

Caillois names and defines four categories of games: *agôn* (competition on an artificially leveled playing field), *alea* (games of chance), *mimicry* (role-playing, or make pretend), and *Ilinx* (disorientating oneself, thrill-seeking and risk taking). Finally he explains the dichotomy between the childish glee of *paidia* and the arbitrary self-challenge of *ludus*.

Caillois attempts to define play (as an activity that is voluntary, has an unknown conclusion, and produces nothing) and to classify the types of games that may be played, breaking them into games of skill, luck, imitation, and adrenaline, while also categorizing them by their degree of structure and rules.

What is a game? Though they can never be defined absolutely, Caillois, Suits, Costikyan, and Björk and Holopainen give their varied opinions based on different views and professions. Then Caillois disassembles Huzingas' definition of play, classifies games into *agôn*, *alea*, *mimicry*, and *ilinx*, and scales games between *paidia* and *ludus*.

Caillois defines play as activities with the characteristics of being "free", "separate", "uncertain", "unproductive", rule-bound, and/or "make-believe", and constructs his classification of games into four main categories: *agôn* (competition), *alea* (chance), *mimicry* (simulation), and *ilinx* (vertigo), which are further refined by a game's leaning towards *paidia* (chaos) or *ludus* (order).

Agon: Balanced competition validates superiority.

Alea: Passivity? Appealing. Randomness equalizes.

Mimicry: Improvisational role-playing, spectacle.

Ilinx: Disorientation--"pleasurable torture"!

Paidia: Instinctive exuberance.

Ludus: Refined, contrived, disciplined. Mastery rewarded.

Gamer-o-namer-o,
Roger Caillois of France
Helpfully classified
Games that we play:
Ruled or else make-believe,
Free, risky, bounded, with
Unproductivity
Ruling the day.

Caillois realizes the difficulty in classifying different modes of play. He comes up with the categories of competition, chance, simulation, and vertigo. Within each of these categories, there is a relation to levels spanning from child-like play to play that requires mature skill.

Play is ubiquitous throughout the animal kingdom. At its foundation, play is unproductive, contained, unreal, and optional. Caillois attempts to classify all forms of

play into games of competition, chance, simulation, and vertigo; each type spans the continuum from instinctive improvisation to calculated skill.

Caillois expands on Huizinga's definition of play: unproductive (no goods produced), voluntary, removed (isolated from the real world), unpredictable, and either ruled (e.g., chess) or make-believe (e.g., WoW). He categorizes games as: agon (competition of some skill), alea (no control over outcome) mimicry, ilinx (pursuit of vertigo, e.g., horseback riding).

Caillois outlines the qualities an activity must possess to be considered play. He further classifies play according to four categories, *agôn* (competition), *alea* (chance), *mimicry* (simulation), and *ilinx* (vertigo). Caillois also describes the rule-based nature of play along a spectrum ranging from *paidia* (free, improvisational) to *ludus* (disciplined, highly rule-based).

Caillois' piece circulates around categorizing different types of play, to define play. The four main types of play are competition type *agon*, chance and gambling type *alea*, simulation type *mimicry*, and disorienting and vertigo type *ilinx*. All of these are also stratified according to the amount of organization involved.

Because playing is simultaneously unpredictable, unproductive, uninhibited, and unreal, while also structured and regulated, such a multitude of games exist that classification into those seeking competition, pure chance, imitation, and distorted perceptions becomes hardly possible. Nevertheless, either sheer excitement or satisfaction lies at the root of all play.

Caillois discusses the classifications and definitions of play taking into consideration the way peoples throughout different times and cultures have utilized available resources to play. He contends that there are four classifications: Competition, Chance, Simulation, and Vertigo, and a spectrum of organization and sophistication for each.

Roger Caillois seeks to define the idea of play and its role in different types of games. From his analysis, we see four types of games – competition (*agôn*), chance (*alea*), simulation (*mimicry*), and vertigo (*ilinx*) – each containing a higher degree of play, from *paidia*, to the lowest degree, *ludus*.

People need definitions. Their need arises from a purpose, (philosophy, design, etc...). Purpose influences their definitions. Caillois creates a venn diagram for the set of "all games". He names characteristics of games, and organizes games by their characteristics. He distinguishes "play" with respect to animals, children, and adults.

Caillois analyzes play within society, categorizing it as "agon", activity utilizing skill, "alea", ability independent games of luck, "mimicry", play where impersonation and simulation become reality, and "ilinx", pursuit of vertigo and sensation, all of which span a spectrum of "paidia" and "ludus", seemingly effortless unrestrained jubilation or meticulous dedication.

Caillois provides a definition of play, being free, separate, uncertain, unproductive, rule driven or make believe (the last two are not exclusive or required), and a categorization of games based on Agon (competition), Alea (chance), Mimicry, and Ilinx (vertigo) with each category ranging from paidia (turbulence) to ludus (rules).

The Caillois text outlines a simple taxonomy of games. The author separates games into four categories: Agon (competition with set rules), Alea (games of chance), Mimicry (games of make-believe), and Ilinx (games of disorientation). Games can also range on a sliding-scale between Paidia (unregulated) to Ludus (strict rules).

Caillois examines the concept of play by first attempting to define the term and the qualities that play must have and then by separating the different types of play into classes and providing a number of examples for each class.