
Why Discipline?
Frustration with the current state of game study is an underlying motivation for much of the [inadequate] commentary on games today. It is hard to pinpoint a way of approaching gaming study. This essay explores the common ground terminology of “game” and “study” in the form of four concepts: narrative, interactivity, play, and games.

Narrative
Definition: A personification by a medium of an initial state, a change of state, and insight found by change. This series of events is often combinations of patterns and repetitions. Zimmerman aims to look at new types of narratives and why they are narratives instead of the simple are they or are they not considered a narrative. An experienced narrative is a story.

Interactivity
Definition: Reactions due to actions by all involved. Too broad so size it down to how it relates to narrative. 1) The psychological, reactive response with an object. 2) The physical relations with the actual object. 3) Participating with the predestined choices and procedures of the object. 4) Connecting this object with others.
All narratives have some degree of these. The one that most distinguishes one narrative from another is 3.

Play
Definition: Free movement within a rigid structure because of and despite a rigid system. This includes: game play, ludic play, and playfulness.
Play relates to interactive narrative through the author. He creates a rigid environment that allows for play yet by no means prescribes it. Play is the user’s freedom within the system.

Games
Definition: Artificial, voluntary, interactive activity where player(s) follow rules of conflict to reach a quantifiable outcome.
All games are narratives that are explicitly interactive (type 3) and promote play.

For Future Study
Examine how gameic narrative systems act in ways other media cannot. Instead of focusing on is there a game-story, should instead question how can we profit most from the unique stories offered by games and in turn create more game-stories?

Class Questions:
1) How do QFG and U7 fit into these four concepts of game-story? Do they support Zimmerman’s claim that all games can be defined by a compilation of these definitions?
2) One of Zimmerman’s own: What would a game be like that encouraged players to break the existing rules in order to create new ones?
3) How does the definition of narrative change between ludic and paidic forms of games?