

Media Transformation

Vorlesung

WiSe 2021-22

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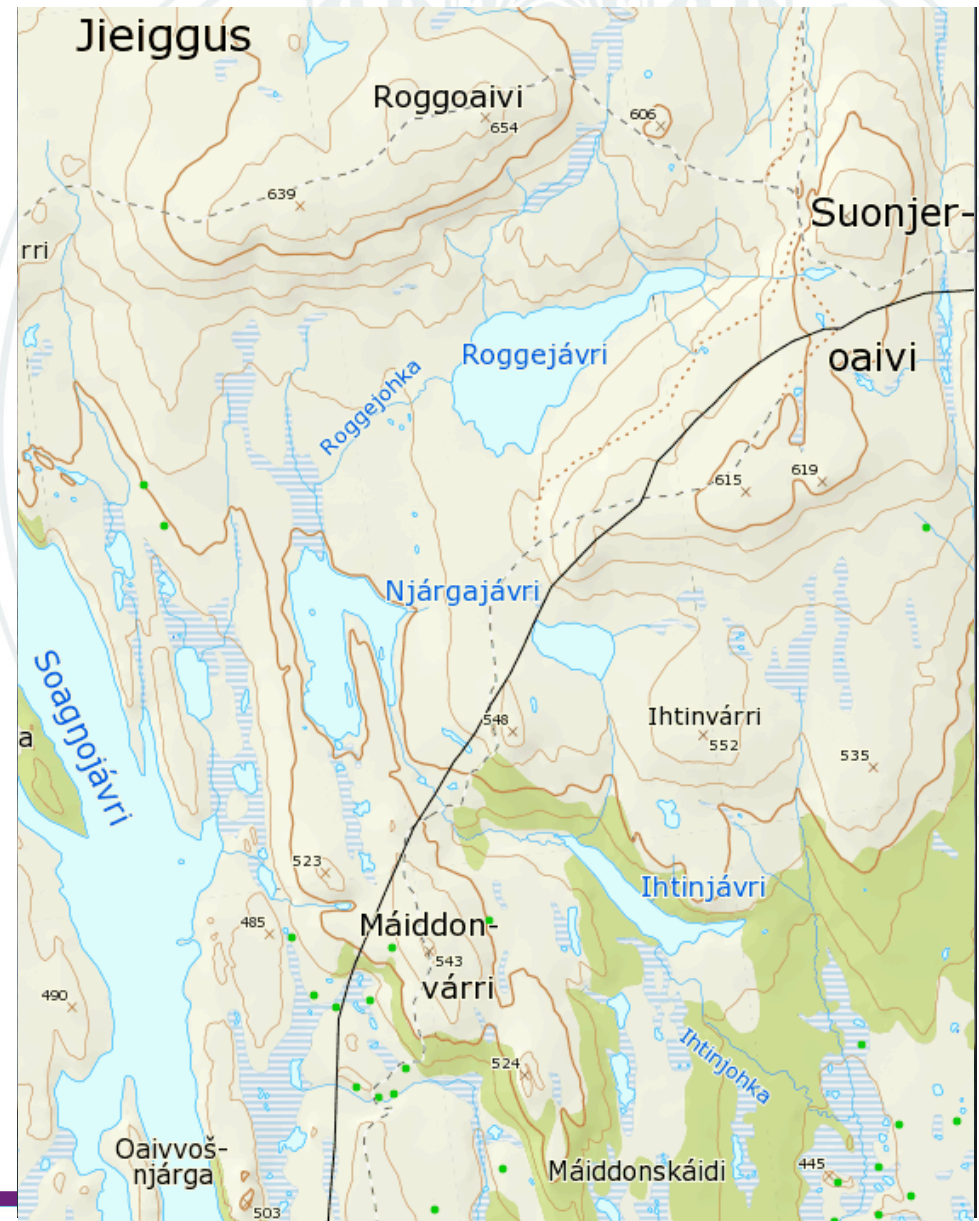
Woche 6



Limitations of choice

- How many ways to the mountain?
 - can follow the path
 - or another path
 - or off path
- Continuous choice

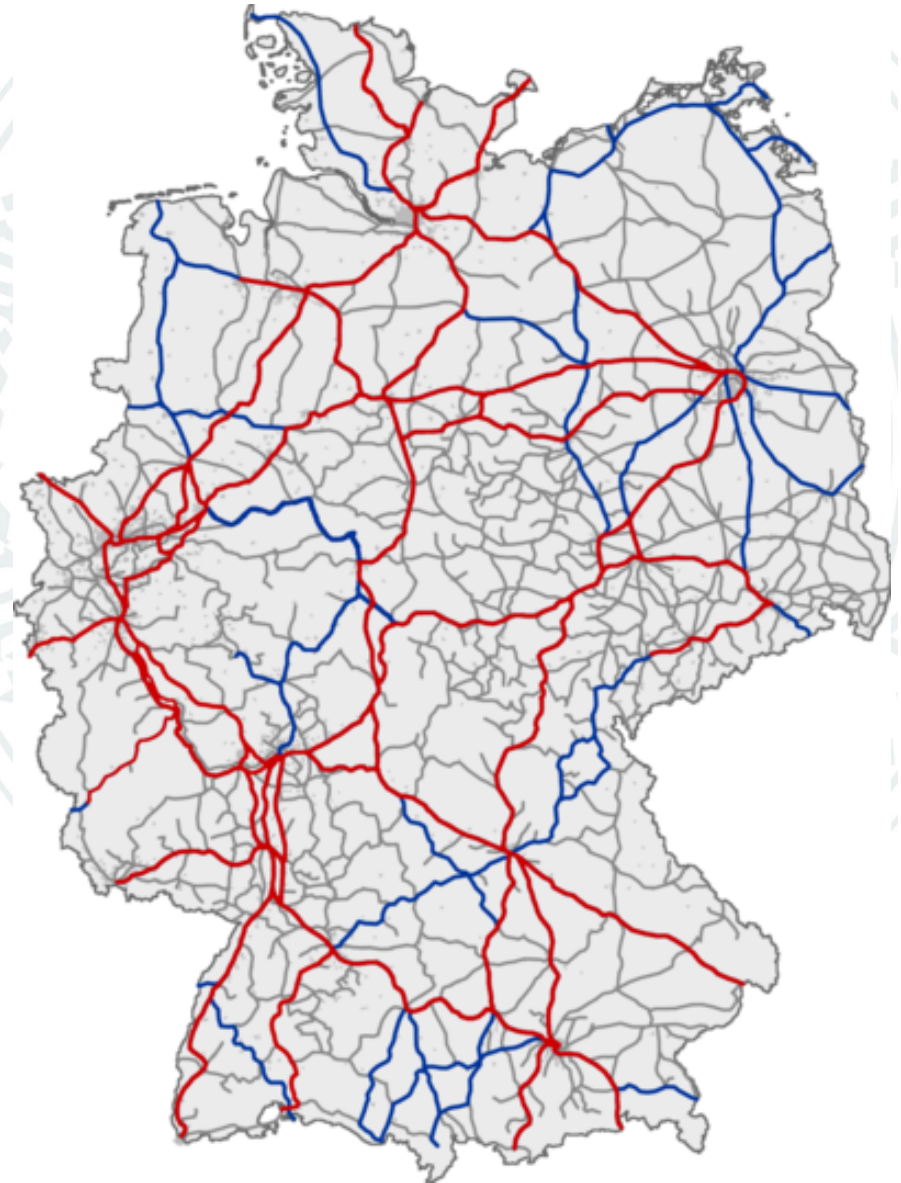
Caspar David Friedrich. Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer, um 1817. Hamburger Kunsthalle.
Norgeskart. <http://www.norgeskart.no/>



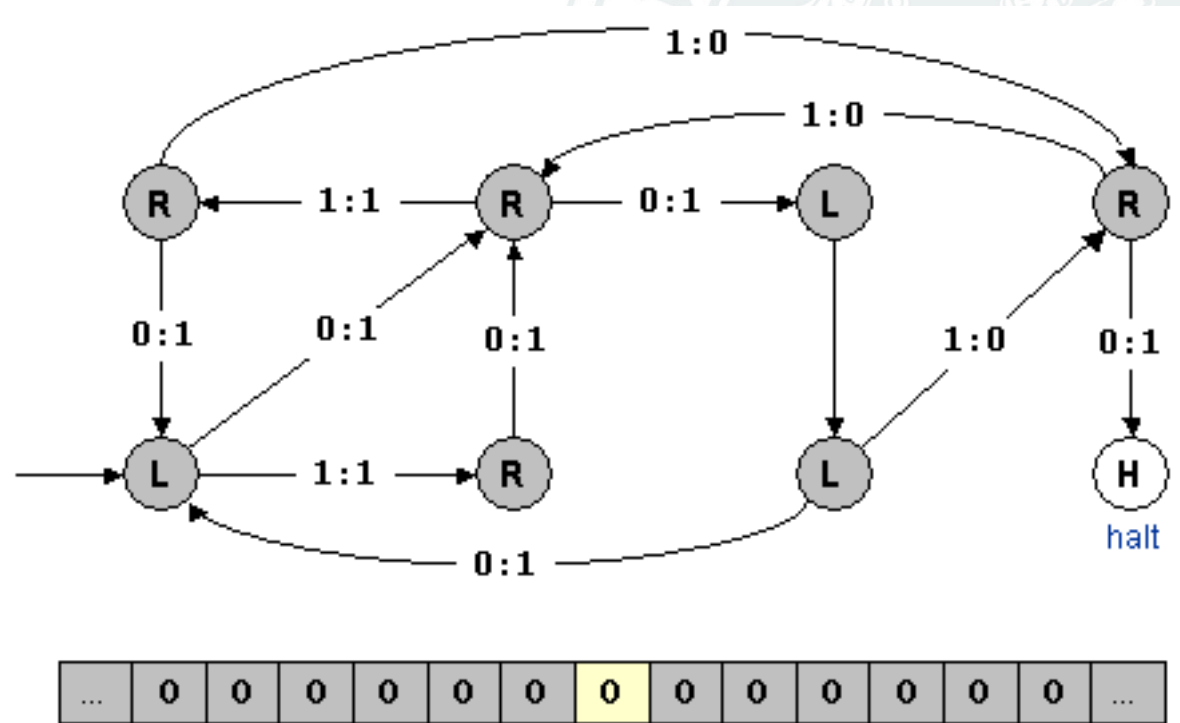
Limitations of choice

- How many train routes to Hamburg?
 - can follow one track
 - or another track
 - not off track
- Discrete choice

Bahn-Streckenkarte_Deutschland.png: Quelle derivative work: YouthOfSword (talk) - Bahn-Streckenkarte_Deutschland.png



States as networks



Robert Sedgewick and Kevin Wayne. (2000–2016). *Introduction to Programming in Java*. 5.4 Computability. <http://introcs.cs.princeton.edu/java/54computability/>



Movement

- Through
 - a landscape
 - a train network
 - a text
 - a painting
 - a VR game
- Like painting and poetry
 - no absolute differences
 - different expressions
 - different humans



Games and life

“I would like people to play it once...because that’s life. Life you can only play once...I would like people to have this experience that way.”

[...] it is a game, and Cage understands that people will naturally want to go back and play through again, and even perhaps reload a previous save point to avoid unpleasant results that might occur because of actions taken in the game.

To this, Cage says, “I’m fine with that, but the right way to enjoy Heavy Rain is really to make one thing because it’s going to be your story. It’s going to be unique to you. It’s really the story you decided to write...I think playing it several times is also a way to kill the magic of it.”

David Cage about Heavy Rain in: Gaskill, J. (2009). Quantic Dream's David Cage: Play Heavy Rain Several Times, "Kill The Magic Of It." <http://www.g4tv.com/thefeed/blog/post/698809/quantic-dreams-david-cage-play-heavy-rain-several-times-kill-the-magic-of-it/>



Music and singularity

- What are you doing in ten years from now?
- Play. I hope that one day I will manage to gather all the threads in this one tone that will knock down all the human beings on Earth. Aarrgghh!!!

Ottar Skagen is interviewing Bugge Wesseltoft, in Jazznytt, nr.1, 1993.
http://www.wesseltoft.de/press/bugge_jazznytt93.pdf



Beyond the limits

- Music of one tone
 - simplicity
- Games only played once
 - life
- The aim to get beyond the limits of the medium



Freedom in storytelling

- Telling a story
 - or
- Creating a story?



Freedom of text based stories

- High: telling story
- Being told story
 - this is where interactivity is most relevant?
- Low: reading story



Freedom in storytelling

- Before the story is told
 - freedom
- After the story is told
 - locked

- When the walk is walked it is fixed
 - but we can always walk again
 - and tell new stories



How close can one get?

- The aim for reality
 - confessional literature
- Write your life
 - play your life?
 - design the game of your life?
 - of others' lives?
- Can we make continuous choices in games?
 - or in life?



Text as code

- Performance
- Text as a code (to be decoded)
- as score (to be played)
 - improvisation
- The fact that somebody gives you alternatives does not mean you are free
 - but not that you are unfree either
- How do YOU tell stories?



Exercise

- Create small groups
- Tell each other stories
- For each story
 - analyse how it is told
 - analyse its relationship to events
- Report back
- What would it take to make the stories interactive?



Freedom in storytelling

- Telling a story
 - or
- Creating a story?



Narratives and games

- Computer generated narrative
 - from data to text
 - weave the story from datapoint to datapoint
- Playing the game
 - from state machine to game
 - weave your game story from state to state
- Some states are close to continuous
 - like moving across the map
- Others are discrete
 - run ∨ hide the knife ∨ clean ∨ ...



Freedom in games

- Computer games run on Turing complete machines, but
 - complexity
 - random
 - human players (MMOGs)
- Novels are also written in discrete alphabets
- Human projected intelligence (Eliza)
 - human projected freedom?



Context

- Freedom is always in context
 - What do you want to do?
 - What do you choose: a, b, or c?
- Determinism?
- Freedom from constraints?



Freedom and creation

Before creation

During creation

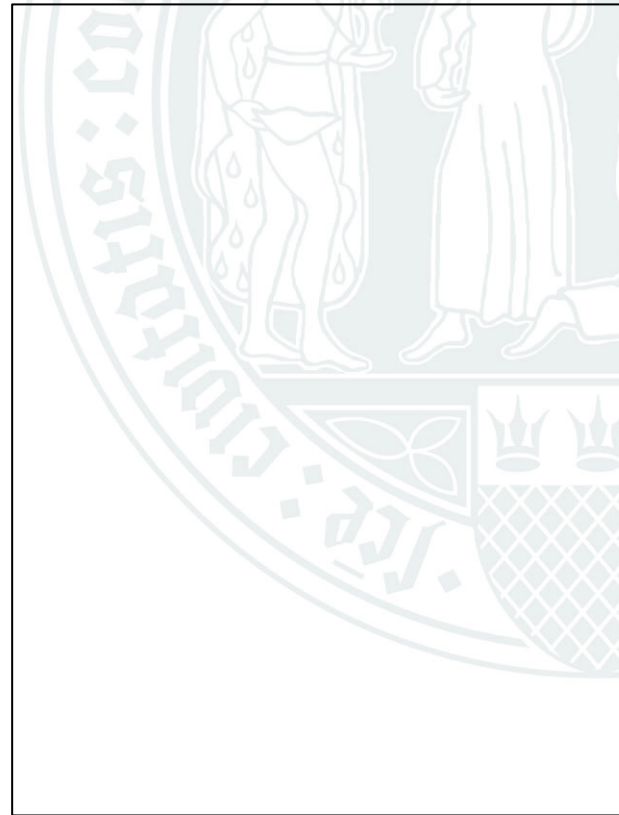
After creation



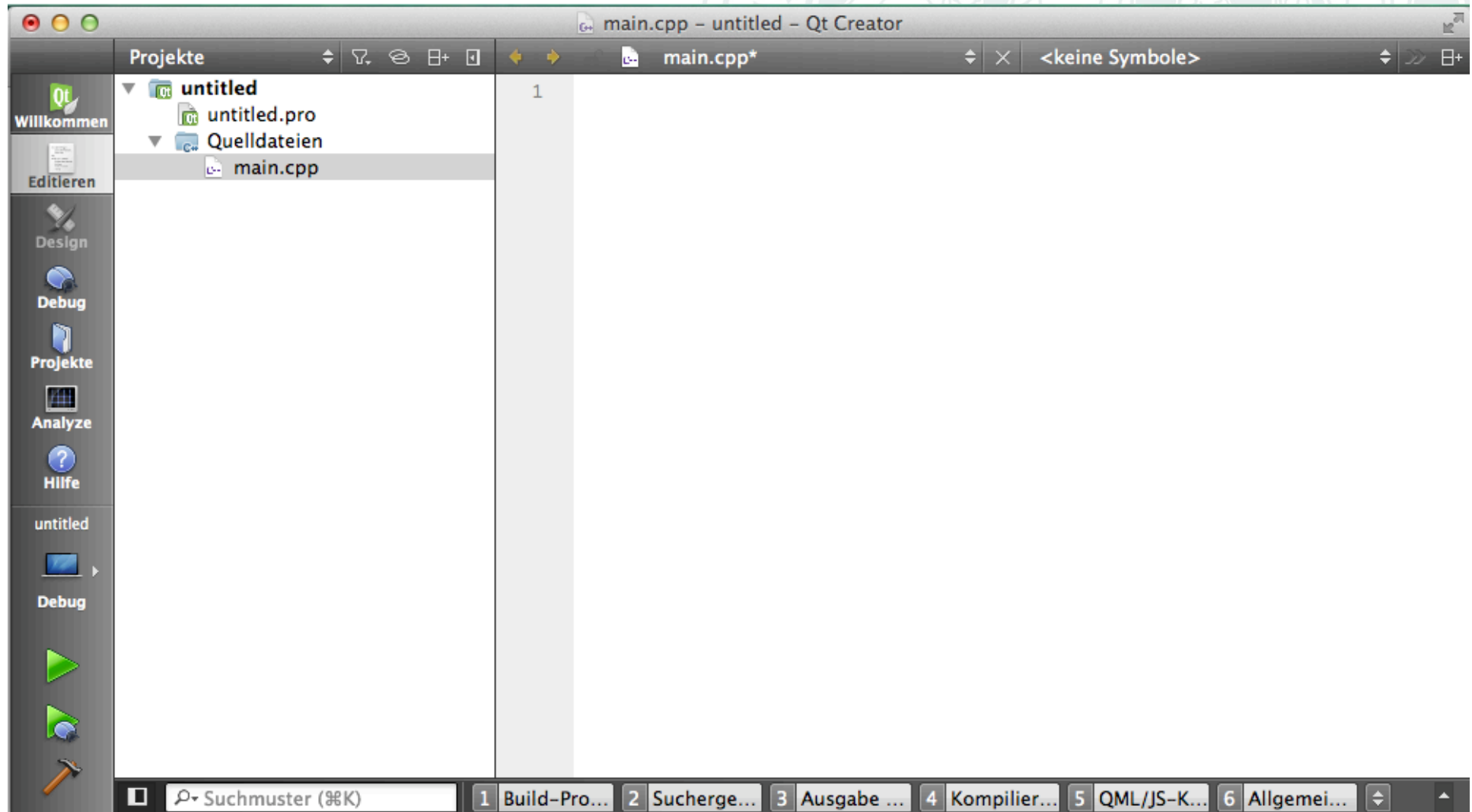
- Interactivity gives some freedom
- The work is already created
- But readers/users always re-create



This is full freedom



Or this



Levels of interactivity

- Oral culture
 - storytelling
 - listening to the public
 - adjusting the story
 - the lecture
- Text
 - fixed document
- Interactive storytelling
 - fixed document with variation
 - un-fixed document



Interactive storytelling

- Stories with feedback
 - oral storytelling
- Stories with branching
 - adventure games
- A story can be retold
 - or a game can be replayed
 - life cannot be relived



Interactive storytelling

- Choice
 - types of limitations
- Creating and telling stories
 - complex relationship
- Freedom
 - always contextual
 - determinism?
- Text as code
- Text as score



Live action role-playing games (LARP)

Nur ein Spiel: „Ein Dokumentarfilm über Fantasyrollenspieler.

Das Ziel meiner Dokumentation ist es, die Faszination von Rollenspielen auch Nichtspielern zu erklären.

Anders als im deutschen Fernsehen üblich, wollte ich keine von Sucht oder Amok bedrohten Freaks vorführen, sondern porträtierere "normale" Menschen, die von ihrer Leidenschaft erzählen.“

(Michael Schilhansl)

<https://vimeo.com/16064142>



LARP

- Playing a role
 - instructions
 - but no text
- Developing a character
- World building
- Relationship to life?
 - cannot replay easily
 - “dead” players must take on new characters

