Game and Learn: 
An Introduction to Educational Gaming 
7. Games and Storytelling

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The Characteristics of Game Stories
Ancestry of Interactive Fiction (Montfort)

- Riddles
  - e.g. Riddle of the Sphinx
- Puzzles
  - e.g. Detective Mysteries
- Literary machines
  - e.g. Queneau's 100,000,000,000,000 Poems, other OuLiPo works
- Dungeons & Dragons
- AI Conversational Machines
  - e.g. ELIZA/DOCTOR, SHRDLU
- Early Computer Games
  - e.g. Hunt the Wumpus, Mouse Maze, Trivia

Components of Game Narratives

- Inputs
  - commands (in the world) -> diegetic or hypodiegetic (stories within stories)
  - directives (about the program) -> extradiegetic
- Outputs
  - replies -> diegetic/hypodiegetic
  - reports -> extradiegetic
- Characters and Related Types
  - Player(s)
  - NPC
  - Other Persons
Game Spaces and Narrative Architecture (Jenkins)

- Evocative Spaces
- Enacting Stories
  - Broad goals/conflicts
  - Localized incidents (micronarratives)
- Embedded narratives
  - Game as an information space discovered, structured, and restructured by the player
- Emergent Narratives
  - Constructed by the player

Games and Narrative Levels (Frasca)

Level 1: representation and events ("what happens")
Level 2: manipulation modes ("what the player can do")
Level 3: goal rules ("what the player must do to win")
Level 4: meta-rules ("what player modifications to the other three levels are allowed")
Constructing the Story

The Hero’s Journey (Campbell)

• Three parts to the journey:
  
  • The **Departure**: the hero is called to adventure
    
    • Someone is in need of aid, and the hero is called upon to help
  
  • The **Initiation**: the hero undertakes a journey (physical or spiritual) to reach the goal that will secure the needed aid
    
    • The hero undergoes a process of change
  
  • The **Return**: the hero accomplishes their task, and aid is rendered
    
    • The hero receives some reward
The Detailed Journey

- **The Departure:**
  - The Call to Adventure
  - Refusal of the Call
  - Supernatural Aid
  - The Crossing of the First Threshold
  - Belly of The Whale

- **The Initiation:**
  - The Road of Trials
  - The Meeting With the Goddess
  - Woman as Temptress
  - Atonement with the Father
  - Apotheosis
  - The Ultimate Boon

- **The Return:**
  - Refusal of the Return
  - The Magic Flight
  - Rescue from Without
  - The Crossing of the Return Threshold
  - Master of the Two Worlds
  - Freedom to Live

Character Roles (Propp)

- **Main Characters:**
  - Protagonist (Hero)
  - Antagonist (Villain)
  - Dispatcher
  - Donor
  - Helper
  - Person Sought-For
  - False Protagonist (False Hero)

- **Supporting Characters:**
  - Family Members
  - Connectors
## Character Functions

### Introduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Absentation</td>
<td>A member of the family absents him/herself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Interdiction</td>
<td>An interdiction is given to the hero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Violation</td>
<td>The interdiction is violated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Reconnaissance</td>
<td>A villain makes an attempt to get information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>The villain gets information about the victim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Trickery</td>
<td>The villain tries to deceive the victim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Complicity</td>
<td>The victim is deceived.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Donor Sequence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1st Donor Function</td>
<td>The hero is tested by a donor of a magical agent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Hero's Reaction</td>
<td>The hero reacts to the agent or donor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Receipt of Agent</td>
<td>The hero acquires the use of the magical agent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>The hero is led to the object of search.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Struggle</td>
<td>The hero and villain join in combat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Branding</td>
<td>The hero is branded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Victory</td>
<td>The hero defeats the villain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Liquidation</td>
<td>The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Body of the Story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Villainy</td>
<td>The villain causes harm to a family member. - OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a</td>
<td>Lack</td>
<td>A family member lacks or desires something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mediation</td>
<td>A misfortune is made known, the hero is dispatched.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Begin Counteraction</td>
<td>The hero (seeker) agrees to counteraction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Departure</td>
<td>The hero leaves home.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Hero’s Return

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Return</td>
<td>The hero returns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Pursuit</td>
<td>The hero is pursued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Rescue</td>
<td>The hero is rescued from pursuit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Unrecognized Arrival</td>
<td>The hero, unrecognized, arrives home or elsewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Unfounded Claims</td>
<td>A false hero presents unfounded claims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Difficult Task</td>
<td>A difficult task is proposed to the hero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Solution</td>
<td>The task is resolved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>The hero is recognized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Exposure</td>
<td>The false hero or villain is exposed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Transfiguration</td>
<td>The hero is given a new appearance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Punishment</td>
<td>The villain is punished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Wedding</td>
<td>The hero is married and ascends the throne.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes:

- 12–14 can also occur as a block prior to the 8–11 block;
- 23–24 and 25-26 can also occur prior to 19;
- 17 can occur between 25 and 26.
The Basic Screenplay Paradigm (Field)

**ACT I**

- **First Half**
  - Dramatic Context
  - 25%
  - Plot Point I (approx. 20-30)
    - 17-25%

- **Second Half**
  - Dramatic Context
  - 50%
  - Midpoint
    - About page 60

**ACT II**

- **First Half**
  - Confrontation
  - 67-75%

**ACT III**

- **First Half**
  - Resolution
  - 75%

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Storytelling for Games (Sheldon)

- Five Major Modes:
  - Linear
  - Branching
  - Controlled Branching
  - Web
  - Modular

Linear Storytelling
Linear Storytelling Example: 
*Portal*

Branching Stories
Branching Stories Example: *La Pucelle Tactics*

Controlled Branching
Controlled Branching Example: 
*Grim Fandango*

“Web” Stories
“Web” Stories Example:
*Jak & Daxter: The Precursor Legacy*

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**Modular Storytelling**

```
Perms.
Perm. 1  Dyn. i
Perm. 2  Dyn. i
Perm. 3  Dyn. i
Perm. 4  Dyn. i
Perm. 5  Dyn. i
Perm. 6  Dyn. i
Perm. 7  Dyn. i
Perm. 8  Dyn. i
Perm. 9  Dyn. i
Perm. 10 Dyn. i
Perm. 11 Dyn. i
Perm. 12 Dyn. i
Perm. 13 Dyn. i
Perm. 14 Dyn. i
Perm. 15 Dyn. i
```

First Story Step

Final Story Step
Modular Storytelling In Action

Modular Storytelling Example: 
*Far Cry 2*
Resources Cited

• The Characteristics of Game Stories:
•**Constructing the Story:**
  • Propp, V. *Morphology of the Folktale*. Univ. of Texas Press. (1968)
  • *Proppian Folktale Outline Generator v1.0*. Online at: http://www.stonedragonpress.com/wicca_201/vladimir_propp/oral_tradition_00_a.html

•**Game Videos:**
  • *Portal*: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSxmDlql62k
  • *La Pucelle Tactics*: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leluVROEsGo
  • *Grim Fandango*: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtOMCJByp2c
  • *Jak & Daxter: The Precursor Legacy*: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvdC6AOqu8U
  • *Far Cry 2*: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Nn3N9GSSsg