
Central Question:

- Storytelling is the second oldest profession. Epic poetry, drama, the novel and the cinema have all become expert in their different ways at the craft of telling a story. Why should videogames, then, be any different? (p. 164)

Poole’s Assertion:

- Not only has no convincing example of this new creature called “interactive storytelling” yet been spotted in the wild, no one is even sure what it might look like (p. 166)

Two Types of Story:

- For the purposes of talking about videogames, the “back story” is the diachronic story, and the story that happens in the fictional present is the synchronic story—an ongoing narrative constituted by the player’s actions and decisions in real time (p. 168)
  - Whodunit is the diachronic story, while the process of investigation is the synchronic story (p. 168).
- What does this mean for videogames? Well, it turns out that the delicate balance of story types is skewed in videogames: it is very heavily weighted toward the diachronic (p. 168). A synchronic story would simply be the actions of play within the game.

Impossibility of Synchronic Narrative:

- One problem is that great stories depend for their effect on irreversibility—and this is because life, too, is irreversible (p. 177)
- The drama is provided by the prescribed story, the virtual exploration is interactive, and never the twain shall meet (p. 180)
- The fact remains that the player still cannot do something that the game is not prepared to allow (p. 187)

Analysis:

I chose this particular chapter because it fits well with our current readings, specifically the Aarseth. Both pieces are involved in a discourse that seeks to call into question the presumptuous colonialism current theorist have in dealing with the new medium of videogames. Where Poole ends, Aarseth begins—the notion of “simulation” rather than “interactivity” is the logical conclusion of Poole’s argument. Discuss.