

# Three Little Pigs and a Wolf: A Remediation.

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## ABSTRACT

This paper describes the design process and methods used while remediating the classical fairy tale of “The Three Little Pigs” to a Point-n-Click Adventure game.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

People always used narratives in order to communicate, to pass on stories or traditions, to transfer news to others who were not able to witness important events. Furthermore, as society became more educated narratives started being used as a way to express feelings, emotions and ideas. Not too many decades ago, narratives were conceptualized primarily in written form or at movies or theatrical plays. With the rapid development of technology, new ways of presenting narrative works appeared. Museum exhibits, video games, board games, art installations are a few different ways of narrative representation that emerged from the transition to a more digital society. This technological development also gave the opportunity to artists, writers, game developers and programmers to revisit any work of art or literature and try to present them from a new perspective. A method most commonly used is re-mediation, that is the process of refashioning, remaking a concept in a different medium. Here the concept changes to fit the guidelines of the exact medium which is chosen. This paper describes the re-mediation of the classical fairy tale of “The Three Little Pigs” [1]. The medium chosen for this re-mediation is a Point-and-Click Adventure Game and the software that was used is Adventure Game Studio [4].

## 2. THREE LITTLE PIGS

The fable of the Three Little Pigs was first included in [1]. The story is about three pigs that leave the safety of their mother and try to make it by their own. In this new endeavour, their personalities become clear by the choices they make in building a new home. Two of the pigs have a more easygoing attitude towards life and try to avoid as much work as they can, so they choose to build houses, one out of straw and the other out of wood, with the help of a man they meet. The third pig being more responsible and hard working, builds a house out of bricks in order to feel more secure. The writer in order to test and validate the choices the pigs made, introduce a wolf who destroys eventually the first two houses and eats the pigs. Upon finding the brick house he is unable to destroy it and tries to trick the pig into coming out. One more time, it is clear that this pig is more mature and smart than his brothers and outsmarts the wolf. In the end the wolf due to his frustration climbs down the chimney only to find a terrible death from the water that was boiling at the pig’s fireplace.

This fairy tale tries not only to entertain the reader but to transmit some ethical messages and morals. Specifically, it is promoting the idea of hard work and the consequences of actions that do not comply with this idea. The first two pigs, put almost zero effort in finding a way to build their houses. They chose the easy way, thus resulting in their death as the houses were not safe enough to withstand the wolf’s attack. On the other hand, the third pig, worked hard and smart and the result was building a safe environment. Putting effort on building a chimney will eventually result in the wolf’s death and the salvation of the pig.

## 3. THE GAME

### 3.1 Structure

The game is a remediation of the classical fairy tale of “The Story of the Three Little Pigs” [1]. In the original fable, fabula/story and sjuzhet/discourse move in a linear way, the wolf is bound to visit the pigs’ houses in a specific order only moving forward in time. In the game on the other hand the plot is being enforced with additional possibilities for the hero. Furthermore, the player has now the control of the order that the events will take place. Visiting the “Memory Lane” (See Fig.1), the player triggers a flashback that explains how the pigs came to build their houses. This additional information fixes the problem of the Nonnarrated [6] element that exists in the original story which takes as a given fact that the pigs just know to build houses. Moreover, some Disnarrated [6] aspects, meaning alternative outcomes, were addressed in the game. Starting once again from the order the houses are destroyed, the player is now the one who chooses which house will visit first. Also in the original tale, the wolf cannot destroy the house made out of bricks so he climbs down the chimney and gets killed. In the game though, the player decides if he will try going down the chimney or find another way to destroy the house.

Moving away from the linear structure that written fables have, in this game a mixture of the next structures was used. “The Vector with Side Branches” first tells the story in a linear way but the links along the time continuum allow the players to explore further the narrative [3]. Through those links the player in the game could find additional information about the fairy tale’s characters or about their background stories. For example, after being introduced to the game, the player has the possibility to learn how the pigs managed to build their houses. In addition, a picture on the wall of one of the pigs’ houses could reveal a side story about the “people” depicted in that picture.



Figure 1. From the beginning the wolf has numerous choices.

In “The Directed Network, or Flow Chart” horizontal progression corresponds to chronological sequence, while it gives the player the illusion of choices when splitting the paths to eventually reach the same outcome [3]. In the project, the wolf has the possibility of choosing which house to visit first. The goal is for the wolf to kill all the pigs or die trying. By using this structure, this goal could be reached in many different ways. The last structure used was “The Braided Plot”, which is a structure that allows different perspectives in the same narrative depending on the amount of characters [3]. The characters might share the same events but each of them has a different experience of this event. For example the player swaps character from the wolf to one of the pigs and experiences the pig’s memories (see Fig.2). In addition when the wolf sees through the window of the soon-to-be-dead pig, we see the thoughts and feelings of the pig, moments before his death (Fig.3).

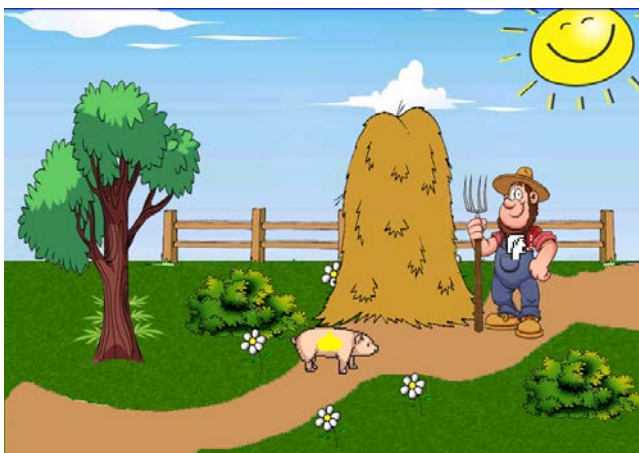


Figure 2. The player swaps character and plays as the pig, exploring his memories



Figure 3. Upon realizing his upcoming death, the pig expresses his thoughts and feelings.

In order for the players to become more immersed in the game Aristotle’s elements were used. Aristotle’s pathos (Greek for ‘suffering’ or ‘experience’) is often associated with emotional appeal. But a better equivalent might be ‘appeal to the audience’s sympathies and imagination.’ An appeal to pathos causes an audience not just to respond emotionally but to identify with the writer’s point of view--to feel what the writer feels. In this sense, pathos evokes a meaning implicit in the verb ‘to suffer’--to feel pain imaginatively [2]. Focusing on the personal feelings of the pigs before they got killed by the wolf, results in increasing the sympathy of the audience towards the pigs; also will make the wolf less likeable. Another way to make the audience feel more immersed is by giving them some ethical dilemmas on the story (e.g letting the wolf die, or saving a pig). The player has the opportunity, opposite to the original fable, to kill all pigs and avoid getting killed.

### 3.2 Goals

In the mini project, the two sets of goals (system and narrative) are the same. Meaning that the system’s purpose is to mediate the narrative. The story of the “Three Little Pigs” is the main purpose, and the system acts as a helping tool in order for the players to experience this fairy tale from a different perspective. The game has specific boundaries and does not give a high level of freedom to the player. Furthermore it gives a set of rules which will define the way the player use this freedom. In addition, the game’s narrative is closer to a didascallic one, helping in a way the player reaching completion. All the above suggest an inclination towards shortening the Audience/Author Distance (AAD). Using a narrative that is closer to a didascallic one also increases the intelligibility of the game. The meaning that is mediated is easy to understand as the substance of “The Three Little Pigs” was intended to be understood by all ages(primarily small children) so it holds simplistic meanings. Finally, there is some space for the players to give some personal meaning to the game that they have just played. This meaning can differ from the one that was intended in the first place, hence increasing the narrative’s closure [5].

### 3.3 Interactivity

The interactivity that is more suitable for the mini-project is the “purposefully random selection among many alternatives” interactivity. This kind of interactivity suggests that the choices given to the player seem random but there is a description or a hint that will predispose the player of the consequences of these choices. This will make easier the navigation in the game but also make clear to the player the reason of the specific path acting also as a factor for increasing the AAD. A “reactive” interactivity is not suitable for my game as it suggest that the player is not interacting deliberately with the game. Furthermore, a completely random interactivity is also not suited for the game as the player will not know the outcome of his actions before doing them. This might increase the suspense of the game but it will move away from the goal of the system, which is to communicate the narrative. The player might assume that he has to go to each path in order to finish the game, something that is not intended nor needed [3].

### 3.4 Presence, Immersion and Involvement

Presence is the psychological experience of nonmediation, for example the sense of being in a world generated by the computer instead of just using the computer. While immersion is the sensation of being surrounded by a completely other reality that takes over all of our attention. These two terms are connected and related as presence is the response to a given level of immersion. Involvement is usually confused with presence. Involvement has to do with the content of the game/narrative etc, while presence has to do with the form. It is related to interest. As far as the game is concerned, all the visual and audio effects, the surroundings and the situation that the player is involved bring a high level of presence but that does not mean that everyone will find this game interesting. Emotional response is the feelings that derive from an outcome inside the game. Experiencing something emotionally engaging does not mean that affect the level of presence but it might affect interest depending on the event. Once again presence has to do with form while the emotional response has to do with the content. The project game involves a lot of deaths and misfortune, which might evoke certain emotions to the player, being angry, frustrated or happy about an in-game event increases the immersion thus making the game more interesting (involving) for the player [7] [8] [9].

To increase the spatial immersion, lively colors and “fairy tale” cartoon images were used that made the players immersed. Moreover, the music used in the game [10]-[14], starting with a playful intro, moving to a more intense background music, and later to a more melancholic one, invites the player to certain mood swings depending on the event that is taking place in the game. Furthermore, having to do with a subject that immediately brings to mind childhood memories act as an immersive boost for the player. That is also correlated with the plot, which despite being familiar to most, the way it is narrated increase the temporal immersion. Giving the player the options to go back in time to witness some extra information or having alternative paths that do not hint the consequences also increases the suspense of the player. As far the as emotional immersion is concerned the

misfortune of the characters and the dilemmas that may encounter increase this kind of immersion. Personal thoughts from the soon-to-be-dead pigs also cause different feelings to the players.

Finally, the narration in the game is two-fold. On the one hand, the wolf through interaction with the environment makes remarks about it and in a sense talks to himself but in the same time to the player. Thus, giving hints on how to continue the game. On the other hand in some cases an outside narrator takes over and reveals information to the player that the wolf could not possible know, like information about the pigs’ family and character.

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