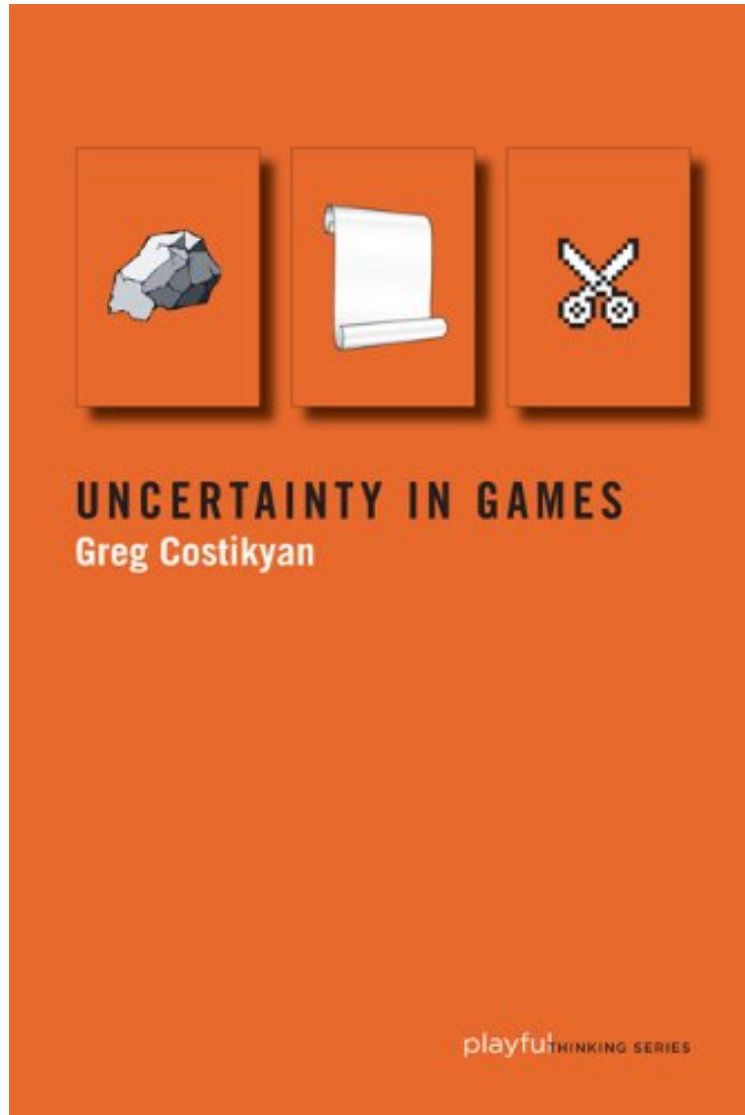


[Download free pdf] Uncertainty in Games (Playful Thinking)

## Uncertainty in Games (Playful Thinking)

*Greg Costikyan*

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**Greg Costikyan : Uncertainty in Games (Playful Thinking)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Uncertainty in Games (Playful Thinking):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Uncertainty rules.By LeTchuckMakes a strong case for the presence of uncertainty in games, and the difference between it and randomness. I completely agree with the idea that uncertainty, in its many faces, can increase the appeal and value of a game and make for a a more interesting game.Worth a read if you're looking for some ideas on your next journey to the game design world.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Short discussion on the matterBy Geraldo XEXEOThis is a good discussion about

uncertainty in games, and is worth its value, giving some hints for designers. However, it is a bit too small. The book could continue in different ways. 12 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Rambling and without substance

By Robert M. Seater I've read a lot of books about games. Sometimes they provide advance, sometimes they note larger patterns trends, sometimes they provide taxonomies, and sometimes they just point out insightful anecdotes. Even when one of those books seems mostly repetitive, there are some good insights. This book doesn't seem to do any of those things, and I can't honestly say I learned anything at all from reading it -- I am left feeling mildly irritated at the writing style and without anything to show for it. After reading a section, I am hard pressed to describe anything that was actually said. The book rambles on without saying anything, page after page. I can't see any kind of thesis or theme, nor is there concrete advice or abstract observations. There is just a string of trite comments about classic games, mostly the author describing himself playing the game -- but not with any depth, insight, or detail. I gained no new insight on either the games I knew well nor on the games I had not heard of. It spends a little bit of time giving a (poor) summary of Caillois's classic book, but even there the author seems to have failed to grasp even the most basic points of substance of what Caillois was saying. On the rare occasion the book starts to actually starts to make any kind of claim or observation, it is oversimplified to the point of being clearly false. E.g. It begins one chapter saying "culture is what differentiates humans from other animals". No. Culture is one of the properties that distinguishes humans, although even that property is not clear cut -- many other animals exhibit crude forms of culture, although rich extensive culture is distinctively human. But there are other properties that also distinguish humans. The author reduces a complex topic to a trite statement that is just wrong. Worse, I have no idea why the author even wants to make a point about culture, since the rest of the chapter then rambles on about other topics, failing to ever connect culture back to the topic of the book -- uncertainty in games. The claims about culture are tiny part of the book, but they exhibit the author's overall failure to use words precisely, his failure to have a focused point to an essay, and his apparent lack of knowledge of the subjects discussed. There are too many good, great, and even mediocre books about games to waste time reading bad ones. I advise passing on this one.

How uncertainty in games -- from Super Mario Bros. to Rock/Paper/Scissors -- engages players and shapes play experiences. In life, uncertainty surrounds us. Things that we thought were good for us turn out to be bad for us (and vice versa); people we thought we knew well behave in mysterious ways; the stock market takes a nosedive. Thanks to an inexplicable optimism, most of the time we are fairly cheerful about it all. But we do devote much effort to managing and ameliorating uncertainty. Is it any wonder, then, asks Greg Costikyan, that we have taken this aspect of our lives and transformed it culturally, making a series of elaborate constructs that subject us to uncertainty but in a fictive and nonthreatening way? That is: we create games. In this concise and entertaining book, Costikyan, an award-winning game designer, argues that games require uncertainty to hold our interest, and that the struggle to master uncertainty is central to their appeal. Game designers, he suggests, can harness the idea of uncertainty to guide their work. Costikyan explores the many sources of uncertainty in many sorts of games -- from Super Mario Bros. to Rock/Paper/Scissors, from Monopoly to CityVille, from FPS Deathmatch play to Chess. He describes types of uncertainty, including performative uncertainty, analytic complexity, and narrative anticipation. And he suggests ways that game designers who want to craft novel game experiences can use an understanding of game uncertainty in its many forms to improve their designs.

Once again, Greg Costikyan has given us an original and insightful angle on game design. In a world inundated with overwrought megabytes about fun, graphics, and immersion, Costikyan shows that an analysis of the role of uncertainty in games sheds important light on the process of game design. This book should be required reading for game designers. (Chris Crawford, former head of Atari's Games Research Group, and founder of the Game Developers Conference) Until now, uncertainty has been a shadowy concept in the world of game design; hard to put a finger on, hard to pin down. In this incisive text, rich with examples, Greg Costikyan captures uncertainty, dissects it, analyzes it, then miraculously brings it back to life and sets it free, all in the name of showing us what uncertainty truly is: the secret force that makes us love games. (Jesse Schell, Carnegie Mellon University; CEO, Schell Games) Greg Costikyan is a true veteran of the game industry. His career spans the earliest online videogames, tabletop role-playing games and wargames, and recent Facebook and casual hits. Uncertainty in Games puts Costikyan's considerable experience and pointed intellect to good use. The result is some of the most insightful, accessible, and witty writing about games in recent memory. There is one thing I have no uncertainty about: my game design students will be reading Uncertainty in Games. (Eric Zimmerman, independent game designer founding faculty, NYU Game Center) Uncertainty in Games is sure to provide readers of all stripes many satisfying 'Aha!' moments. For gamers, those might take the form of 'That's why I got hooked on Game X.' For developers, there's a wealth of specific advice for providing deeper, more surprising experiences. Academics will discover new tools of critical analysis rooted in the unique perspective of a hands-on game designer. Even publishers will find insights into how better to retain players and monetize them more effectively. In this brief, easy read, Costikyan truly does offer something for everyone. (Warren Spector, award-winning veteran game developer) About the Author Greg Costikyan, an award-winning designer of board, tabletop,

roleplaying, computer, online, mobile, and social games, is Senior Game Designer for Loot Drop, Inc. He is the author of four science fiction/fantasy novels.