The myth of the Aleph

- Ryan disagrees with the belief that a hypertext presents the reader with many (potentially infinite) narratives.
- Being able to experience the same lexia (units of text) in different orders only matters if sequence is critical in determining meaning.
- Further, the units of text must be written to fit together. Many possible combinations won’t make sense to the reader.
- How does this observation apply to games?

The myth of the holodeck

- Ryan describes the difference between first-person and third-person emotional experience.
  - “…will she be like an actor playing a role, innately distanced from her character and simulating emotions she does not really have, or will she experience her character in the first-person mode, actually feeling the love, hate, fears, and hopes that motivate the character’s behavior, or the exhilaration, triumph, pride, melancholy, guilt, or despair that may result from her actions?”
- Reader/viewer involvement in a story is a compromise between first and third-person perspective – mentally simulate the life of characters, but understand you’re participating in a media experience (engagement, catharsis).
- In a pure first-person medium, only a small subset of stories would be appropriate:
  - “…which means, a rather flat character whose involvement in the plot is not emotional, but rather a matter of exploring a world, asking problems, performing actions, competing against enemies, and above all dealing with interesting objects in a concrete environment.”
  - Makes a slippery generalization from the holodeck to computational media more generally.
## Dichotomies

- Internal interactivity projects the user as a member of the fictional world.
- External interactivity situates the user outside of the world.
- In exploratory interaction, the user can not change the destiny of the fictional world.
- In ontological interaction, the players actions send the virtual world on different forking paths.

## Combinations

- **External/exploratory**
  - Canonical example: hypertext literature

- **Internal/exploratory**
  - Canonical example: mystery story games

- **External/ontological**
  - Canonical example: Choose your Own Adventure, SimCity

- **Internal/ontological**
  - Canonical example: Holodeck