

FIL5810: Transmedia Story Creation (McDaniel): Some Important Concepts so Far

1. Part I: Classical Narratology and Narrative Fundamentals

- a. Fundamental Elements of Narrative: Plot, Character, and Environment
 - i. Conflict is essential for a dramatically satisfying plot
 - ii. Narratology is the formal study of the narrative form, involving elements such as focalization, perspective, genres, myths, metanarratives, temporality
 - iii. Diegesis (telling: narrator speaks directly) vs. mimesis (showing: the story is recounted through the voices of characters)
 - iv. Umwelt: the fictional reality perceived in the telling (requires suspension of disbelief)
 - v. Narrative is a form of *representation*
- b. Structuralism: studies of plots, formulas, and formulaic discourse (Huisman, Propp)
 - i. Discourse (sjuzet) vs. Plot/Story (fabula)
- c. Poststructuralism: “the experience and understanding of the observer are built into the interpretation”
- d. Origins of Folklore and Fairy Tales
 - i. Folk tales were often about empowerment, shared cultural ideologies
 - ii. The literary fairy tale commercialized and warped many of the original aspects of communal storytelling (group interactions, evolving plots, etc.)
- e. Psychological and Social Aspects of Storytelling
 - i. Stories are commercialized, and all stories are trying to sell us something (Fulton)
 - ii. Our cognitive faculties may be especially well-suited for working with the narrative form (e.g. intertextuality, heteroglossia mentioned by Huisman)
 - iii. Jerome Bruner, Narrative Construction of Reality: ten “features” of narrative with psychological / ontological connections

2. Part II: Narrative and Interactive Media

- a. Neo-Aristotelian Approach
 - i. Brenda Laurel: Aristotle’s *Poetics* as applied to interactive media
 - ii. Janet Murray: interactivity (Borges’ “pullulating moment” when “all of the quantum possibilities of the world are present”) – computer is procedural, participatory, encyclopedic, and spatial
 - iii. Ken Perlin: believable agents are the missing link
 - iv. Michael Mateas: beats, or action/reaction pairs between characters (Façade)
- b. Ludology
 - i. Markku Eskelinen: narrative proponents don’t know narratology; games deserve their own theories. Games are configurative.
 - ii. Espen Aarseth: “the computer game is the art of simulation,” “the game gaze is not the same as the cinema gaze.” *Ergodic texts*. Moulthrop describes ergodics as “the pathwork of the moment” (p. 58).
 - iii. Gonzalo Frasca: gaming is a form of *simulation* – *simauthors* vs. *narauthors*, *paidia* vs. *ludus*
 - iv. Boundary Spanners: Henry Jenkins (interactive narrative media as architecture), Stuart Moulthrop (interactive narrative media as molecular vs. molar)
- c. Simulation, Ethics, and Agents
 - i. Military ties to simulation (remember Zipes’ analysis of what Disney did to folk tales?)
 1. Simon Penny: what behaviors are these simulators training? “Play” is a powerful training tool. Procedurality: generating “behavior on the fly.” How do user behavior and system behavior relate?
 2. Frasca: narrative is about what already happened while simulation is about what could happen (p. 86). Augusto Boal’s Theater of the Oppressed (spect-actor). **See Zimmerman’s response on p. 88 for several potential pass-4 game resources!**
 3. Sengers: artificial agents. Problems with AI in modeling agents. *Hermeneutics*. The Expressivator example.