Lecture 18: Midterm Review and Intro to Grammars

CM 148
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Sissy’s Magical Ponycorn Adventure

• Question 1, Part A
  – Internal or External?
    • Internal: You’re playing through the character Sissy
  – Exploratory or Ontological?
    • As long as you make a logical argument...
    • Exploratory: While the player is free to move around, there’s no way to change the outcome of the game
    • Ontological: The player’s decisions effect the virtual world and change the course of the narrative
SMPA – Question 1, Part B

• Listen
  – Listen to input from the player (mouse clicks)

• Think
  – React to mouse click (trigger an action, collect an item, move to a location)

• Speak
  – Respond to mouse click (play audio, run animation, show ponycorn collection)
SMPA – Question 1, Part C

• Procedural
  – The location of Sissy’s character on the screen.
  – The sequence in which rainbow rooms are revealed to the player.
  – The display of ponycorns collected so far.

• InstantiaL
  – The ponycorn illustrations.
  – The audio clips.
  – The ponycorns’ names.
  – Sissy’s walking sprite animation. [procedural maybe?]
SMPA – Question 1, Part D

• Formal affordances suggest...
  – Find and collect all the ponycorns by visiting rainbows and interacting with characters
  – Interact with cut-out drop-shadowed illustrations

• Material affordances
  – Click on characters and objects to talk/interact
  – Click on ponycorns to collect

• Agency
  – High? Maybe lower than that if you expect more out of the game
  – Material and formal affordances are balanced
  – User is allowed to do what the game suggests
CLOP – Question 2, Part A

• Spatial:
  – 1. World is populated by individuated existents. Yes, the horse and the virgin and the guy standing there there are all distinct entities positioned in space.

• Temporal:
  – 2. The world undergoes significant transformations. Not really, the horse moves forward and that’s about it. And the horse fails a lot.
  – 3. The transformations are caused by non-habitual physical events. No, it’s a horse doing horse things. Yes, the horse is trying to save the lady and the horse is controlled by an entirely wacky out-of-body experience.
CLOP – Question 2, Part A

• Mental:
  – 4. There is some sense of characters having emotional reactions to events. Yes, some character responds with pleasure to the failings of your horse.
  – 5. There is a sense of goals and plans for characters. Yes, the horse is clearly seeking out the virgin in response to information it got about it from the other character.
CLOP – Question 2, Part A

• Formal/Pragmatic:
  
  – 6. Does the experience lead to closure? In my playing of the game, no, I never get to the end. I imagine if I got good enough, then yes, my horse would save the virgin and that would be that.
  
  – 7. Real events do occur. Yes, there’s really a conversation about saving the virgin and the horse really does set off to accomplish that task.
  
  – 8. Does the story communicate something meaningful? It’s up to the person answering this question.
CLOP – Question 2, Part B

• Narrative (representation)
  – Weird medieval fantasy where Sherrod is encouraging CLOP the unicorn to go on a quest to reach the virgin

• Paidia (Manipulation rules)
  – Move CLOP’s legs individually to get him to move

• Ludus (Goal rules)
  – Move all the way left to the end of the level (to yon high and pleasant hill)
CLOP – Question 2, Part C

• Which is more procedural? CLOP or Sissy’s magical ponycorn adventure?
  – CLOP
    • Extremely procedural movement
    • Fewer instantiaL assets
  – SMPA
    • The only procedural aspects of CLOP is the location and overall movement/animation
CLOP – Question 2, Part D

• Comparing CLOP and SMPA

• Narrative
  – Narrative in SMPA is a bit stronger than CLOP; the goal is to collect all the ponycorns and there are more characters, interactions, and unique conflicts along the way

• Ludus
  – Both have clear goals (traverse the terrain, collect the ponycorns)
  – SMPA also has subgoals such as getting the coconut to use on the Lemon
  – CLOP has subgoals such as getting past difficult bits of terrain

• Paidia
  – CLOP’s main experience is mastering the manipulation rules that control the movement of the unicorn
  – SMPA has more things to interact with
CLOP – Question 2, Part E & F

• What is the protagonist’s goal or motive force for action?
  – Get to that virgin on that hill

• What is the protagonist’s main conflict?
  – Moving those legs to get over those hills
Question 3

- Aristotle's The Poetics (330 BC)
- Janet Murray’s Hamlet on the Holodeck (1997)
- Ryan’s Beyond Myth and Metaphor (July 2001)
  - Cites murray
- Mateas’s Preliminary Poetics for Drama and Games (2001 - but published again in 2004, will accept either)
  - Cites murray and aristotle
- Frasca’s Simulation versus Narrative: Introduction to Ludology (2003)
  - Cites murray (and references Aristotle’s Poetics w/o citing it)
  - Cites murray and ryan
- Mateas and Stern’s Build it to Understand It (2005)
  - Cites murray and aarseth
Question 4

Galloping is an action applying to nothing.
Understand "gallop triumphantly" as galloping.

Instead of galloping:
    now the player is in the hill.

[and yes, there seem to be 3 rooms instead of 2]
New Assignments
Final Project: Inform Story World

• Work in teams of two to develop an interactive story
  – Bigger and better than your Assignment #4

• First deliverable:
  – Design Document
  – Due Friday, May 22
Design Document (Due 5/22)

• **Describe the story arc for your game.** What happens in the beginning, middle, and end? Is there a central dilemma or crisis that the player character has to overcome?

• **What is the role of the player character in the game?** Does the player play multiple characters? If so, what is the relationship between the multiple characters?

• **Describe each location that will appear in your game.** Draw a map showing how the locations relate to each other (boxes and lines are fine for the map).

• **What are the significant objects in your game?** What role do they play in the game?

• **What is the role of non-player characters (NPCs) in your game?** Can the player talk with NPCs? If so, how will dialog be implemented (topic keywords, conversation dialogs, etc.)? Do NPCs move around and take action or are they primarily conversational? If NPCs move around and take actions, what do they do?

• **What prior stories, story genres, or games will your game reference?** If so, how will you leverage the player's prior knowledge in your design?

• **How will player interaction be integrated into the story structure?** Will the player be uncovering a story that already happened? Will the player have an impact on the plot (and if so, how)? What will be the relationship between story and discourse in your game? In describing the interactive story structure of your game, use terminology from the readings from the first half of the class.
Final Project Schedule

• Friday, May 22
  – Design document due

• Wednesday, May 27 and Friday, May 29
  – Inform 7 clinic in class
  – We’ll cover
    • Ifs/conditionals
    • Any other problems you’ve encountered in your trials with Inform

• Monday, June 2
  – In-class playtesting
  – Bring what you have (as complete as possible)
  – Get feedback from your fellow students

• Friday, June 5
  – Turn in your final submission
    • Source code, playable URL, walkthrough, description
Assignment #5: Create a Story Grammar

• This is the last assignment

• Choose a formulaic story genre
  – James Bond
  – Night Vale
  – CSI

• Write down a story grammar for that genre

• Plug your grammar into Tracery
Assignment #5 Technical Details

• Deliverable:
  – An interactive webpage with your grammar encoded within it
  – Press a button to interactively get new expansions using Tracery

• Framework already in place:
  – https://jsfiddle.net/ktuite/osxkzq6j/
  – Fork this JSFiddle
    • Can make a JSFiddle account or remain anonymous
  – Add your own name, title, and grammar description
Darcy traveled with her pet sparrow. Darcy was never vexed, for the sparrow was always too indignant.

Yuuma traveled with her pet unicorn. Yuuma was never astute, for the unicorn was always too courteous.

Chiaki traveled with her pet zebra. Chiaki was never wistful, for the zebra was always too vexed.
Example Grammars

- BondGrammar.pdf
- Numb3rs