

RIDERS workshop: Narrative session

Storytelling and Narratology

The afternoon session will focus on exploring narratology and its driving mechanisms and concepts from the perspective of Interactive storytelling and an interactive user/inter-actor.

intro: Propp, Greimas, Bremond, plot models ; Genette, Barthes, discourse models.

Logical possibilities (choice, forking paths, escape from teleology of gameplay); or, OuLiPo (Ouvroir de littérature potentielle), Perec, Queneau, Abish - creative constraints (stimulus to narrative creativity as gameplay – narrative satisfaction rather than achievement of gameworld goals).

[“Queneau’s *Exercices de Style* is the recounting ninety-nine times of the same inconsequential episode, in which a man witnesses a minor altercation on a bus trip; each account is unique in terms of tone and style.” Lipograms, palindromes, univocalism.]

Suggests two models:

A: event-based, choice among logical possibilities

B: narration-based, constraint as stimulus to creativity

Experimental proposition: have a go at both.

Interactive Narrative: All Tomorrow's Parties

Opening scenario: protagonist X arrives at a party; among those already there is Y, whom X already knows well. The introductions over, Y approaches X ...

This is an experiment in collaborative, turn-based, two-player interactive narrative. Players have distinct roles, but should both (independently) aim to produce the most satisfying narrative they can. A turn consists of a unit of story of indeterminate size: it should be substantial enough to advance the narrative and to fulfil the specifications set for it, but it should not extend so far as to have an internal narrative development of its own.

Version A

Based upon Bremond: focus upon events; principle of choice among logical possibilities.

At each turn, player 1 specifies the action category of the next move in the narrative, from 1 to 6. Player 2 selects the quadrant of the table from which the move will come, and specifies the particulars of the move.

Version B

Based upon Genette, Barthes, and narratological concepts in general circulation: focus upon narration; principle of constrained creativity.

Player 1 specifies the prior constraints (of genre, style and narration) according to which the whole narrative will be constructed. At each turn, player 2 specifies the narrative mode and semiotic code, and player 1 narrates the turn accordingly.

References:

Barthes, Roland. *S/Z*. Trans. Richard Miller. London: Jonathan Cape, 1975.

Bremond, Claude. "The Logic of Narrative Possibilities." 1966. Trans. Elaine D. Candalon. *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 11, no. 3 (1980): 387-411.

Genette, Gérard. *Narrative Discourse*. 1972. Trans. Jane E. Lewin. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980.

	Favourable	Unfavourable
Modification	<p><i>Amelioration:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. X gains merit 2. X rewards Y 3. X obtains a benefit from Y 4. X attacks Y 5. X obtains information from Y 6. X deceives Y 	<p><i>Degradation:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. X receives blame 2. X punishes Y 3. X provides a benefit to Y 4. X suffers an attack from Y 5. X provides Y with information 6. X is deceived by Y
Preservation	<p><i>Protection:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. X avoids blame 2. X protects Y from punishment 3. X avoids providing a benefit to Y 4. X avoids Y's attack 5. X conceals information from Y 6. X discovers Y's deception 	<p><i>Frustration:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. X fails to gain merit 2. X deprives Y of reward 3. X fails to gain a benefit from Y 4. X fails to attack Y 5. X fails to obtain information from Y 6. X fails to deceive Y

Key:

X = agent; Y = patient

Action categories:

1. Merit and blame
2. Retribution
3. Rendering services
4. Aggression
5. Revelation
6. Inducing error

Prior constraints:

Genre	Style	Narration
action-adventure	baroque	first-person present tense
bildungsroman (coming-of-age)	comic	first-person retrospective
dystopia	epic	first-person unreliable (i.e. narrator's own bias distorts the account)
erotica	farcical	
fantasy	minimalist	
hard-boiled detective story	modernist	
historical fiction	naturalist	
horror	parodic	
psychological thriller	picaresque	
romance	post-modernist	
science fiction	realist	
superhero	satirical	
western	social realist	
whodunit	tragic	
		third-person present tense

Turn-based constraints:

Mode	Code
<p>analepsis (flashback)</p> <p>prolepsis (flashforward)</p> <p>description</p> <p>dialogue</p> <p>interior monologue</p> <p>free indirect discourse (representation of speech or thought, in between quotation and summary report)</p> <p>internal focalization (narration restricted by what one character perceives and knows)</p> <p>external focalization (no access to characters' perceptions or thoughts)</p> <p>hypodiegesis (second-level narration within the narration)</p> <p>meta-reference (reference to the fiction, narration, or sentence in progress)</p> <p>iteration (narration of a recurrent event)</p> <p>repetition (repeat narration of a single event)</p> <p>scene (narration "in real-time")</p> <p>stretch (narration "in slow motion")</p> <p>summary (condensed narration)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. cultural code (referencing culture-specific ideas, values, bodies of knowledge, conventional wisdom. <i>E.g., making sense of an action in terms of a proverb, or in terms of popular psychology</i>) 2. hermeneutic code (establishing, compounding or resolving an enigma, or explanatory gap. <i>E.g. the crime in a whodunit</i>) 3. proairetic code (initiating, developing or concluding a recognizable trajectory of action. <i>E.g. drawing a gun</i>) 4. semantic code (carrying implications or connotations of significance to the story. <i>E.g. describing behaviour that establishes a key feature of the protagonist's character</i>) 5. symbolic code (establishing or consolidating a theme that structures the story. <i>E.g. a contrast between vice and virtue</i>)