

Call for papers

Seminar on the hermeneutics of games and play to be held at the IT University of Copenhagen, 19th - 20th of April 2022.

In the study of games, hermeneutics has long been recognized as an important theoretical perspective through which to understand the interpretation of games. That said, there is no consensus on the role of hermeneutic interpretation in playing games, and game scholars (e.g., Aarseth 2003, Aarseth and Möring 2020, Arjoranta 2011, Arsenault and Perron 2008, Karhulahti 2012, Kłosiński 2018, 2021, Leino 2012, Majkowski 2017, Martin 2019, Möring 2013, Salin 2018) have applied several existing hermeneutic approaches and theories to different aspects of games, play, and player (implied or actual).

Therefore, the time is right to evaluate the state of the art with regard to the hermeneutics of games and play and consider unresolved issues and questions yet to be asked. Is there a 'ludo-hermeneutics' and if so, what does it look like? If not, could such a theory be synthesized from existing research, and do we need one altogether? In continuation, what is the object of existing or future ludo-hermeneutics? Is it the game, objects, or events within the game, or perhaps the player or the playing practice? Can hermeneutic analysis of games be used to understand other domains of knowledge, such as simulations and virtual worlds? Given Wittgenstein's account of games as phenomena with family resemblances, is it even possible to imagine one unifying hermeneutic of games, or do we need multiple? What is the role of media and technology in ludo-hermeneutics? How can ludo-hermeneutics be employed in practical game analysis or applied in critical theory of games? Finally, while game scholars often engage the hermeneutics of Heidegger (2010) and Gadamer (2013), is there anything to be gained from bringing other approaches into the discussion such as critical hermeneutics (Roberge 2011; Thompson 1981), material hermeneutics (e.g., Verbeek 2021) as well as feminist (e.g., Code 2003; Warnke 1993) or Marxist (e.g., Jameson 2015) approaches?

With this seminar, we wish to bring together scholars working with hermeneutic perspectives on games and play, with the purpose of exploring common grounds, differences, and future directions. As we intend to foster in-depth peer discussion, this will be a closed seminar with a limited number of participants.

Participants are invited to submit position papers, each of which will be given half an hour for presentation and half an hour for subsequent discussion. It is our aim that these position papers will later be published in an anthology of game hermeneutics.

The organizers will cover up to 3 hotel nights and refund pre-agreed travel costs.

The seminar is organized by Ida Jørgensen and Espen Aarseth in connection with the ERC Horizon 2020 research project Making Sense of Games.

References

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