

Bibliographical Reference

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Topic of reading

Game Design as Narrative Architecture

Main points

- Recoiling two sides of, then present, Ludology vs Narratology
- Meeting in the middle ground between the two
- Combining the two by creating four Spaces of Narration:
 - Evoked
 - Enacted
 - Embedded
 - Emergent

Key terminology

- **Ludology**: The study of games and gaming, especially video games.
- **Hypertext**: A software system allowing extensive cross-referencing between related sections of text and associated graphic material.
- **Spatiality**: Relating to space.
- **Evoked Narratives**: When the 'story element is infused into the physical space a guest [or player] walks or rides through' in game world
- **Enacted Narratives**: When the story is 'structured around the characters movement though space and the features of the environment may retard or accelerate that plot trajectory'
- **Micronarratives**: Localised incident, usually they are emotionally impacting attractions.
- **Plot**: The way movies present its narrative.
- **Story**: What we Construct in our mind from events that has happened.
- **Embedded Narratives**: Narration process by distributing the information across the game space.
- **Emergent Narratives**: NOT restructured or preprogramed, taking shape through the game play, yet they are not as unstructured, chaotic and frustrating as life itself.
- **Evoked**: Bring or recall (a feeling, memory, or image) to the conscious mind.
- **Enacted**: Put into practice (an idea or suggestion).
- **Embedded**: Implant (an idea or feeling) so that it becomes ingrained within a context.
- **Emergent**: In the process of coming into being or becoming prominent.

Key quotations

- Not all games tell stories (2)
- Many games do have narrative aspirations (2)
- The experience of playing games can never be simply reduced to the experience of a story (3)
- If some games tell stories, they are unlikely to tell them in the same ways that other media tell stories. (3)
- Game designers don't simply tell stories; they design worlds and sculpt spaces. (4)
- Spatial design can either enhance our sense of immersion within a familiar world or communicate a fresh perspective on that story through the altering of established details. (12)
- structured around the character's movement through space and the features of the environment may retard or accelerate that plot trajectory. (12)
- the game space becomes a memory palace whose contents must be deciphered as the player tries to reconstruct the plot (13)
- game spaces are designed to be rich with narrative potential, enabling the story-constructing activity of players. (13)
- it makes sense to think of game designers less as storytellers than as narrative architects. (13)

Key references

Michel de Certeau, [The Practice of Everyday Life](#) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988)
Henri LeFebvre, [The Production of Space](#) (London: Blackwell, 1991)

Overall 500-word summary

Henry Jenkins tried to tackle the debate of Ludology vs Narratology and tried to meet up in the middle ground, by first seeing true to what the Ludologists believe and then confronting on what can be improved, what we know, and can all agree and how they can all meet in the middle. To do that he created a system of Spatial Narrating, instead of just being a narration, he called them spaces of Narration. He clarified how “games designers don't simply tell stories; they design worlds” ⁽³⁾ then he continues to expand on his previous essays that he has made “cases that game consoles should be regarded as machines for generating compelling spaces, that their virtual play spaces have helped to compensate for the declining place of the traditional backyard in contemporary boy culture, and that the core narratives behind many games centre around the struggle to explore, map, and master contested spaces.” ⁽⁴⁾ From this point he began to expand on this and provided with four options to fit his statement.

The Four options are Evoked Spaces, Enacted Spaces, Embedded Space and Emerged.

In **Evoked Narratives**, he compares the space to theme park, when a person can go around the park and chose the rides as they go along, it's the same concept in game world, when the player has the space to explore the “theme park” of his game space. And he also covers how the story that's told in the movies and story that's been told in a game can be in the same universe but be totally different, such as the Star Wars games and movies.

In **Enacted Narration**, it's when the story is structured around the characters movement though space and the features of the environment may retard or accelerate that plot trajectory which is usually covered by cut-scenes.

As for **Embedded Narratives**, it is when the ideas are implanted throughout the game play without showing you the event that accord, for example a broken piano that's damaged from a fall tells story that it has been thrown out of a higher floor. It's like the Pull adventuring system in D&D campaigning, when you want a character to know there is a scary monster around, you, as DM, describe a spooky scene and horrifying smell with lights getting turned off.

And lastly, the **Emerged Narratives**, that shapes the narrative of the story based on your gameplay, for example when you find a job from newspaper in Sims, "game spaces are designed to be rich with narrative potential, enabling the story-constructing activity of players" ⁽¹³⁾

As to where I stand: I understand why he provided the 4 spaces, and I agree with him till a certain level, I have similar categories of 4 narratives, but I also think all 4 narrational options can intervene each other and work together. I believe if a form of Narration Telling (Media) that can use all 4 options and tell a tale, would be the best form of narrative and the only form of media that can do this, is Game Design, hence its superiority over all the other forms of media and Narrative Telling.