Game Development Essentials: An Introduction

Third Edition
Chapter 5
Story & Character Development
creating the narrative
Key Chapter Questions

■ How do *story elements* in games differ from those in films and other entertainment media?

■ What are some traditional *story structures* and *character archetypes*?

■ What is *interactivity* and how can it be applied to storytelling?

■ What are some dramatic storytelling devices used in games, and how do they affect *immersion*?

■ What are the different forms of *character development*, and how do they specifically apply to game characters?
Storytelling Traditions

Valroe (Wikipedia Commons)

Cave Paintings
Generating Ideas

Spider: The Secret of Bryce Manor
Classic Character Archetypes

Hero

Link (The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword)
Classic Character Archetypes

Shadow

The Joker (Batman: Arkham Asylum)
Classic Character Archetypes

Mentor

Albus Dumbledore (Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix)
Classic Character Archetypes

Ally

Sheva Alomar (Resident Evil 5)
Classic Character Archetypes

Guardian

The Inquisitor (*Sacred 2: Fallen Angel*)
Classic Character Archetypes

Trickster

Glados (Portal 2)
Classic Character Archetypes

Herald

Princess Zelda (The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess)
Classic Character Archetypes

Protagonist

Lara Croft
(*Tomb Raider*)

Ezio Auditore da Firenze
(*Assassin’s Creed II*)
Classic Character Archetypes

Antagonist

The Archdemon
\(\text{Dragon Age: Origins}\)

Alma
\(\text{F.E.A.R.}\)
Classic Character Archetypes

Antagonist

- Transformational
- Mistaken
- Exaggerated
- Realistic

Mario & Wario

Nintendo
Classic Character Archetypes

Co-Protagonists

Ratchet & Clank
Sony Computer Entertainment America

Jak & Daxter
Sony Computer Entertainment America
Classic Character Archetypes
Supporting Characters

Call of Duty: Black Ops
Traditional Story Structure
Hollywood Three-Act

Diagram by Per Olin
Traditional Story Structure
Monomyth & Hero’s Journey

Illustration by Ben Bourbon
Story Elements
Premise

Devastation

NovaLogic, Inc.
Story Elements

Backstory

Myst

Cyan Worlds

Catherine,
I've left for you a message of utmost importance in our fore-chamber beside the dock. Enter the number of Marker Switches on this island into the images to retrieve the message. Yours,
Abra
Story Elements

Synopsis

Rift
Story Elements

Theme

Bioshock 2
Story Elements

Setting

Shadow Complex

Assassin’s Creed II
Plot

- Balancing Conflict
- Shifting Focus
- Foreshadowing Events
- Suspension of Disbelief
- Realism

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves

Naughty Dog
Plot
Suspension of Disbelief

Sony Computer Entertainment America

Flower
Plot

Realism

Electronic Arts

Skate 3
Game Story Devices

Interactivity

The Sims 3
Game Story Devices

Non-Linearity

_sqare Enix

Deus Ex: Human Revolution
Game Story Devices

Player Control

Dungeon Fighter Online

Nexon
Game Story Devices
Collaboration

Diagram by Per Olin

Beth shook her head derisively and reached for the crypt door.

They paused for a moment, then Beth slowly entered. Jim followed her closely.

Just as they reached it, the crypt door creaked open slightly.

Before they could react, a gruesome arm reached out, grabbing Jim and pulling him into the darkness.

The dark crypt loomed before them. They nervously approached, wondering if the legends were true.

Beth turned and chased after him.
Game Story Devices

Immersion

Eidos

Batman: Arkham Asylum

Three Rings

Puzzle Pirates
Game Story Devices

Immersion

- Cinematics
- Scripted Event

Square Enix

Take-Two Interactive

Final Fantasy XIII

Red Dead Redemption
Game Characters
Player Characters & Avatars

Brütal Legend

Electronic Arts
Game Characters
Non-Player Characters

Wii Sports Resort
Game Characters
Character Types

- Animal
- Fantasy
- Historical
- Licensed
- Mythic
Character Development Elements
Character Triangle

Love Triangle

Protagonist

Like

Dislike

Like

Antagonist

Love Interest
Character Development Elements

Character Arc

Diagram by Per Olin
Point-of-View
First-Person

Borderlands

Take-Two Interactive
Point-of-View
Third-Person

Dante’s Inferno
Visual Character Development

Blizzard Entertainment

World of Warcraft

NCsoft

City of Heroes
Visual Character Development Techniques

Mark Soderwall

Character concept drawings

- Concept Art
- Modeling
- Texturing
- Animation
Visual Character Development
Style

Amanita Design

Machinarium
Verbal Character Development
Narration & Monologue

It was a morality core they installed after I flooded the Enrichment Center with a deadly neutron to make me stop flooding the Enrichment Center with a deadly neutron.

Portal: Still Alive
Verbal Character Development

Dialogue

- Reveal Character
- Reveal Emotion
- Advance the Plot
- Reveal Conflict
- Establish Relationships
- Comment on Action

Batman: Vengeance storyboard
Movement
Signature

Solid Snake (*Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots*)

Konami
Movement

Idle

Sonic The Hedgehog

Sega
Movement
Walking Cycle

Link (The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures)
Background, History & Advancement

Class & Race

NetDragon Websoft Inc.

Conquer Online
Background, History & Advancement

Skill

Frogster Interactive Pictures AG

Runes of Magic
Character Description

- Name
- Type
- Gender / Age
- Physical Appearance
- Background and History
- Personality Characteristics
- Vocal Characteristics
- Relevancy to Story Synopsis
Summary

- Storytelling Traditions
- Generating Ideas
- Classic Character Archetypes
- Traditional Story Structure
- Story Elements
- Plot
- Game Story Devices
- Game Characters
- Character Development Elements

- Point-of-View
- Visual Character Development
- Verbal Character Development
- Movement
- Background, History & Advancement
- Character Description
- Game Storytelling & Documentation