the application of effort and cultural capital (competence) to perform in a compellingly
contrived, indeterminate system. TopCoder’s players are competing to demonstrate programming ability in the application of their expertise to a novel problem in urgent circumstances, against time and against each other. The success of the enterprise depends on TopCoder’s ability to tap into this playful competitive mode or disposition while the entire game activity is extrinsically governed by an ulterior profit motive, geared to practical applications of the winning solutions after the fact. These are not, of course, inevitably cases of labor exploitation in the Marxian sense. Further research would be needed to evaluate the nature of this ludo-capitalism, but along with the use of games to attempt to colonize creativity, we should also notice the implicit distinction here between “players” and the sponsoring institutions that create the conditions for such play. What we are beginning to see is the bifurcation of creativity, separating those who are creative within a ludic system from those game designers creatively contriving the ludic system itself.

What is most provocative about the current moment, then, is how the explosion of thoroughly digitized games prompts us to confront the play element and its powerful yet indeterminate relationship to the emergent cultural form of computerized games. As institutions are coming to deploy games in their governance and in their engagement with a computer-mediated public, we may be well advised to see their efforts as similar to the age-old and ongoing attempts to employ ritual to prompt sentiments for nations or other groupings. The disposition of play is, in many ways, the latest sentiment to have been turned into the object of institutional desire. Some of us are prepared to bet that its roots in indeterminacy will be a bulwark against corporate takeover; but a bet is probably the most we can hazard.

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**NOTES**

1. This exclusion was all the more ironic given that the term “stakes” from the sixteenth century denoted that which was risked or wagered, as in games of chance. Anthropological treatments of gambling evaded this contradiction and brought the matter back around to materiality by narrowly construing the gambling as a functionalist redistribution of wealth. See, for example, Laura J. Zimmer, “Gambling with Cards in Melanesia and Australia: An Introduction,” *Oceania* 58, no. 1 (1987): 1–5.


10 The Serious Games Initiative is housed at the Woodrow Wilson Center and aims to support the development of games that educate or can be used to manage public policy efforts. See http://www.seriousgames.org.
19 See Caillois’ discussion of *alea* in *Man, Play, and Games*, 17–19. Elsewhere he writes, “It is . . . uncertain activity. Doubt must remain until the end” (ibid., 7).
30 James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 37.
32 Dibbell, comment at Workshop on Productive Play, May 17–18, 2008, at the Beckman Center on the campus of the University of California–Irvine.
36 I situate this technoliberal ideology amid postwar American ideas about technology, authority, and individualism in *Making Virtual Worlds*.