J I D

Journal of Interactive Drama

A Multi-Discipline Peer-Reviewed Journal of
Scenario-Based Theatre-Style Interactive Drama
Freeform Live Action Roleplaying Games

Journal of Interactive Drama

A Multi-Discipline Peer-Reviewed Journal of
Scenario-Based Theatre-Style Interactive Drama

Volume 1.2, October 2006

Contents

J I D
Journal of Interactive Drama

A Multi-Discipline Peer-Reviewed Journal of
Scenario-Based Theatre-Style Interactive Drama
Freeform Live Action Roleplaying Games

Editorial Policy

The Journal of Interactive Drama is an international journal dedicated to the publication of critical discussion and scenarios related to Scenario-Based Theatre-Style Interactive Drama Freeform Live Action Roleplaying Games and welcomes contributions in all areas of the study, design, and creation of stand-alone scenario-based LARPS as well as Scenario-Based Learning related to interactive dramas of this type. Review articles of books related to interactive drama and informal book announcements are also welcome. Critical pieces on scenarios or convention events are welcome. Stand-alone scenarios are encouraged for submission with designer notes and running commentary. Submissions are peer-reviewed. Contributions may be submitted from all countries and are accepted all year round. The language of publication is English. There are no restrictions on regular submission; however, manuscripts simultaneously submitted to other publications

cannot be accepted without express notice and permissions for simultaneous publication. Submissions by regular mail and electronic mail are both accepted.

Distribution and Community

The Journal of Interactive Drama is published online at http://www.interactivedramas.info/journal.htm and in press format using pdf distribution media. The journal is normally published regularly as an ongoing concern with submissions considered as they are received. You may find the current issue and past issues archived at http://www.interactivedramas.info/journal.htm on the world wide web. The journal is associated with the scenario archive at http://www.interactivedramas.info. The online discussion forum associated with the journal and the scenario archive/workshop is at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/InteractiveDramatist. This forum includes online workshop for interactive dramatists to post draft versions of scenarios for community comments as well as for them to share their material with other directors to run in different venues.

WRITING CHARACTERS

Stephen R. Balzac
Organizational Consultant and Business Coach
7 Steps Ahead

ABSTRACT

The key element of any live roleplaying game are the characters. The character sheet is the primary tool that the gamemasters have to draw the player into the scenario and enable the willing suspension of disbelief necessary for successful roleplay. This article discusses the advantages and disadvantages of several approaches to character sheet generation. It provides a set of suggestions on how to create effective character sheets that will enable the player to internalize his role, his perceptions of the world, and his place in the scenario.   Copyright (c) 1992, 2007 Stephen R. Balzac. Originally printed in Metagame, the Journal of the SIL.

"Characters are the most important part of a game; character sheets are the least important."

It's been said more than once, but is that really true? Well, it does seem reasonable that in any game, the characters are the most important part of the game. After all, the players are not taking on the roles of furniture, buildings, or other item cards; rather the players are all playing characters in the world created by the gamesmasters. So, what's in a character sheet?

The character sheet is the document which tells the player where he or she stands in the world. What is he doing? Why is she doing it? Who are his friends and enemies? Who does she work for? How does he feel on various issues? And so forth. How can a GM accomplish all this? After all, character sheets in games have ranged from a single "character

paragraph" to multiple pages of description sometimes having exactly no relevance to the game. Let's look at what a character sheet is intended to do, what it needs to do, and the various ways it can do those things.

At the most simplest, a character sheet must tell the player: his name, his goals, the identities of those other characters whom he knows, and any data on relationships, commanders, subordinates, or allies that is unique to that character. Sometimes team information can be omitted from the character sheet, letting the bluesheets take up the slack; that doesn't work if the character has knowledge about the team that doesn't belong in the bluesheet. For example, if Fred is a traitor, his character sheet needs to specify that; putting it in a bluesheet given to the rest of the team would make his life a bit difficult.

Given this basic list, what could be used to accomplish it? Well, how about a bulleted list? Seems very straight forward, just a listing that looks something like:

- Name: Ivan Tadeov
- Position: KGB Commander
- Goals: Defeat the gravy-sucking capitalist pigs.

And so on. Such a listing might even include a listing of important character traits:

Personality Traits: Short-tempered, dislikes capitalists, fanatical.

Now, there are several problems with this approach. To begin with, telling someone that he is a fanatic really doesn't do much. First off, what is a fanatic? How does a fanatic act? There's absolutely no guarantee that the player and the gamesmaster will have the same image of a fanatic. The GM might think of a fanatical Russian as something out of a James Bond film; the player might have a definition of fanatic based on the image of a professional athlete or musician, each of whom are certainly fanatics in their own ways. A more serious problem is that most fanatics don't think of themselves as such; more generally, most people don't think of themselves as a list of "traits." People think about how they act, what they do in response to other's actions, and so forth. A bulleted list leaves little room for that sort of characterization. It really isn't much more than the Interactive Literature equivalent of a D&D character sheet. That doesn't mean that a bulleted list is useless: it can serve as a very

useful set of notes to the GM when he's writing the character. It just doesn't make it as a character itself. To put it another way, how many people would prefer the outline of a story to the story itself?

The basic "character paragraph" is the next step up from the bulleted list. It's just a relatively brief restating of that list, in prose this time: "You are Ivan Tadeov, head of the KGB, and boy, do you hate those gravy-sucking capitalist pigs! You're a real fanatic about it too!"

Not much of an improvement, is it? The basic problem of this approach is that it's giving the player a set of instructions. Unfortunately, it gives him no guidance as to what any of these wonderfully descriptive statements really mean. Ivan hates capitalist pigs. So? Does that mean that he walks up to people and shoots them on sight? Does he walk around saying, "Are you a gravy-sucking capitalist pig?" Does he hide his hatred? Or is he unafraid of making enemies or tipping his hand? The player has been given no idea how to express these traits, no sense of situation or where he fits into the world. The character sheet has failed in a basic function: to tell the character where he stands in respect to the rest of the game.

The next step up is to give the player a page or so of unadorned prose telling him about himself, and maybe mentioning acquaintances, subordinates, and the like. Unfortunately, this is still lacking in an important area: history and detail. If a player is presented with a character sheet containing the line, "Your friends are Tom, Dick, and Harry, all of whom you can certainly trust," he might have some questions: the most likely are, "how well do I know these people? How well do I trust them? Under what circumstances did I meet them?"

It can make a major difference. If the player thinks that someone is out to get him, he might reasonably want some way of distinguishing between his friends. Many people have good friends, friends whom they trust. But how many of your friends would you trust with your life?

The character still doesn't really have a good sense of place in the world. Perhaps more significant, the player has no sense of how his character reacts to changing situations. For example, our player hears fairly early in the game that Harry can't be trusted. If Harry is someone the player's character has known for thirty years and they have been close friends all that time, the player might react to the rumor in one fashion; if Harry is someone he met last week, he might react quite

differently. To extend that, perhaps Ivan hates capitalist pigs and wants to see them all die. But what's his limit? Is he going to kill capitalist pigs no matter what? What if the world is about to be blown up by a third party and only alliance between Ivan and the pigs will save the day? What does Ivan do?

Well, given no information to work with, most people will play themselves at this point. They ask themselves, "What would I (the player) do?" rather than "What would I (my character) do?" If this is a roleplaying game, it doesn't seem unreasonable to give the players something to roleplay. The problem so far is that the player has been given dry facts, no character motivations, no character incentives. For all that every GM says that the idea is not to win but to roleplay, if the player is only given a list of goals, winning and losing quickly appear as little more "did I accomplish my goals or didn't I?" To take this a step further, what happens if the player accomplishes his goals at 1pm on Saturday? What does he do? Who does he play for the rest of the weekend?

The next step up from this is the "cut and paste" character. For example, the "KGB Agent" paragraph, given to all KGB characters; or the "Mad Scientist" paragraph, given to all mad scientist characters, and so on. The problem with cutting and pasting is that it starts to show after a while. As soon as a character sheet has any characterization in it, cutting and pasting can have unexpected traps. It can be very embarrassing when a player comes up and says, "What does this mean? I don't understand this line in my character." At the very least, it makes the GMs look highly unprofessional. Even worse is when the player receives information that he shouldn't have and proceeds to play his character in a fashion totally unexpected by the GMs. They see the player ignoring his character; he doesn't understand why the GMs are so upset with him. A more serious problem, however, is that all characters within a group have the same "vanilla" view of the world. Teams become one big happy, interchangeable, family, not a collection of unique individuals working toward a common goal for individual reasons. Finally, players are paying for individual characters. Why not give them what they pay for? Of course, if you've advertised that, "Every player will receive a custom carbon copy of the character his friend has," then you may as well go ahead with cut and paste.

Suppose now that we give the player a long, detailed character sheet. Potentially, this can give the player a great deal of information on background, motivations, and, in general, his place in the world. There's nothing wrong with a several-page character sheet, provided it meets a few requirements: the information contained in the character sheet must be well-written, relevant, and generally fun to read. Let's face it, if you can't write without putting the reader to sleep, don't write a long character. Obviously, there's no way a player can be given his complete life history, but he can be given enough to work from. He can be told how he got to where he is now, why he does what he does, and so forth. It gives the GMs the chance to slip in information both about the character and the plot in a subtle fashion, without having to hit the player over the head with it. Finally, it gives the players something to roleplay other than themselves. Instead of a flat listing of traits, the character sheet becomes three-dimensional.

This is a very important point. By talking to the player in the voice of the character, the GM has helped to build and reinforce the suspension of disbelief necessary for the game. The character sheet draws the player into the illusion of an imaginary world, instead of coming off as a list of instructions from the GM to the player. In the former case, the player is "listening" to the character talking to himself; in the latter case, the character sheet comes off as the GM talking to the player about a third party.

But, how long is long enough? Unfortunately, there's no minimum length after which the GM can say, "OK, Ivan's four pages long. He's a good character now." The minimum length is simply however long it takes to convey all the necessary information to the player in a well-written and fun-to-read fashion. That might be two pages, or it might be six or seven. Optimally, the character sheet will contain information on each of the character's plots, acquaintances, background, and how the character feels about all of that. Now, there's something there to play beyond just trying to "win" the game.

But if long is good, is longer better? Well, not exactly. The character sheet is not the only thing that needs to go into that character packet, nor can all the information that needs to go into the game be included in character sheets. One common mistake made by GMs who do like to write long characters is that they forget about the rest of the game. One

game had these long, fantastically detailed character sheets, and very little else. The bluesheets were on the order of, "You are a member of organization FOO. You believe in FOO. You want to see them succeed." Scenario information, abilities, items, and so forth, were all at the same level of detail. The GMs had simply become so enamored of writing characters that they had forgotten to write the rest of the game.

Another group of GMs managed to give equal time to every part of the game. However, some 99% of the information in their characters, bluesheets, etc, was irrelevant to the game. The actual information that mattered to the play of the game could be compressed into a very few paragraphs. These GMs had become so enamored of the world they were creating that they forgot that they were writing a game.

How then does someone write a good character sheet? The answer is actually very easy: practice. Unfortunately, that doesn't really help very much. How does someone get started? Well, here are some simple tips:

Don't tell a character he has a particular personality trait, make him have it: if Ivan is a fanatic, don't write "you are a fanatic." Write his character background to show him just how he acts. That way you've also conveyed your view of what fanaticism actually means to Ivan. You may never even need to use the word "fanatic" in Ivan's character sheet. After all, he may not see himself that way.

The importance of something to a character will generally not depend on how early in the character you mention it, but on the vividness and length of your description. Something that appears to have been tossed in as an afterthought will generally be treated as one, no matter what you intended.

Write the character sheet in the voice of the character; don't write it like the GM talking to the player. Don't automatically start the profile with, "You are foo..." Make it more interesting. Give a creative lead in.

Try to give characters personal as well as group goals. They should have something to do if their group leader flops.

Give characters as many hooks to other players and plots as the game structure will permit. Not everyone can work themselves into the game from nothing, and even good players can get stuck if their characters are too lacking in connections. Spread around lots of rumors. It livens up the game and helps tie the plots together. As a

side comment, if only the "bad guys" are interested in or know about a particular topic, then the players will quickly realize that anyone who knows about that topic is a "bad guy."

Following these hints, what might a character look like? Well, space precludes including a complete character sheet, but here is a possible opening paragraph which might have come from Ivan's character sheet:

> *Those stinking capitalist dogs have destroyed your country! Scarcely a few years ago, the Soviet Union was one of the greatest... nay, it was the greatest nation on Earth. Strong, powerful, blessed with the vitality of communism, the USSR was a power amongst nations. Those piddling scum of Europe quaked in their beds at night and in their boots by day before the Soviet Union's military might. Even the United States dared not push her. But no longer. Now, she has been reduced to a collection of poverty-stricken, squabbling "republics." The once-great Russian Empire is struggling to hold itself together, while the rest of the world laughs. And rather than taking what is its rightful due, the Soviet Union must beg the foreign pigs to grant money and capital so that the country can switch to a "free market" economy. Well, this is just too much for any true Russian to tolerate!*

From the beginning, Ivan is given a very strong sense of self. He has a clear view of how he sees the world and what he thinks of others, all, by the way, without once using the word "you." The character would continue on from here to describe to Ivan the plots in which he is involved, his acquaintances, and so forth, maintaining the voice established at the beginning and giving Ivan in character examples of what is and what is not normal behavior for him.

Remember, while there is no "right" way to write a character, there are plenty of wrong ones. It's easy to produce something unplayable, boring, or just plain screwed up. The most important thing to remember is that you are giving the player a portrait of a person, not a list of goals and character stats. The character sheet is the player's first point of entry into the collective illusion which is your live roleplaying game. How well you bring him in can affect the entire course of the game. Good luck!

Stephen R. Balzac

CORRESPONDENCE

7Steps Ahead, Stow, Massachusetts, United States, http://www.stevebalzac.com, E-mail address: sbalzac@alum.mit.edu.

INFORMATION, IMMERSION, IDENTITY
The Interplay of Multiple Selves During Live-Action Role-Play

J. Tuomas Harviainen

University of Tampere

ABSTRACT

This paper presents field study data on how participants of live-action role-playing games (larps) perceive their identity while they are within the game, and what may be the primary factors affecting this perception. The data has been collected from three larps, "Melpomene: Aiskhylos" by J. Tuomas Harviainen (Jun. 23, 2005, Finland), "Four Color: Kun Soi Jazz" by Mike Pohjola (Jul. 30, 2005, Finland) and "Moira" by Karin Tidbeck and Anna Ericson (Aug. 19-21, 2005, Sweden). Included is also some extrapolation on the findings and an information studies -based potential explanation for the way the results differ from what has been expected in prior theoretical models. Focused interviews have been used to ascertain the reliability of the survey results.[1]

> *"Clearly there was a problem with two different types of playing trying to cope with being on the same larp. The Finnish/über-immersion/'secrets' with the younger Swedish avantgarde ensemble/dramaturgy/drama style."*
> (Open feedback in a questionnaire from Moira)

---

[1] This article is a revised and expanded version of an earlier paper, "Defining the In-Game State", presented at the Seminar on Playing Roles at the University of Tampere on March 30th, 2006.

J. Tuomas Harviainen

1. DESIGNING AND CONDUCTING THE FIELD STUDY – A PRACTICAL OVERVIEW

1.1 WHY STUDY THE IN-GAME STATE?

There are two particularly strong arguments for making research into the field of larp experiences:

The first one is that live-action has reached a significant level of popularity, as entertainment, art form and medium – up to and including educational use. It is a phenomenon known well enough to be referenced in popular culture, at least in Northern Europe, without needing an explanation. According to a recent study (Gade, 2005), 11% of Danish teenagers listed larping among their five favorite nature activities. The Finnish larp portal, larp.fi, has 2453 registered users.[2] In 2005, 127 larp-related events were listed on that portal's calendar. Live-action role-playing is no longer an insignificant minority hobby, practiced just for the sake of fun.

The second relevance point deals with the internal phenomena inherent in larping. The flow of informational material available in larps is defined prior to the games, the interpretative theme-frames pre-designed and the participatory concepts – both character- and narrative-wise – of players set in advance. Therefore the pseudo-autonomous reality of a larp makes it possible to use such an environment to study interpretation, information and experiential patterns not normally accessible in such a refined, pure state.[3] By understanding the way larps work, by applying research methods on

---

[2] Data from Feb. 14, 2006. In comparison, the Danish liveforum.dk had 3110, the Norwegian laiv.org 2109 on that date. As is obvious when comparing Gade, 2005 with the Danish portal's numbers, it is very likely that only a small minority of the people participating in larps are registered on these sites.

[3] Most larps take place in pseudo-autonomous temporary realities, i.e. zones of temporary pretence play where an illusion of isolated reality is preserved by joint accord. A second type, temporarily appropriated space, shares the same properties except for the sustained illusion of being a separate reality. For an example of a larp taking place in a temporarily appropriated space, see Montola & Jonsson, 2006. Both types contain the re-signification zone or "magic circle" (as per Salen & Zimmerman, 2004) required for functional larp play.

them, we gain new insight into the way those methods work – insight not available through the traditional use of those methods.

Analyzing the diegesis ("the sum of all that is considered true within the reality of the game") in its entirety goes beyond the reach (and purpose) of this paper. Instead, this is a concentration on one particular aspect, the in-game mind-state experienced by players during larp play, its structure, and its defining traits in both the diegetic and the adiegetic (i.e. everything not included in the diegesis) sense.

1.2 ORIGINS OF THIS STUDY

At the initial stage, this project was intended as a study into the cultural factors affecting players' perceptions on the quality of larps. This diversity has been seen as a common problem within the field, ranging from wider differences between Nordic and North American larp cultures to the scale and publicity issues between different Nordic paradigms (see Fatland 2005a for details). The idea was to take advantage of the first ever larp that was truly inter-Nordic in its participation beyond paradigmatic lines, "Moira" by Anna Ericson and Karin Tidbeck, in order to see if players from Finland or Norway would react significantly differently to the game elements.

To facilitate the process, a series of preliminary tests were conducted so that the methods could be refined and so that there would be enough control data from one country (Finland, in this case) to see whether the results were indeed culturally caused. What happened, however, was that the return ratio of the questionnaires was far too low, at both the primary test game ("Moira") and the primary control game ("Four Color: Kun Soi Jazz", by Mike Pohjola). The only games to provide sufficiently high return rates were my own (the test run larp for the questionnaire, "Haalistuvia Unelmia", and the first game where the questionnaire was officially used, "Melpomene: Aiskhylos").[4] This essentially meant that for its intended purpose, the study appeared nearly useless.[5]

---

[4] For further details on these two games and the testing project for which they were primarily created, see Harviainen 2006.
[5] The interviews used to confirm the survey data, however, show that such cultural larp differences are unlikely to actually exist on a level deeper than phenomena caused by

The Exhaustion Effect: After all three studied larps plus the test run, game participants not willing to answer the questionnaire gave extremely similar verbal feedback on why they refused to fill it. The primary stated reason was mental exhaustion caused by emotional and social investment into the diegesis. The descriptions were extremely alike, despite the fact that the length of such commitment varied from 1,5 hours (Haalistuvia Unelmia) to over 50 hrs (Moira) from game to game. My belief is that this ties in with both live-action role-playing's inherent autotelicity and any information seeking patterns contained within the game's frame (see below), and this set of subjects will be a key target in my further studies on how role-play is experienced. (The only other reasons given for not filling out the questionnaire were a refusal to "dissect" one's very positive game experience and a lack of interest in contributing because of severe disappointment in the game itself. Both came in similar numbers, and thus effectively cancel each other out as potential slants in the actual results should these people also have answered the questions.

However, the combined results from the three games provided enough data to permit extrapolation on general tendencies of Nordic larp participants' perceptions on their in-game mental state.[6] When one takes into account the difficulty of obtaining such base data in large enough numbers, the advantages of having even such extrapolations available becomes apparent. Furthermore, it enabled the formulation of focused interviews created for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not the results were indeed accurate enough.

---

differences in local play-style preferences. Among the 21 interviewees, country of origin had no effect on the division of results.

[6] Following standard practice in psychological research, this study uses the word "participant" and not "subject" about the people who answered the questionnaire. "Subject" is the material being handled, never a person, in this context. "Game participants", in turn, refer to the players and playing organizers of a larp.

1.3 CONSTRUCTION OF THE HARVIAINEN-HELIÖ QUESTIONNAIRE

To understand how in-game presence in a larp is perceived, special methodology is needed. As normal tools for discerning neither identity nor social interplay apply, something else must take their place. In this, I and Ms. Heliö turned to the methods used in psychology of religion, a field known for trying to understand cognitive experiences of alternate states without seeing them as problems that need to be solved.

Thus, as a basis for our questionnaire, we used a classical field survey made on the nature of religious conviction in certain religious demographics, the Allport-Ross Religious Orientation Scale (1964/1967, Feagin variant; see Wulff 1996, pp.231-235 for details[7]). The key idea in that scale is the division of religious values (and thus, but only secondarily, religious behavior both derived and separate from them) into extrinsic and intrinsic types. For example, "The prayers I say when I am alone carry as much meaning and personal emotion as those said by me during services" is an intrinsic value question, whereas "Although I am a religious person, I refuse to let religious considerations influence my everyday affairs" is a question on extrinsic values. A key finding was that a surprisingly strong division actually existed between the two types of religion (leading to the actual division into the i/e scale; the first versions did not include it), with one being essentially utilitarian and the other having nearly all motives stemming from a faith basis. This division, strongly reminiscent of how larp participants had traditionally stated their attitude on the game experience, was what we decided to use.

In order to convert the scale into the new form, it was dually deconstructed. There were two clear obstacles to cross: On one hand, religion's extrinsic aspects are based on utilitarian, social and communal advantages, all of which are elements that exist in larps only to a limited extent. On the other, Allport (who was the primary instigator of the religious values project) had his own views on religion, psychology and sociology, all of which interfere with the scale's wording. The first issue

---

[7] As both Allport and Ross' and Feagin's (1964) original studies concentrated on comparing intrinsic and extrinsic religious values' correlation with racism, I strongly suggest that game researchers not thoroughly familiar with the methodology in question reference Wulff's concise summary of the process instead of the actual studies.

was solved by replacing extrinsic, social questions with the non-experiential performance aspects of larps.   Some of these were related to perceived activity, others to assumptions on the game's narrative matrix.[8] The second issue's impact was minimized by taking into account the known facts on Allport's own views on both faith and the study of it (thoroughly extracted and analyzed in Hermanson, 1997).

In addition to the modified Allport-Ross scale, we included questions on the quality of game elements and preparation, the perceived impact of those two things, and questions on belief and experiences in character relationship and immersion. Some of these were for research, some for control purposes and some were incentives for game designers to accept our study into their games in exchange for getting formal feedback. Several questions were expanded with open follow-ups, so that any confounding variables could be reliably eliminated. The questionnaire also went through a review process at all stages, by being exposed to open criticism from other role-playing analysts and professionals from relevant tangential fields.

The test run game and the data collection in Melpomene: Aiskhylos were conducted on version 2.0 of the questionnaire. After that, some small clarifications and linguistic changes were made and three questions added: two on off-game interaction support and workshops plus their impact, one on experiencing the game's themes. These changes produced some extra data, but were not so significant that they would have negated the previous version's results in any way.

The final version of the Harviainen-Heliö questionnaire (v 3.0, included with this article) takes into account all of the central theories that have been presented on larp identity and elements affecting it, plus Henriksen's (2005) theory of educational/utilitarian participation in larps. At the same time, normally essential questions and theory on in-game activity beyond motives has been intentionally left out in order to concentrate on the issue of mind-states.

---

[8] Effectively, elements such as seeing public actions as more important than private ones and assumptions on what kinds of plot elements were intended to come up during a game.

1.4 BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS 1: A SHORT SUMMARY OF THE REALITY OF LARP PLAY

Live-action role-play takes place within a temporary reality definable as potential space (see Winnicott, 1971 for the parameters of such play-spaces). It is essentially a spatial representation of an imaginary place that is imposed upon an actual place (as per Aarseth, 2001) through a jointly agreed-upon social contract. A level of belief in this potential space is then created and maintained through a process consisting of two factors: Eidetic reduction (i.e. intentional ignorance of observed elements inconsistent with the intended "pure experience"), and a semiotic re-signification process. The latter is used upon those real-world elements that are incompatible with the potential space but can be to a certain extent be translated into interpretative forms that are compatible with the diegesis (for example, "seeing" a car as a cart). These experiences are also communicated to other players via an equifinality-based (roughly: based on interpretations/visualizations/ideas that are close enough to one another to provide compatible function; see Loponen & Montola, 2004, for details) discourse that reinforces the mental state required to preserve the potential space active in the minds of larp participants. Any issues that require meta-level or adiegetic solving are resolved through an arbitration process that follows Lévi-Strauss' idea of bricolage (Lehrich, 2006), even when said issues are not conflicts per se.[9]

> "'Diegesis' is […] the creation of a common set of references for the individual role-players, while 'immersion' is an aspect of decoupling ability, where players try to ignore the scope-syntactical tags placed on the remembered present, that tell us 'this isn't real!'." (Lieberoth, 2006.)

---

[9] Bricolage essentially means that arbitration is based on re-arranging (or, occasionally, extrapolating upon) existing pieces and systems instead of creating new ones. As Lehrich observes, bricolage in role-playing extends much further into play than just to the basic function described here.

For a more complete view on how the reality construction process works and how it differs from the shared imaginary space of tabletop (pen&paper) role-playing and the shared observable environments of virtual role-playing games, see Harviainen, 2007.

Narrative elements (both personal-level and game-wide) either emerge as diegetic or are introduced as meta-level information by the game's organizers. In other words, plots, drama and intrigue are either prepared beforehand or emerge during play from potential "seeds" or "fabula" (Fatland, 2005b). A larp is therefore very much like a temporary ritualistic state, a liminoid experience (Lehrich, 2004). This ritualistic state typically contains an illusion of being completely autonomous and isolated during play, but is actually influenced by outside concerns.[10] Opinions on this influence tend to be mostly impression-based, cursory and biased, even in academically accepted documents:

> "Since the magic circle is meant to provide a safe place to submit play behavior, some may argue that the blurred and dissolved magic circle in LRP games poses the danger of anti-social addictions and players mistaking serious real life issues as part of playing a game. It is difficult to fend off those fears when these mistakes occasionally are made. However, in our experience, LRP players are more often than not sensitive to the fact that they are indeed playing a game." (Falk & Davenport, 2004.)

One of the key questions dealt with in this article is therefore the extent to which such adiegetic outside influence actually exists during play, as opposed to such overt generalizations.

1.5 BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS 2: BASICS OF ROLE-PLAYING IDENTITY THEORY

A connection exists between the so-called "general player types" and the way game participants construct their character identity and their view on the diegesis. The three basic templates for identity that have been presented in larp theory are the divisive identity state, the narrative

---

[10] Larps taking place in a temporarily appropriated space are an exception to this rule, as they are intentionally constructed to intermingle with real-world elements (Montola & Jonsson, 2006).

identity relationship and the perikhoresis state (Harviainen 2005a). A fourth identity template, blended entity, has been discussed in the context of digital and tabletop role-playing, but can be extended to cover larp play as well (Tea & Lee, 2004; Hendricks, 2006).

Divisive identity means that during play, the game participant's personality effectively becomes that of the character and loses all connection to the player's real-world self. This is a view often presented due to ideological reasons such as immersionist dogma (Pohjola, 1999), experiential drama aspirations (Koljonen, 2004) or anti-role-playing propaganda. Gade's (2003) idea of a separate diegetic role is also based on such a divisive view.

The narrative identity relationship assumes that characters are only social masks similar to those people wear at different places, so that just as the work "self" and the home "self" differ from one another, so does the game identity called "character" or "role". This view is common among non-immersive players and larp participants with either a highly theatrical or a strongly ludology-based view of the games. It is also very important to note that the great majority of the most active academic role-playing theorists are members of this school of thought, occasionally to the point of explaining the other views away as delusional pretension. Brenne (2005), Edwards (2001), Hakkarainen & Stenros (2003), Heliö (2004) and Lankoski (2004) all primarily follow the narrative identity theory. Ermi and Mäyrä, 2005, given its extended view of social constraints, also defaults to the narrative identity view, but at the same time leaves room for a perikhoretic interpretation. Furthermore, Montola's theories are most often based on this approach, despite him not making any definite statements about character states or relationships.[11]

The third view, perikhoresis, presumes that character and player are complete, individual selves that exist in a state of reciprocal interpenetration. The character is complete enough so that it in theory could exist as an individual (as per the divisive model), yet information flows between the two personas. What affects one affects the other, though not in an identical manner (Harviainen, 2005a). In this study, however, I contest the idea about the communication between these two

---

[11] A thorough explanation on how normal narrative identities are constructed and how they function can be found in Holstein & Gubrium, 2000.

idioms being unregulated and constant.

The fourth, blended entity, is a hybrid that is born out of a mixture of player traits and character material. It is essentially a combination of multiple semantic and cognitive relationships, mental states, with corresponding reactions dependant on the frame / level on which the game is being accessed (Tea & Lee, 2004; extended beyond digital gaming in Hendricks, 2006). As interviewees who claimed to use both character and player information during play all described themselves as favoring either the narrative or the perikhoretic approach, I have not included blended entities within the data given below. It is nevertheless highly probable that some larp participants currently described as narrative or perikhoretic actually default towards blended entity during play.[12]

1.6 QUALITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE COLLECTED DATA

The first stage of the study was conducted as an independent groups experiment on three separate occasions, on a random audience of players. At Melpomene: Aiskhylos the participants were informed in advance that there would be written questions on the game experience, at the other two games they were not. Given that the number of participants in Four Color and Moira was high enough to guarantee reliable anonymity and the completely voluntary nature of answering the questionnaires at those games, this is not a problem as far as research ethics are concerned. On the contrary, by not informing in advance on the existence or nature of the questionnaire, we removed the possibility of it influencing the game experience in any way.[13] Game participants were asked to fill the

---

[12] There is no field data yet on blended entities in larps. The assumption here is based on three elements: approximations used by interviewees unable to explicate their mental state during play, the potential stability of such a relationship, and the fact that a blended entity state would be most convenient for certain styles of larp play known to exist.

[13] A note on pronouns and the implementation of the study: Ms. Heliö participated in the creation of the questionnaire and planning stage of the project, but withdrew from it at Moira due to work-related concerns. Thus the creation of the survey was a joint effort, but all data analysis upon its results was performed by the author alone, as were the interviews. The language used in this article reflects that.

questionnaires immediately after the game, in order to minimize ideological factors and group pressure ("time-ideology distortion") influence on the results.

Partial or full answers were received from 60 larp participants. The basic breakdown is: Moira 30, FC 20, M:A 10. 30 female, 29 male, 1 intergender. 35 Finnish, 22 Swedish, 1 Norwegian, 2 undefined. Age ranging from 16 to 37, with a spread well within acceptable survey limits. Larp experience ranging from next-to-none and 16 years, and tabletop role-playing experience ranging from none to 23 years. Maximal potential overlap caused by same players appearing at multiple games is two persons, and thus carries next to no impact on reliability. Almost all (individual variable dependant accuracy) who returned their questionnaires answered to the scaled questions about game quality and its effects, and 90% of them also answered the Allport-Ross variant section. The total number of accessible answers was too low for a reliable quantitative analysis, but as this study is a work in progress, it was sufficient as grounds for initial tendency analyses and as a basis on qualitative interviews on its key subjects. All first-stage data was processed with SPSS. The information also contained material not relevant to this study, such as descriptive statistics included primarily as incentives for the games' producers. Without such incentives, it would have been harder to convince them to accept their games as study subjects.[14]

The second stage consisted of questions included in 21 focused interviews that were conducted simultaneously for the purpose of ascertaining the reliability the survey results and in order to provide data for another research project centering on information behavior during larps. The interviewees were chosen through a combination of random selection and snowball method at two role-playing conventions, representing larpers from six different countries.[15] The questions dealt

---

[14] The data strongly points towards the potential that if the survey range had been wider, the descriptive game quality feedback would provide excellent control data for analyzing quality-based affective variables such as how the game environment's preparation quality, the effect of the game environment on the game experience, and environmental immersive experiences correlate. Therefore including these kinds of questions in any upcoming surveys is recommended both for incentive and analytical reasons.
[15] The conventions in question were Knutpunkt 2006 in Sweden and Ropecon 2006 in Finland.

with in this paper were selected to correspond with the survey's essential target areas, as well as certain points of the original questionnaire that may have been linguistically problematic.

Given that next to no serious research has been conducted on the sense of identity of role-players during the course of play (Henriksen, 2005 and Rutanen, 2006 being the main exceptions) the data gathered is both groundbreaking and susceptible to a significant margin of error.[16] The latter factor is due to three key elements: a conflict of situational concerns, the amount of data-per-questionnaire needed for reliable results that led to a low number of returned questionnaires (40% in Four Color, about 45% in Moira, depending on who are counted as "players"; Aiskhylos included a mandatory obligation to give formal feedback and thus had a return rate of 100%)[17] and possibility of ideological distortion (players reporting the states they would liked to have experienced, instead of the ones they actually did experience). Furthermore, as this study necessitated the self-analysis of game participants, it naturally favored experienced players and thus may not be as reliable on predicting the in-game mental states of less experienced game participants, nor of those not from the Nordic area.[18] It is also likely that displeased players may have been more likely to not participate in the survey, despite its inherent potential for anonymous feedback and

---

[16] It is imperative to note, however, that the low number of academic material on live-action role-play has at least partially been due to the lack of peer-review qualified publication forums on the subject and not researcher incapability to meet academic standards.

[17] Haalistuvia Unelmia also had a mandatory answering policy, but all those who stated they would return the questionnaire later on failed to do so (30% of the game participants being in this group. Thus all answers at Aiskhylos were collected under supervision. The same never-return problem was observed at Moira, leading to all received answers being from questionnaires collected immediately after the games and thus equally reliable as far as time-ideology distortion is concerned.

[18] When interviewed, experienced players were often able to describe their earlier senses of identity very accurately. These descriptions do, however, contain the same risk of contamination by *post de facto* idealism as do the survey results.

For the effect cultural game paradigms have on styles of play see Fatland, 2005a and Harviainen, 2007. According to generic, stereotypical larp "theory", the most significant cultural factors that may affect the results are the prevalence of immersionist ideology and the lack of competitive-style larps within the Nordic area. There is no data available to make conclusions on this assumption at the moment, but it should be kept in mind – especially when answers on immersion-related issues are reported in this paper.

criticism. Whether this, or any group dynamics effect during game debriefing, would have affected the final results is highly debatable and thus discarded as irrelevant to the subject at hand.[19]

2 RESULTS, TENDENCIES AND CONCLUSIONS

Note: All sub-group percentages are presented here as segments of the entirety of that particular group, not as partials of the initial percentage of given answers. The breakdown of answers given by only some participants is thus presented as if it were a percentage of the entire survey group. Base results are presented in survey data, supported by interview data when necessary.

2.1 THE PLAYER-CHARACTER RELATIONSHIP

Approximately 86,7% answered the question 'During the game, did you think of your character as "Me" or as "My character"?' Of those who answered, 51,9% reported a first-person relationship, 30,8% a third-person relationship and 17,3% reported both. The answers correlate with character relationships as follows:

- Me: 6 divisive, 1 narrative identity, 19 perikhoretic, 0 none, 1 both divisive and perikhoretic[20].
- My character: 2 divisive, 5 narrative identity, 8 perikhoretic, 1 none.
- Both: 0 divisive, 0 narrative identity, 5 perikhoretic, 2 none.
- none marked: 1 divisive, 0 narrative identity, 2 perikhoretic, 1 both divisive and perikhoretic.[21]

---

[19] As noted, offsetting the potential negatives is also the possible existence of players not willing to dissect a positive game experience.

[20] The test run contained several such double-answers, leading us to the conclusion that these are most likely caused by people finding out that the perikhoretic answer matched their relationship more closely than their initially marked divisive one but not bothering to remove the first marking they'd made. This potential error is due to the order in which the questions were on the paper.

[21] There were no results that count as "none" here, as all of the rest contained no answers

As this shows, the identity types have significant correspondences with certain character-player relationships, but are not nearly as clear-cut as role-playing identity theory suggests. These do not form a clear enough scale that could run from divisive "me" through perikhoretic "me"-"both"-"my" to narrative "my".[22] Furthermore, there are enough "none" answers to suggest that this three-part relationship theory does not cover all player experiences on the question of in-game identity state.[23]

> Interviewer: "Can you say something about your sense of identity during play? What is your sense of self, and how do you feel, and see the game-world around you?"
> Sparrow-hawk (female, Swedish): "I always feel like myself. And I feel like I'm pretending, but I'm pretending with my own feelings included. That there's always a big part of me also. Yeah, I'm pretending, but with big pieces of me inside of it, and all the feelings. And what the character feels, I feel too."[24]

2.12 INFLUENCING FACTORS AND ENJOYMENT

The popularity of live-action role-playing clearly shows that it is an enjoyable activity to at least a certain demographic group. What is not known, however, is the reason for this enjoyment. A few theorists have

---

in section 4 of the questionnaire.

[22] Given the small number of participants, the inconsistencies could be attributed to a standard error margin, but as percentages of the current groups they are high enough to note as potential inconsistencies in theory.

[23] Note that all of the "none" answers were given by players with at least some third-person tendencies in their character relationship, and that the possibility of the existence of "blended entity" type players within these categories may divide the scale even further.

[24] Data other than gender and nationality has been withheld in order to hide the interviewees' identities, and their names were replaced by types of birds for the same reason. As gender had no noticeable effect on answers in either the survey or the interviews, I have disregarded it as a basis for choosing which interview answers to present here.

tried answering this question: Edwards (2001) and Henriksen (2005) say it is a result of fulfilling the desires, goals or agendas of game participants, and thus highly utilitarian.[25] Gade (2003) and Fatland (2005b) state that the main reason for enjoying a larp is interaction. Harviainen (2007) has suggested that an inherent autotelic phenomenon similar, but not identical, to Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) concept of flow exist within the larp mind-state.[26] These three theories are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but rather perspective differences on which source of enjoyment is the primary one.

According to this study, the most significant factor positively affecting the participants' game experience was in-game interaction between players. 89,6% of those 58 players who answered stated that it had either a positive (51,7%) or very positive (37,9%) effect on their game experience, and 3,4% a negative effect. This war further explicated in the open feedback questions. Other significant factors were duration and pacing (positive or very positive 56,1%, negative 17,5%) and general plot structure (positive or very positive 58,6% and 1,7% negative). The highest negative effect was reported on pre-game information provided by the organizers (negative 19,3%, very negative 7%), but as almost all of those complaints come from Moira, which rated significantly lower than the other two games on the "provision of information about the game beforehand" scale, it is not possible to reliably assess the significance of that factor to the game experience or in-game identity.

However, at the same time the correlation between the quality of game material and general game enjoyment is far lower than what has been suggested in earlier larp theory. 92,2% marked the "I enjoyed participating in the game", with no clearly corresponding factors as to why, while the final 7,8% of "no" answers all had very negative general appraisals of the game and/or stated some singular disruptive element as a big problem. The logical conclusion is that some sort of an autotelic

---

[25] Edwards' theories, unlike the others mentioned here, are based on tabletop play and thus contain elements and perspectives incompatible with larp phenomena.

[26] Larp mind-states contain similar phenomena to flow components, but there are several differences, especially on the points of goals and self-consciousness. As Järvinen, Heliö and Mäyrä (2002) note, flow relates to *doing*. In contrast, autotelicity in larps is apparently related to states of *being*. See Appendix 2 for details.

element indeed inherently exists within the in-game state of a larp, or in the situational, temporary nature of in-game interaction. In other words, live-action role-playing is an enjoyable activity in itself, not enjoyable solely because it fulfills other needs.

Something also worth noting is that 19 people said they had learned something new from the game and 10 stated that they had not (see Henriksen, 2005, for the theory of developmental motivation of play). Players who said they had learned something new rated significantly lower than average on game enjoyment:

	Learned=yes	Learned=no	All
Enjoyed participating = yes	85,0%	100%	92,2%
Game experience=negative	10,5%	0%	5,2%
Game experience=neutral	21,1%	10%	10,3%
Game experience=positive	52,6%	70%	63,8%
Game experience=very positive	15,8%	20%	20,7%

Though the number of answers is low, a logical conclusion here would be that educational role-play is not as valid a course as it seems. I believe that would nevertheless be a false one. A second potential explanation for this phenomenon is presented in chapter 2.5.

2.3 CHARACTER IMMERSION

A central point of contention in larp theory has for a long time been the nature and potential traits of immersion, especially character immersion:

> "Immersion is the player assuming the identity of the character by pretending to believe her identity only consists of the diegetic roles." (Pohjola, 2004.)

> "The taking on of an amount of social and mental qualities of an imaginary entity, while at the same time suppressing some of the common social and mental qualities of the player. A fusion of the imagined entity and the player, which in its consciousness and

outer semblance carries the mask of the imaginary entity."
(Mäkelä, Koistinen, Siukola & Turunen, 2005.)

The question "Do you believe it is possible to identify so strongly with one's character that it becomes one's primary identity (i.e. does, in your opinion, "character immersion" exist)?" was answered by 68,3% of the participants. Of those, 82,9% gave a positive answer. 93,8% of that group furthermore stated that they had experienced the state themselves. This is in direct contrast to the theories of Lankoski (2004) and Hakkarainen & Stenros (2003) [27], and significantly conflicts the views of Brenne (2005). A phenomenon this prevalent among larp participants should not be disregarded as insignificant, even if it is, as Pohjola (2004) claims, only a temporary self-induced delusion.

Positive answers to belief in character immersion were much higher among Finnish participants (95,2%) than Swedish ones (68,4%). This is directly in relation to the stereotype of Finland being biased towards character-immersion explanations on play and Sweden favoring a more "live-inside-the-fantasy", drama-based approach (see Fatland, 2005a for details). Nevertheless, the percentage on positive answers even among Swedish participants is still high enough to cause suspicion on purely narrative-identity based theories.[28]

Despite the prevalence of immersionist answers and reported first-person and divisive character mind-states, 48,1% of the participants stated that they allowed narrative concerns to influence their play. This, combined with statements of game-improvement and/or personal desire -based affecting factors from players who did not mark the narrative influence question as "yes" (an additional 16,7%), means many players

---

[27] It is worth noting, though, that the Meilahti model's fluid "story of the self" –based view on identity makes it possible to interpret the model as immersion-compatible from the perspective of the model itself. Such a view on immersion is, however, very different from the way in which immersionist documents such as Pohjola, 1999 interpret the phenomenon.

[28] As Lehman (2005) has pointed out, all data on immersion is highly susceptible to cultural influence. That influence does not affect the game experience itself, but rather the way in which the experience is communicated to other people. Essentially, Finnish players are more likely to call a state of highly committed character play "immersion" than, for example, typical American larp participants would be.

are actually far less thoroughly character-immersed than they claim to be when interviewed. So even when in theory following character motives, most players are taking external factors into account.

> Interviewer: "So you basically favor the narrative over the other possible game elements?"
> Peregrine (male, Danish): "Any day." …
> I: "… how does it feel when you are playing who you're playing?"
> P: " That's a tough question. Hmm, I don't know. When there's action, when you're doing something, when you're active, then you – or, at least, I – lose some of the sense of self. But on quiet moments it's, the immersion comes harder. So it's, it's nicest when there's actually something to do, but that doesn't mean, you don't have to run around hitting people. You're doing something, it helps."
> Crane (male, Danish): "I'm into the immersion part, so if I'm not supposed to know something I prefer not to know it at all, because it is hard not to use it in some way, to [react as if I did not know certain things about what goes on]."

This study in no way brings us closer to understanding the psychology of the character-immersive mind-state, but it does point toward the existence of such a state as an actual majority experience – or at least as a popular name for certain personal types of larp experiences – during Nordic larp play.[29]

---

[29] The question on belief in immersion was originally included in the questionnaire solely for control purposes. Therefore there were no immersion-descriptive questions in the study per se, even though several of the points of the Allport-Ross variant deal with elements associated with immersion experiences. To balance this, the interviewees who reported immersion experiences or character-immersive behavior were asked to elaborate on those subjects.

2.4 FACTOR COMPONENTS AS DESCRIPTIONS OF IN-GAME PRESENCE

Factor analysis (principal component varimax with Kaiser normalization[30]) produced seven clearly different components that match the verbal descriptions given by players in both the questionnaires and during earlier informal discourse interviews. Some of the factor correspondences are quite low, but due to the correlation with secondary information can be taken as significantly tendency-indicative even though they are not reliable enough per se. For the sake of readability each component is treated here as if it were a "player type", instead of the state of primary default game-presence they apparently actually represent. Likewise, indicative mood is used in defining their traits, for the same purpose. Note that a play-state type may vary both from game to game and also between different moments during a game. Players may have preferred ways of in-game presence or default playing-styles, but fixed, immutable player *types* appear very rare.

> Interviewer: "Do you think the plot is so important that you have to preserve it?"
> Owl (male, German): "Sometimes. <laughs> Maybe my character could be more important."
> I: "So, in your opinion, does the thing you are favoring change from one game to another?"
> O: "Yeah."
> Goose (male, Finnish): "Every game begins with a simulation you're running on top of your normal personality. And I sort of try to get used to [the character]. In some games it's easier to accomplish, in others harder. In general, the more intensive and more active the game is, in other words: the less 'just hanging around' there is, the more there is that helps you get into character, the more automatic it becomes. So in a good game, I stop thinking about things outside the character concept at all. I do not succeed in this often, as it usually requires a game that is both long and, like, complex enough

---

[30] Components reported here in rotated form, converged after 10 iterations.

and with enough interaction happening between the character and the world."[31]

The component-templates are listed here in the order of factor reliability.[32] Each of them is, for the sake of convenience, given an estimated summary.

Type one players mostly exist in a narrative identity (.353) relationship with the character. Their style of play is highly affected by off-game desires (.778), narrative assumptions (.721) and a desire to improve the game for all (.724). They also show low levels of ethical genre influence on actions (.195) and enjoyment of new forms of activity (.135). Despite narrative influences, they do not perceive the game as a form of theatre (-.222), nor do they show signs of escapist tendencies (-.173).[33]

Pattern One - The Social Game Player: Treats the larp as a game that is meant to be enjoyed by all; Not competitive; Open to all information sources, but favors story-arc forming information; Possibly self-serving; Probably in narrative identity mode.

> Interviewer: "How do you feel about using metainformation, if it improves the game?"
> Peregrine: "If it improves the game, I have nothing against it. And I often tell my players that they should do so. 'Cause if they have the information, they're gonna act on it anyway. Why not act on it to further the game?"

---

[31] Goose was interviewed in Finnish. Translation by author.

[32] As this is more of an initiative on a new field and study subject than a fully reliable, clinical field project, I have chosen to treat even low correlation scores as important enough to note. The purpose of this is the presentation of potential leads to future researchers. It is therefore imperative to note that these game presence types are essentially generic predictions based on insufficient data, not findings.

[33] Narrative assumptions are roughly players' anticipation on what plot elements will enter play and where those plots should lead. Ethical genre influence refers to willingness to follow ethical principles defined by a genre or type of game (such as a willingness to kill being seen as "good" in action, and curiosity as beneficial in mystery games). Character reflexivity is the phenomenon of instinctively reacting to a stimulus of some kind because of one's character's traits, not the player's real traits.

> Crow (female, Swedish): "I have no problem whatsoever being taken off-game and given extra information, if that helps the game." …
>
> C: "I can't really say I lose my sense of self, I don't think you ever do. But I would say that when going into a character, going into a game, I put on a costume that is partly a symbiosis with myself, but [one] that I can put on and off at will."[34]

Type two players also favor narrative identity (.164, and over -.200 for the other two relationships). They have a very theatrical view of the game (.392) and see public actions as more important than private ones (.777). They are influenced by narrative assumptions (.262) and desires to improve the game experience for all (.178), but neither off-game desires (-.190) nor genre (-.104). They clearly see themselves as different from the majority of game participants, believing others immersed more strongly than they did (.646). Some of them have problems identifying with their characters (.138). What is extremely interesting is that a small correlation (.102) exists with this player type and experiencing character-reflexive behavior, which is normally perceived as one of the hallmarks of immersionist play.

Pattern Two - The Actor-Player: Highly theatrical view of larp; Action-based stance on playing; No value difference between diegetic and adiegetic information; Dislikes self-serving play; Probably either in narrative identity mode or not at all "in character".

> Rooster (male, Swedish): "I see no problem with [using metainformation]. It is great, because it enhances the possibility to play my character. I already know a lot of things that my characters do not. I have no real answer to that. Intuitively, I do know that's the case, from my own experience   that myself and my character live as different kinds of entities. The character, it's not a question of

---

[34] When condensing answers, I have preserved statements within a single quotation if there was no input from the interviewer between the reported statements. In cases where there was, the answers have been divided into multiple quotations.

exploring that character's, what he perceives. You know, it's not like there exists another reality, and I get brought into this character who happens to be in my body, experience what he or she experiences, and act accordingly. It's, the model is not true. The truth is that I already know the environment, I know cause of why we're having this larp. In many cases I know the other players. I know usually what they are capable of playing. So I already have all this information, and I use this information subconsciously, even if I'm not consciously using it. So I might as well go all the way and try have as many, as much relevant information as possible, to act. And that doesn't mean I would improvise, but I would improvise with as much information as I could get."

Peacock (male, Swedish): "I invent [missing information] and I usually go by chemistry with the fellow actors. What feels right and what is the drive of my character. So I don't really bother about thinking about the background and reasoning it all out. I go by what feels right and it usually works." …

P: "I prefer [the use of off-game information]. Because [of my background] I want to have things planned, and if they go that way, it's good. If they don't go that way, I have no problem with it. You can't have too much information." …

P: "My character, I feel, is secondary to the all-over narrative. … [As my in-game identity,] I feel that I am moving forwards. I don't necessarily think about it consciously. I have no real conscious thought, but I have a very strong presence of what I am doing. … The thinking me isn't really present."

Type three players are closest to the stereotype of "mature" play-states. They are very clearly in a perikhoretic state (.869, with -.685 for divisive and -.354 for narrative identity). Some theatrical perspective exists (.190), as does narrative influence (.203). They experience character-reflexive behavior (.346), yet are not ethically influenced by genre considerations (-.125), nor do they necessarily see themselves as different persons than normally (-.139). They also do not consider observed activity as more important (-.222). As the descriptive data

shows, the great majority of larp participants resemble this template the most.

Pattern Three - The Lives-in-the-Diegesis: Favors diegetic information sources; Character-based choices, but may have a theatrical view; Translates information into character choices or motives; Highly probably in perikhoretic identity mode, with a somewhat blurred sense of identity (and thus with a potential for actually being in blended entity); The definite majority type of game presence.

> Raven (female, Swedish)[35]: "I am always at least a little bit myself. I have not so far really had a complete experience of being, like, my character. I've always had a tiny bit of myself present. … But I'd very much prefer to [play by being just my character.]
>
> Swan (male, Swedish): "I don't like [the use of meta-information during play], no. If there's something that your character doesn't know, I regard it as not present in the game. … I think it's a test of good role-playing to be able to actually work beyond [off-game knowledge]. So you know the role is this, and you have this information, but you will not use it because that would ruin your game and other people's games. So I never cheat like that, no." …
>
> S: "I had to put words on [my in-game identity], I'd say 'environmental player', what I usually play, if I understand that one, is I usually play someone who is in there for the atmosphere, to create life in other peoples' characters as well. … I try most of all to see [the game] as the player, which is very hard, when you know you're not a player in a fantasy world, it's typically when things are built and you can see it's artificial material. I try as hard as I can to be the character and play the role and see the world as it is. But it is hard to notice the details. And I find myself sometimes thinking as myself, the real person, and that annoys me a bit

---

[35] Raven was interviewed in Swedish. Translation by author.

> because I would like to get more deeply into the character."
> Owl: "I try to make my character as different from myself as possible, but there's always a part of me inside."

Type four players very closely fit the immersionist idea. They exist in either divisive (.297) or perikhoretic (.149) states, and not in narrative identity form (-.644). They show no preference either way on issues of escapism (negligible), but enjoy the possible new forms of activity the larp provides (.527). Their identity changes from the normal one (.876) and activity is not tied ethically to genre considerations (-.131) or publicity (-.166). Some of them (.105) do allow the desire to improve the game for all to affect their actions, though.

Pattern Four - The Hardcore Immersionist: Primary identity clearly different from the normal one; Absolute priority on character consistency; Highly probably hostile towards meta-level information during play; Translates all information into diegetic form; Very probably not in narrative identity mode.

> Magpie (male, Swedish): "I regard myself as a lousy larper, because I do not lose myself into the character, as I think that I should do. I want to be totally immersed, completely swallowed by the character's movements, not by my doings. And what I'm constantly, always striving for is the very rare moment when I actually leave the room and there is only my character moving, and I can be constantly amazed about what he is doing."
> Interviewer: "How do you feel about the use of off-game or metainformation during the game?"
> Grouse (male, Danish): "I hate it, to be honest. I'm a re-enactor as much as I am a role-player, and I can only take that much off-game information or metainformation during the larp." …
> G: "I think that the easiest way to say this is that in my opinion the highest level of role-playing is when you're feeling your character's feelings. But, however, the worst thing you can do is, obviously, is that you're just feeling your own

emotions. So that's actually what I use as a rule of thumb in figuring out if I'm doing the right thing."

Shrike (male, Danish): "[If I am forced to use off-game information during play, or see someone else doing so] I feel awful. … I am strongly against using knowledge that is not in the game." …

S: "I don't think I completely immerse. I think I have a tendency to see things from, just, a little step away. But the strange thing is that I can still feel those emotions my character gets. So in that manner I'm still there, I'm still affected. I try to accept the magical circle and act according to it, but I try to maintain that reflective view while I still feel the emotions of the character."

Waxwing (female, Finnish): "I am a member of that school of thought which seeks to immerse into character as much as possible, meaning I try to block out my own conscious thoughts and solely experience my character's thoughts. But I've game mastered so much, meaning I've done lots of NPC roles, … that I've learned to break the experience momentarily and then return into [being just my] character [without problems].[36]

Type five players strongly resemble type one, but are more strongly connected to the experiential nature of the larp. They are probably mostly narrative identity types (.106, perikhoretic negligible and divisive slightly negative). There are some theatrical views (.201), high enjoyment of new possibilities of action (.568) and character-reflexive behavior (.580). Their ethics are influenced by genre (.799) and actions by desire for improvement (.358). Some preference for observed activity (.194) also exists. It is quite likely that most players playing non-player characters would default primarily to either this template or type one, depending on the role in question. Type five also matches the Swedish ensemble-style of play very closely.[37]

---

[36] Waxwing was interviewed in Finnish. Translation by author.

[37] Ensemble play is a type of larp where characters are mostly constructed by their players, based on general group descriptions given by the game's organizers. The style also includes the idea that it is better to slightly yield from one's own in-game motives in

Pattern Five - The Genre Player: Plays game primarily according to its perceived type; Has a theatrical view of the larp, but with a favoritism towards narrative build-ups; Seeks and uses information based on genre expectations; Probably in narrative identity mode or not "in character"; The patern most probably assumed by NPC players and highly ensemble-style larpers.

> Woodpecker (male, Swedish): "[I]f there's a feature that would give me more story I would tend to hook that on. I would go for the 'more story' approach."
>
> Interviewer: "So, in essence, you favor elements that further the story, or improve the game?"
>
> W: "Yes, I hope everyone would. I hope everyone would do that, on 'is it cooler if my character had a broken leg now, and it was impossible to leave camp because my leg were broken? – Of course it's broken! I can't move!'
>
> I: "So you think that the character-immersive style is then of less value?"
>
> W: "Clearly. It's useless, I think. If I would have tried to immerse in any of the games that I was in, and not game master myself, I would be utterly, completely bored."

Type six is most like that of players not enjoying the game they are participating in. Narrative identity is the most likely one for them (.135, perikhoretic negligible and divisive slightly negative). They show negative tendencies in escapism (-.143) and theatricality (-.407), and do not enjoy the new activity potential provided (-.233). Some experience character-reflexivity (.188). They too believe others immerse more strongly than they do (.457). Their most defining trait is inability to identify with their character (.844). Yet, curiously, they have seemingly next to no need to improve the game (-.130).

---

order to heighten the play-experience of others. Ideally, this is supposed to create a game where everyone gets some moments of "perfect drama". This is in direct opposition to the character-immersionist goal of staying as consistently as possible within purely character motives.

Pattern Six - The Disappointed: Does not enjoy the larp; Probably in narrative identity mode or not at all "in character"; A strong sense of dissociation with the game; Hostile towards all information sources not already defined as "friendly" before disappointment took place; Has no need to improve the game.

> Grouse: "[In a Danish larp with mistaken genre information], there was enormous gaps between our relations, between characters, and that proved an enormous problem. However, there were two kinds of people when it came to solving this situation. Half the participants were, very, they were very much against this and very stressed and tried to cope with this by making sure they were entertained as players rather than as their roles, whereas we were some that just decided to go with the flow of the situation and we generated our own relations during the larp.[38]

Type seven consists of escapists, who - against views expressed in earlier theory, including my own (2003) – exist in a narrative identity state (.304 ; the others negligible). They are on a vacation from the burdens of the mundane world (.901), not in a theatrical play (-.480). Some experience character-reflexivity (.109) and/or are not the same persons that they are outside the game (.151). They somewhat identify with their characters (-.103 resulting from inverse question formulation), are not interested in improving the game (-.120) and do not consider public actions better than private ones (-.141).[39]

Pattern Seven - The Escapist: Probably in narrative identity mode; Extremely strong escapist tendencies; Strongly non-theatrical view

---

[38] As type six is not the "default" playing style of anyone, it has to be described via second-hand knowledge.
Note that in certain countries, the words used for concepts like "character" and "role" differ from their conventional use in role-playing material written in English. In this case, "role" denotes what is commonly called "character".
[39] Escapists, and "power-gamers" who also very likely fit this category, willing to admit to being such are very rare, as most escapists see themselves as being some other type of player. Yet second-hand sources show that they definitely exist. As with type six, type seven is easier to present through participant observation than interviews.

of the game; Selects and interprets information based solely on personal interests; Primarily plays for self-gratification purposes.

> David Carsten Pedersen: "One night someone, who hadn't been a part of defining the common limits [of sex and violence in System Danmarc], went too far. He kept punching someone because he didn't get it. That's solely the player's responsibility. Having no rules isn't carte blanche to go psycho."
>
> Rasmus Högdall: "That kind of player will always detract from the experience, because they won't immerse or participate on the given premises." (Opus, 2005; translation from subtitles)

While these seven types are clearly incomplete, theoretical templates, in my view they are tendency-indicative enough. There are two major elements in them that merit further consideration, in addition to their intrinsic worth as potential new sources for player and play-relationship typology:

1. Even though the great majority of players exists within the perikhoresis (or, possibly, blended entity) state during play, the internal variance of narrative identity –style players is much higher. Yet the common factors for perikhoretic players are relatively low. All this leads a lot of credence to theories that have tried to understand play-behavior based on narrative-identity concerns, such as that of Edwards (2001)[40], but also points towards a separate immersionist approach really existing, one that those models do not sufficiently explain. In essence, the theories on narrative play-behavior work apparently better than expected in explaining variations within the narrative identity group, yet fail at explaining the play-experiences of game participants not in that mind-state.

2. The "player types" presented in this paper, based on actual field reports, are all somewhat at odds with what has so far been suggested in role-playing theory. The existing theories do account for most of the variables seen here, but not in the combinations they appear in. To

---

[40] Both those concerning temporary play-behavior patterns such as Stances and more permanent perspectives like the so-called Creative Agendas.

understand the reasons for this, we must turn to a new explanation, but one that takes into account the pieces that are already known: analysis of play behavior as patterns in information seeking and use.

2.5 FROM PLAYER TYPES TO ACTUAL PATTERNS

Larp play consists of constant information activity. Much of the actual play is based on the seeking and encountering of in-game knowledge, and then reacting to it. Furthermore, larps where metainformation is needed during play are rare.

> Amanda B. Sulvhöj: "We wanted to avoid sending out tons of written material for people to read, because experience shows, that they don't read it, and then only 10% of the players know the larp." (Opus 2005; translation from subtitles.)

In order to comprehend how the information seeking process' rules change during larps, we have to look at the defining traits of the in-game state as information. At the moment when a game begins, the play-space becomes a temporary pseudo-autonomous reality that is isolated by three factors: authority, language and the larp sign-interpretation state[41] (for the principles governing such changes, see Deleuze & Guattari, 1988[42]).

---

[41] Again, certain types of larps differ in this, becoming temporarily superimposed on reality instead of being isolated from it. Except for this difference in their play-space, they have the same intrinsic play-state traits as other larps.

[42] Interviews I have conducted on players (following the discourse-as-interview pattern; Kvale, 1996) during the three years of my larp theory test project strongly point towards there being a correlation between the default in-game state players choose if they are not specifically instructed by a larp's organizers and the way they re-signify any game elements that do not fit in with the diegesis. The same patterns were observable in the interviews used to confirm the survey results presented here. Players favoring a narrative identity approach reported using an icon-index-symbol system very close to that of Loponen and Montola's (2004) adaptation of Peirce. In contrast, players considering themselves as belonging to one of the other two types (especially self-proclaimed immersionists) had serious difficulty in explaining the semiotic re-coding they used, beyond acknowledging that they did use such a method in properly reaching the in-game state. The descriptions acquired from them closely resembled Ricoeur's views on

At that metamorphosis point, players become characters. Absolute executive control over the temporary reality turns from potential into factual and transfers into the control of one singular body, the game master(s).[43] Language patterns turn into a situationally codified discourse that makes sense within the game's diegesis.[44] The players' primary social identities – and, for many, their primary selves – are now those of their characters, as the play-space is transformed by the dual process described in chapter 1.4.

These changes create a new information factor that must be taken into account: metainformation, or, more precisely, a type of metainformation that exists in innate conflict with the diegesis.[45] It is that conflicting nature which sets the metainformation of a larp apart from other similar types of metainformation. A player, in order to function within the game, has to process multiple kinds of information relevant to the play, and classify it into different levels of utility and acceptability. The information is essentially alien and is appropriated rather than absorbed, i.e. interpreted into a form compatible with the (in this case temporary) world-view. This is done partially through the use of

---

context-based re-signification.

[43] Note that normal cultural variables exist within the larp's temporary reality. Power-distance defines access to the game master(s) and potentially assisting staff and a larp still has geographical barriers if the play-space is large enough. Uncertainty avoidance measures are usually publicly set in advance to a communally understood level (mostly by game-master choice) by statements on whether players needing new information are expected to invent that information or to get it from an acceptable source. Time barriers in larps are much stronger than in real life, due to the fact that the game is always known to be a temporary state of being. (On these factors' influence on information behavior, see Wilson & Walsh, 1996. On the influence of time limits on larp behavior, see Faaborg, 2005.)

[44] Whether those patterns would make sense outside the game, or even occasionally be identical to real-world discourse patterns, is purely incidental and thus irrelevant.

[45] The word "metainformation" in this context comes from game use, not knowledge theory. It has been used to refer to what is now called extra-diegetic or adiegetic information, and is still in active use in many larp mechanics systems. A common, nearly but not exactly identical expression is "off-game information".

Role-playing games have always included metainformation concerns, ranging from discussion forums to simple game master presence during tabletop play to the "Commune" spells offering meta-level yes/no answers in Dungeons & Dragons. What sets larp metainformation apart is the fact that live-action games strive for an illusion of autonomous space, and thus treat all accessing of meta-activity as breaks in continuity.

a filter – the character – and partially through the players' preferences.[46] How this filtering is done, and what constitutes sign-vehicle dissonance for a player during play, defines the player's "type"[47].

From this perspective, player types one and five have highly adiegetic motives and let narrative information dictate their courses of action – type one for story and five for dramatic purposes.[48] Type two appropriates all information into adiegetic knowledge, seeing no difference in metainformation and character information sources, and therefore treats the game as a theatrical performance. Type three, like type five, is interested in "living within the fantasy", but does so by translating metainformation into character motives (or, more accurately, character *choices*). Type four is interested in completely becoming the character and thus usually (but not always) attempts to ignore all metainformation. When forced to accept such metainformation, type four always translates it into character motives or choices.

Types six and seven – both of which are "problem player" types – exhibit strongly selfish information behavior. Type six rarely accepts any information source that he or she has not classified as "friendly" before play. This means both diegetic and adiegetic sources, and may even include the ultimate information authority of a given larp, the game master(s). Type seven does likewise, but while six resists the alteration of a negative experience, seven appropriates all information for the

---

[46] Wilson's (1996) patterns still work here, but the information travels on dual lines: one for diegetically available information, one for metainformation. Intervening variables then either block or transform the contents of the line that carries information perceived as adversarial to the play-experience.

[47] For the dissonance's characteristics, see Gluck 1997. Simply put, some associative sign-interpretation pairs do not normally come into play outside certain parameters, and when they do, an interpretational dissonance situation is created. For example, in a medieval larp a dagger on the table is only a part of cutlery, but in a murder mystery game it is primarily a lethal weapon. A reversal of these creates potential tension that stretches (or even breaks) "genre logic" rules. Even more importantly, this dissonance happens whenever the use of metainformation conflicts with player expectations. Railroaded ("forced to one direction") narratives are a good example of such occurrences, as are conflicts in design style and play-approach: The Turku.-school ideal (Pohjola, 1999) accepts only diegetic information sources during play, whereas the Storyteller's Manifesto (Westlund, 2004) makes all diegetic information subservient to narrative metainformation.

[48] The difference between these two being a preference either for an overall narrative arc or for singular dramatic scenes.

purpose of self-gratification through escapism. Both experience constant sign-vehicle dissonance.

Thus all information that comes from unwelcome sources – whether diegetic or meta-level – breaks the continuity of play and forces a game participant into conflict. For different player types, unwelcome sources differ greatly, as do the methods they use to appropriate, store or disregard such information.

Being forced to innovate new material, remember needed pre-game information or learn something new are all essentially types of unwelcome information seeking that has to be performed, and thus break continuity. Their presence thus lessens the entirety of the game experience and therefore always includes the risk that game participants forced to deal with such things enjoy the game less.

Most importantly, a point that the field data strongly points towards is that the information use patterns described here affect actual in-game behavior. Players are reluctant to get into situations where their interpretative frame would come into conflict with new information and interested in getting to those that enhance the desired experience. This causes phenomena such as choosing in-game conversation partners based on narrative potential, variance in willingness to consult the game master(s) even when a clear information gap exists, etc.[49]

Yet, despite the conflicting and even directly opposing desires mentioned above, a functional larp works precisely because such conflicts exist. Larps are self-regulating temporary environments that benefit from the presence of different styles, methods and motives of play. As seemingly incompatible larp participants each serve their own goals, they create feedback loops that enable others to appropriate the information they produce and/or alter. Therefore, for instance, a metainformation-using narrativists, seen as a "cheater" by an immersionist, actually produces new game elements that the immersionist is then able to encounter as his character. And the immersionist, seen by the narrativist as "selfish and inconsiderate", in

---

[49] All of these were reported several times in the interviews. Most interestingly, the differences in such behavior seem to take place in re-signification templates closely reminiscent of Gluck's combination of Dervin's information theory and Peircean semiotics, with different play-styles corresponding to different Mappings each (Gluck, 1997). I will analyze those correspondences in a separate, forthcoming article.

turn evokes character-perspective driven game events that would not be produced by just following narrative currents, creating more story potential for the narrativist's use.   Thus are both of their interests served, by people whose playing style they would not accept as valid without the game's reality hiding their differences for the duration of play.

> Magpie: "I'm a modest person. I don't feel like subverting the organizers just for kicks."
>
> Interviewer: "All right. How do you feel if you notice somebody else is actually using outside information for the sake of their game?"
>
> Magpie: "It's very hard to know in the game if this is happening. I mean, how can I know if he is acting on off-game information or not? He won't tell me. I mean he's doing things, I can notice that. But I have no idea what drives him. So I don't know if he does it for off-game reasons or if it is part of his real personality. So I would just treat it like a normal larp event."

3. CONCLUSIONS

1. "Player types" as they have been suggested in earlier role-playing analysis do not exist in larps. The actual difference in styles of play comes from cognitive variables that affect information seeking behavior during play. These personal variables, combined with game and genre based factors, determine which information sources are seen as welcome, acceptable or disruptive to the play experience. That, in turn, creates the personal level of participatory/immersive behavior each participant displays/experiences during play.

2. While player types do not exist, patterns of participatory/immersive game behavior can be reasonably generalized into certain forms of "playing styles". These playing styles may vary from game to game and moment to moment, but most players have a default playing style they will favor unless told to do otherwise.

3. There is an inherently pleasure-giving aspect in live-action role-playing. That aspect is not produced by any traits of the game

experience that can be isolated with the level of knowledge currently available, but it is obvious that disruptive events or a game perceived as "bad" can (yet not always will) cause that pleasure-giving aspect to be suspended. Whether that pleasure is a product of social interplay, narrative participation, fulfillment of an agenda or an actually autotelic quality in the play-process itself merits further study.

4. Taking on the role of another person and thus a new system of thought-patterns is mentally energy-consuming and therefore exhaustive. There is no apparent correlation between this exhaustion and character relationship or immersion.

5. Lehman's axiom on interesting play, "when given a choice, players are likely to choose the option with the most dramatic potential, as long as that option remains within the parameters of character and game consistency", applies also to immersive play to a greater extent than what immersionist larp theories and dogmas (such as Pohjola, 1999) claim.[50] Most players actually interpret game information in a manner that facilitates narrative build-up, even when they see themselves acting solely on the basis of character motives.

6. Players translate information into their primary experiential patterns. Being forced to use information not on one's primary interpretation level creates a dissonance that adversely affects the play-experience. Tendencies of play-style define the patterns of information use, and govern the selection of the parts of seemingly hostile information that are appropriated. By understanding the way information flows during play, how and why it is sought, and how it is appropriated, we will understand how the play-state works, but not how it is actually experienced. For that, we need other tools.

What can be stated at this point to a level of relative certainty is that differing patterns of play indeed exist, and that those patterns are influenced by information behavior, identity preferences and the nature of the temporary play-space. In other words, by several adiegetic factors. Furthermore, we have gained an initial understanding of the level to which each player type / play pattern template is affected by which of the key influencing factors.

---

[50] Lehman's axiom is based on his earlier material; the final formulation quoted here is from Lehman, 2005.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LUDOGRAPHY

Ericson, Anna & Tidbeck, Karin: Moira. Blekinge, Sweden, Aug. 19-21, 2005.
Harviainen, J. Tuomas: Haalistuvia Unelmia / Fading Dreams. Espoo, Finland, Jun. 22, 2005.
Harviainen, J. Tuomas: Melpomene: Aiskhylos. Espoo, Finland, Jun. 23, 2005.
Pohjola, Mike: Four Color: Kun Soi Jazz. / Four Color: All that Jazz. Turku, Finland, Jul. 30, 2005.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aarseth, Espen (2001): Allegories of Space. The Question of Spatiality in Computer Games. In: CyberText Yearbook 2000, ed. Eskelinen, M. & Koskimaa, R. University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä.
Brenne, Geir Tore (2005): Making and Maintaining Frames. A Study of Metacommunication in Laiv Play. Cand. Polit. Thesis for the University of Oslo.
Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly (1975): Beyond Boredom and Anxiety. The Experience of Play in Work and Games. Jossey-Bass, California.
Deleuze, Gilles & Guattari, Felix (1988): A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Translated and foreword by Brian Massumi. Athlone Press, London.
Edwards, Ron (2001): GNS and Other Matters of Role-playing Theory. Adept Press. Online at http://www.indie-rpgs.com/articles/1/
Ermi, Laura & Mäyrä, Frans (2005): Fundamental Components of the Gameplay Experience: Analysing Immersion. In: de Castell, Suzanne & Jenson, Jennifer (eds.): Changing Views: Worlds in Play - Selected Papers of the 2005 Digital Games Research Association's Second International Conference. Digital Games Research Association & Simon Fraser University, Vancouver.

Faaborg, Mathias Lysholm (2005): Quantifying In-Game Economy. A Contribution to the Analysis of the In-game Economy of Larp Events. In: Dissecting Larp, ed.

Bøckmann, P. & Hutchison, R. Knutepunkt, Oslo.

Falk, Jennica & Davenport, Glorianna (2004): Live Role-Playing Games. Implications for Pervasive Gaming. In: Proceedings of Third International Conference on Entertainment Computing – ICEC 2004.

Fatland, Eirik (2005a): Knutepunkt and Nordic Live Roleplaying: A Crash Course. In: Dissecting Larp, ed. Bøckmann, P. & Hutchison, R. Knutepunkt, Oslo.

Fatland, Eirik (2005b): Incentives as Tools of Larp Dramaturgy. In: Dissecting Larp, ed. Bøckmann, P. & Hutchison, R. Knutepunkt, Oslo.

Gade, Morten (2003): Interaction: the Key Element of Larp. In: As Larp Grows Up, ed. Gade, M., Thorup, L. and Sander, M. Knudepunkt 03, Copenhagen.

Gade, Morten (2005): Danish Larp by Numbers. In: Dissecting Larp, ed. Bøckmann, P. & Hutchison, R. Knutepunkt, Oslo.

Gluck, Myke (1997): Making Sense of Semiotics: Privileging Respondents in Revealing Contextual Geographic Syntactic and Semantic Codes. In: Information Seeking in Context, ed. Vakkari, Pertti, Savolainen, Reijo & Dervin, Brenda. Taylor Graham, London.

Hakkarainen, Henri & Stenros, Jaakko (2003): The Meilahti School – Thoughts on Role-Playing. In: As Larp Grows Up, ed. Gade, M., Thorup, L. and Sander, M. Knudepunkt 03, Copenhagen.

Harviainen, J. Tuomas (2003): The Multi-Tier Immersion Theory. In: As Larp Grows Up, ed. Gade, M., Thorup, L. and Sander, M. (electronic edition only). Knudepunkt 03, Copenhagen.

Harviainen, J. Tuomas (2005a): Corresponding Expectations. Alternative Approaches to Enhanced Game Presence. In: Dissecting Larp, ed. Bøckmann, P. & Hutchison, R. Knutepunkt, Oslo.

Harviainen, J. Tuomas (2005b): Testing Larp Theories and Methods. Results for Years Zero to One. In: Dissecting Larp, ed. Bøckmann, P. & Hutchison, R. Knutepunkt, Oslo.

Harviainen, J. Tuomas (2006): Testing Larp Theories and Methods. Results for Year Two. In: Role, Play, Art, ed. Fritzon, T. & Wrigstad, T. Föreningen Knutpunkt, Stockholm.

Harviainen, J. Tuomas (2007): Core Hermeneutics in Role-Playing. Forthcoming in Neuenschwander & Aldred (eds.).

Heliö, Satu (2004): Role-Playing: a Narrative Experience and a Mindset. In: Beyond Role and Play, ed. Montola, M. & Stenros, J. Ropecon ry, Helsinki.

Hendricks, Sean Q. (2006): Incorporative Discourse Strategies in Tabletop Fantasy Role-Playing Gaming. In: Gaming as Culture, ed. Williams, P., Hendricks, S. & Winkler, K. McFarland, Jefferson.

Henriksen, Thomas Duus (2005): Profiling the Larper. What is Actually at Stake. In: Dissecting Larp, ed. Bøckmann, P. & Hutchison, R. Knutepunkt, Oslo.:

Hermanson, Jan (1997): The Interplay of Social Science and Personal Belief in Gordon W. Allport's Psychology of Religion. Lund University Press, Lund.

Holstein, James A. & Gubrium, Jaber F. (2000): The Self We Live By. Narrative Identity in a Postmodern World. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Järvinen, Aki, Heliö, Satu & Mäyrä, Frans (2002): Communication and Community in Digital Entertainment Services. Prestudy research report. Hypermedia Laboratory Net Series 2.

Koljonen, Johanna (2004): "I Could a Tale Unfold Whose Lightest Word Would Harrow up Thy Soul". Lessons from Hamlet. In: Beyond Role and Play, ed. Montola, M. & Stenros, J.

Kvale, Steinar (1996): InterViews. An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.

Lankoski, Petri (2004): Character Design Fundamentals for Role-Playing Games. In: Beyond Role and Play, ed. Montola, M. & Stenros, J. Ropecon ry, Helsinki.

Lehman, Ben (2005): lectures in Finland and personal discourse.

Lehrich, Christopher (2004): Ritual Discourse in Role-playing Games. Online at http://www.indie-rpgs.com/_articles/ritual_discourse_in_RPGs.html

Lehrich, Christopher (2006): Bricolage at Play. Forthcoming in Neuenschwander & Aldred (eds.).

Lieberoth, Andreas (2006): With Role-Playing in Mind. A Cognitive Account of Decoupled Reality, Identity and Experience. In: Role, Play, Art, ed. Fritzon, T. & Wrigstad, T. Föreningen Knutpunkt, Stockholm.

Loponen, Mika & Montola, Markus (2004): A Semiotic View on Diegesis Construction. In: Beyond Role and Play, ed. Montola, M. & Stenros, J. Ropecon ry, Helsinki.

Montola, Markus (2003): Role-playing as Interactive Construction of Subjective Diegeses. In: As Larp Grows Up, ed. Gade, M., Thorup, L. and Sander, M. Knudepunkt 03, Copenhagen.

Montola, Markus & Jonsson, Staffan (2006): Prosopopeia. Playing on the Edge of Reality. In: Role, Play, Art, ed. Fritzon, T. & Wrigstad, T. Föreningen Knutpunkt, Stockholm.

Mäkelä, Eetu, Koistinen, Sampo, Siukola, Mikko and Turunen, Sanni (2005): The Process Model of Role-Playing, updated electronic edition. First edition published in: Dissecting Larp, ed. Böckmann, P. & Hutchison, R. Knutepunkt, Oslo. Online in updated form at http://temppeli.org/rpg/process_model/

Opus (2005): Bagom System Danmarc. In: System Danmarc DVD 2.0 EN. Opus, Copenhagen.

Pohjola, Mike (1999): The Manifesto of the Turku School. In: As Larp Grows Up, ed. Gade, M., Thorup, L. and Sander, M. Knudepunkt 03, Copenhagen.

Pohjola, Mike (2004): Autonomous Identities. Immersion as a Tool for Exploring, Empowering and Emancipating Identities. In: Beyond Role and Play, ed. Montola, M. & Stenros, J. Ropecon ry, Helsinki.

Ricoeur, Paul (1981): Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences. Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation. Edited, translated and introduced by John B. Thompson. Cambridge University Press, London.

Rutanen, Tomi (2006): Eläytymisen rajat. Roolihahmoon eläytyminen näytelmäroolipelissä. Master's thesis in social psychology, University of Kuopio.

Salen, Katie & Zimmerman, Eric (2004): Rules of Play. Game Design Fundamentals. Massachusetts, The MIT Press.

Tea, Alan J. H. & Lee, Benny P.H. (2004): Reference and Blending in a Computer Role-playing Game. In: Journal of Pragmatics, 36 (9).

Westlund, Aksel (2004): The Storyteller's Manifesto. In: Beyond Role and Play, ed.

Montola, M. & Stenros, J. Ropecon ry, Helsinki.

Wilson, Tom & Walsh, Christina (1996): Information Behaviour. An Interdisciplinary Perspective. The British Library Board.

Winnicott, D. W. (1971): Playing and Reality. Tavistock Publications, London.

Wulff, David M. (1997): Psychology of Religion. Classic and Contemporary. Second Edition. John Wiley & Sons, New York.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. THE HARVIAINEN-HELIO QUESTIONNAIRE, VERSION 3.0

(presented here in condensed form)
© J. Tuomas Harviainen & Satu Heliö, 2005

1. General information:

Game:_____ Date:___/___/_____
Location:_____
Duration of the game itself (excluding preparation and debriefing):_____

Age:___
Gender: _____
Nationality:_____
Place of permanent residence: _____
Years of larp experience:_____
Years of tabletop role-playing experience:_____

2. Analysis of the current game:

	Very Negative	Negative	Neutral	Very Positive	Positive
How was your game experience in general?	O	O	O	O	O
How did the following elements affect your game experience:					

	Very Negative	Negative	Neutral	Very Positive	Positive
- Preparation of the game environment	O	O	O	O	O
- Quality of the game material provided (i.e. all written material you received for the game, such as character description and background information)	O	O	O	O	O
- In-game interaction between players	O	O	O	O	O
- Duration and pacing of the game	O	O	O	O	O
- Pre-game information provided by the organizers (i.e. advance information about how and where the game would be run, themes, logistics, etc.)	O	O	O	O	O
- The general plot structure of the game	O	O	O	O	O
- Off-game discourse/workshops with other participants	O	O	O	O	O
- The use of new game techniques or mechanics	O	O	O	O	O

Were there any elements during the game that you found disruptive to your game experience? If yes, please elaborate. (four empty lines)

Were there one or more specific elements that particularly assisted in your enjoyment of the game? If yes, what were they: (four empty lines)

3. How well do you think the following elements had been prepared in the game you just participated in?

	Very Badly	Badly	Decently	Very Well	Well
- The game in general	O	O	O	O	O
- Preparation and staging of the game environment	O	O	O	O	O
- Character creation	O	O	O	O	O
- Support for sufficient character interaction (i.e. was the quantity of plot hooks, game elements, etc. sufficient to provide enough discourse?)	O	O	O	O	O
- Anticipation of optimal game duration and pacing (i.e. was the game the right length and did events unfold at a good pace?)	O	O	O	O	O
- Provision of information about the game beforehand	O	O	O	O	O
- The overall plot structure of the game	O	O	O	O	O
- Production of new mechanics and techniques for the game	O	O	O	O	O
- The participation-fee-to-game-quality ratio of the game	O	O	O	O	O
- Support for off-game interaction (workshops, mailing lists, etc.)	O	O	O	O	O

Please elaborate what kind of changes you would have preferred to see in the areas you considered badly done: (seven empty lines)

4. The in-game state:

During the game, did you think of your character as: ___ "Me" or as ___ "My character"? What do you think were the primary reasons for this: (four empty lines)

Which of the following statements do you consider accurate descriptions of the way you experienced the game? Please mark all that seem applicable.

___ My character was the only "self" I experienced during the game. My real-world personality did not affect my game experience during the game.

___ I was the same person that I am outside the game. My character was only a social mask that I wore, just like I act differently at work and at home.

___ My character and I existed as an interlaced persona, in which the choices of my character arose from the character's personality, but were influenced by my real-world personality.

___ The choices I made during the game were influenced by things I like outside the game.

___ I was on a vacation from the burdens of the mundane world.

___ My game experience was disrupted because the pre-game information (including character) that I received contained too much information that I had to remember/re-read during the game.

___ I was in a theatrical play without an audience.

___ I enjoyed the new forms of activity the game's reality made possible.

___ Occasionally I reacted without thinking solely on the basis of my character's world-view.

___ I was not the same person during the game that I normally am.

___ Ethical choices I made during the game were influenced by the game's genre and/or rules system.

___ Other participants identified with the characters more strongly than I did.

___ I felt fear during the game.

___ My character felt fear during the game.

___ The choices I made during the game were influenced by my assumptions on what would suit the plot structure of the game.

___ My character's actions that were observed by other players were more important to my game experience than were the ones I did without an audience.

___ I felt sexually aroused during the game.

___ My character felt sexually aroused during the game.

___ I enjoyed the sense of being someone else during the game.

___ The choices I made during the game were influenced by my assumptions on what would make the game better for all.

___ I could not identify with my character.

___ It was hard to concentrate on the game, because the game environment did not look like what it was supposed to look like in the game's reality.

___ My game experience was disrupted because I had to invent material that was not included in the pre-game information (including character) that I received.

___ I enjoyed participating in the game

If you felt a loss of the sense of self and/or a strong identification with your character, how long (approximately) did it take you to reach that state?_____

Do you believe it is possible to identify so strongly with one's character that it becomes one's primary identity during a game (i.e. does, in your opinion, "character immersion" exist)?   _____

If yes, have you experienced it yourself? _____

5. Game results:

What was the most enjoyable element in the game:
_____
_____
_____

What was the most unpleasant or disruptive element in the game:
_____
_____
_____

Did you experience the intended themes of the game? If yes, how did they manifest:
_____
_____
_____

Did you learn something new from the larp, such as new values, playing methods or points of view? If yes, please elaborate: (four empty lines)

Any other feedback you want to give on the game:
(16 empty lines)

Any feedback you want to give on this research questionnaire:
(eight empty lines)

This research questionnaire is intended for direct feedback on larps for the organizers of those larps, as well as for non-commercial academic use. The results will be handled in an anonymous manner, and will only be utilized in furthering knowledge and design of role-playing games. All processed data will be made public.

This research questionnaire may be freely distributed and utilized within the abovementioned parameters, as long as no changes to it are made and the authors of this questionnaire are informed of its use.

APPENDIX 2. KEY TRAITS OF AUTOTELICITY IN PRETENCE PLAY (SPECULATIVE):

FLOW:
•A challenging activity that requires skills
•The merging of action and awareness
•Clear goals and feedback
•Concentration on the task at hand
•The paradox of control
•The loss of self-consciousness
•The transformation of time
•Relates to doing

LIMINOID PRETENCE PLAY (INCLUDING LARPS):
•A challenging activity that requires a temporary change of world-view
•The merging of action (pretence) and awareness
•Sense of being a part of the narrative currents
•Maintenance of diegetic integrity
•The paradox of control
•Heightened sense of (potentially artificial) self
•The transformation of time
•Relates to being
•Not as intense as flow

Because the pretence play takes place in a liminoid state, it takes on the characteristics of participatory ritual. Thus the autotelic state is not a flow experience created by an activity (pretence), but rather a new state based on the sense of temporary belonging in the fantasy's reality and its narrative currents.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

J. Tuomas Harviainen (b. 1972) is a master of theology from the University of Helsinki, with over 20 years' worth of tabletop role-playing and a decade of larp experience. Since

J. Tuomas Harviainen

2004, he has also been running a volunteer research program that field tests role-playing methods and theories. His earlier work has appeared in the Nordic larp studies yearbooks and role-playing magazines. Harviainen is currently writing his doctoral dissertation at the University of Tampere, on the subject of information behavior in larp environments. He works as an academic librarian-in-chief in Turku, Finland.

CORRESPONDENCE

J. Tuomas Harviainen, University of Tampere, Finland
Emai: jushar-at-utu-dot-fi

INTERACTIVE DRAMA AS THEATRE FORM

Brian David Phillips
National Chengchi University

WHAT IS INTERACTIVE DRAMA?

When introduced outside of the gaming context, Interactive Drama can be seen as a fairly new form of theatre that takes our traditional concepts and forms of theatre and turns them on their head and inside out. It has similarities to Environmental Theatre, Hyperdrama, Improvisation, and Psychodrama but is most akin to what language teachers call the "role play" or the "simulation." However, Interactive Drama is usually much more involved than these last two.

The Interactive Drama is a scenario-driven form of theatre similar to the parlor drama games of the 14th century in which the *Master of the Masque* assigned roles to guests at costumed masquerades which they would then improvise and roleplay for the duration of the evening. These later became the masquerade balls we know today wherein guests wear costumes but do not play the roles (readers are reminded of the circumstances in which Romeo and Juliet met). While it is not currently clear whether the players were expected to accomplish goals during the evening or if their roleplay was completely freeform, there are contemporary forms of Interactive Drama which incorporate either strategy. There are also a few similarities here to Japanese *cosplay*.

Of course, the contemporary Interactive Drama is not really a direct descendant of the masque, rather most are directly related to similar

games that simultaneously appeared through a process of parallel development in England and the United States during the early 1970's. Most modern Interactive Dramas take the form of Live Action Role Playing Games (LARPs or LRPs), Freeform Role Plays, and Murder Mystery Whodunits.   However, there are currently more theatrical performance groups experimenting with the form as Deconstructed Theatre (see my *"Interactive Drama: Deconstructing Theatre"* for a discussion of this – as well as other pieces I have written over the years on this very topic, as it is one I have revisited often, including the present discussion).

Basically, in an Interactive Drama the participants are given characters to play that have their own goals and motivations.   The participants then freeform roleplay with the other participants without knowing what the other characters are trying to accomplish or what their secrets are.   For instance, to use an example developed by *Scary Kevin* for the internet FAQ, you are given a dossier which contains the background information on your character – perhaps you are a young Danish prince.   You are rather depressed because your father has died and your uncle has married your mother and taken the throne. According to your dossier, you have a few friends you can trust, such as Horatio, and a few you're really not completely sure about, such as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.   Now, Horatio wants you to come and see a ghost with him.   Keep in mind that Horatio, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern are other players, each of whom have similar dossiers with their goals, motivations, and background.   The story then unfolds as the players, as their characters, interact.   The results may be pretty much the way Shakespeare wrote his version or perhaps not, it depends upon how the particular players of a particular scenario interact and what happens.   Hamlet could end up crowned King, or he could be killed rather quickly as Claudius deals with him more effectively.

In their nature, Interactive Dramas can be simple freeform roleplays, grand theatrical pieces, or even historical simulations with knights in armor using padded weapons to combat one another.   Theatre Style pieces tend to by non-physical with no touching or combat in the scenarios while the Live Action Combat pieces are usually outdoors incorporating physical challenges and combat (my own preference is the former but that's just me).   Interactive Dramas may be either

stand-alone scenarios that are self-contained and intended to be played once by any given troupe or they may be serial or chronicle style pieces in which the characters continue from one scenario to another, often gaining more abilities or powers as the storyline progresses.

While the gaming origins are obvious and certainly should not be ignored or made less important than they are, critically Interactive Drama can be seen as a new form of theatre which takes traditional forms and turns them on their head and inside out. It has similarities to Environmental Theatre, Hyperdrama, and Psychodrama but is not a subtype of any of these. It is a new form. In this brief essay, we'll explore some of these links to other forms and discover some characteristics which set Interactive Drama apart. We'll also discuss ways in which Interactive Drama deconstructs are more traditional notions of drama.

Just what the devil is an Interactive Drama? There are as many definitions of what Interactive Drama as there are troupes practicing it. First we should determine what Interactive Drama **is not**:

- Interactive Drama is not Interactive Theatre as the term is used for Virtual Theatre in which live actors interact with virtual objects (generated by a computer).
- Interactive Drama is not Interactive Drama as the term is used for computer virtual reality programs in which the computer user controls a virtual actor who acts with other computer constructs in a completely virtual theatre. Basically, this form of Interactive Drama is an educational computer game program.
- Interactive Drama is not box drama in which an audience sits passively watching a performance by actors upon a stage.
- Interactive Drama is not performance theatre in which actors present the same piece as rehearsed from a preset narrative or dialogue.

So . . . that tells us what Interactive Drama is not so we must now discern what it actually is.

Interactive Drama is a scenario-driven form of theatre akin to parlor

drama games played in the 14th century but more directly related to similar games played since the early 1970s. Most Interactive Dramas today take the form of live action role playing games, freeform role plays, and murder mystery whodunits. However, there are more and more theatre performance groups experimenting with the form - with actors portraying roles and "audience members" brought into the plot (this is most common in the murder mystery dinner theatre circuit but can be found in other experimental groups. For more information on live role plays, the best place to check is the *Live Action Role Playing Frequently Asked Questions* (LARP FAQ) available on the net. There is also a very informative Interactive Murder Mystery FAQ file available.

Basically, in an Interactive Drama, each participant is both performer and audience. Each participant is assigned a role (although in some groups, participants make up their own characters) - a character who fits into the scenario's plot. The players then improvise lines and actions in order to achieve the goals of their characters. Only the scenario writer or director knows the Whole Truth - through conversation and improvisation, the performers role play until the evening's plot is resolved on way or another. Every time the scenario is played there may be a different conclusion but any given group would only play a scenario once. Scenarios become very design intensive and unfortunately there aren't many to go around. Most groups design their own. Some groups perform inter-connected scenarios using the same characters, in serial or chronicle form, with the stories leading into one another while others create entirely new ones for each outing.

Since there are already good resources available on how to design an Interactive Drama scenario, I won't go into detail here - that is not my purpose. I will however recommend a couple short essays on the subject for interested readers (many of which are accessible easily online via a Google search):

- *A Beginner's Guide to Freeforms* - This brief article by Australian Freeform writers Tonia Walden and Louise Pieper is an excellent resource.
- *Introduction to Freeform Games* - This introduction by Andrew Rilestone also gives quite a few pointers for

developing and writing scenarios. Andrew is the editor
for the journal Interactive Fantasy.

In addition to my own web site on the subject, the *Shakespeare
Interactive Drama Archive* (associated with the present *Journal of
Interactive Drama*), those wishing more information on running
Interactive Dramas might like to try the *Live Action Roleplaying
Association* web pages, among others.

CRITICAL APPROACHES, BUILDING OUR OWN

By any standard the world of Interactive Drama is a rather small,
perhaps trivial, social world.   It doesn't have a massive economic
impact, it isn't a representative sample of theatrical theory and practice,
and it does not exemplify any particular literary movement — other than
that of Interactive Drama itself.   It certainly is not the most important
subsegment of Literature on which one might choose to do research.
Yet the world of Interactive Drama poses interesting literary questions —
questions that have not been widely addressed elsewhere, and for which
this particular dramatic world can provide some answers.

INTERACTIVE DRAMA THROUGH DRAMA

Interactive Drama is a new form of theatre which takes traditional
forms and turns them on their head and inside out.   It has similarities to
Environmental Theatre, Hyperdrama, and Psychodrama but is not a
subtype of any of these.   It is a new form.   We will briefly explore
some of these links to other forms and discover some characteristics
which set Interactive Drama apart.[1]   We'll also discuss ways in which

---

[1] Naturally, one can find similarities between Interactive Drama and other forms . . .
such as *Poor Theatre* or even *Taiwanese Opera* and others — albeit most of these are
results of coincidental rather than evolutionary links.   I have had to be selective for
space considerations and so other theoretical relationships will have to wait for a later
date.

Interactive Drama deconstructs our more traditional notions of drama.

ENVIRONMENTAL THEATRE

Those who practice Interactive Drama usually don't think of themselves as participating in a form of theatre, but that's exactly what they're doing. Interactive Drama is a form of deconstructed drama which takes the Environmental Theatre paradigm of combining spaces for audience and performer and eliminates the difference between the two completely. In Interactive Drama, the actor is the audience.

Interactive Dramas are not performed for an audience in the traditional way. Rather, each of the actors is also a member of the audience and vice versa. There are usually no detached observers who act as non-participating audience members. Rather, each member of the audience has a role to play

Since the members of the audience are also the performers, the space no longer need be limited to a stage or performance venue. Interactive Dramas are created/run/performed/played in venues as diverse as dinner theatre restaurants, meeting halls, hotel lobbies, and private homes. The space becomes less important as the environment. Usually, those running an Interactive Drama make an effort to transform the mundane surroundings into an illusion of another space or time (science fiction and fantasy are by and far the most common genres for Interactive Drama with gothic punk vampire scenarios using the *Mind's Eye Theatre* system published by White Wolf (the folks whose work inspired the *Kindred: The Embraced* television series)).

In Interactive Dramas, the audience and the performer is neither separated by space nor by function. The performer is the audience of her own and other's performance. There is still "drama" and "tension" in that the outcome of the plot is still a mystery.

EPIC THEATRE

While Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre had as one of its mainstays the concept of theatre becoming educational, the lowering of the fourth wall

and the creation of metatheatre conventions also have a great deal in common with Interactive Drama performance — with the notable differences being in improvisational scenario and audience-performer relationships.   There is an obvious influence on Australian New Wave Interactive Drama by Brecht, if not by his practice at least by his theoretical intention.

HYPERDRAMA

Hyperdrama is very similar in spirit to Interactive Drama in that the ending of the performance is not set. The audience chooses to follow various characters and plots - changing how they perceive the story from performance to performance.

Hyperdrama has a great deal in common with action-mazes or find-your-own-adventure books. The term "hyper" - "drama" comes from "hypertext," the text construction format of the World Wide Web with links leading to jumps from text to text with seemingly endless possibilities in terms of where the performance can go. However, this is an illusion. The performance possibilities are still finite as they are still script driven. The actors still perform their "lines" and the audience, despite the added control over the "hyper" elements of the drama, is still relegated to the role of passive voyeur. The various "interactive movies" available on CD-ROM are good examples of the basics of the form - albeit not usually very exceptional

The game like qualities of hyperdrama have a great deal in common with the playful qualities of Interactive Drama. The beginnings of freeform endings and multiple plots are also shared by the two. However, Interactive Drama goes further by not having a set script and using improvisational means to create the multiple - now truly infinite - possibilities for plot development.

For more on hyperdrama, the reader is encouraged to read Charles Deemer's excellent *introduction*, *essay*, and examples.

PSYCHODRAMA

Psychodrama was begun by J.L. Moreno as a form of therapy. His work with the use of drama with psychotherapy was groundbreaking and is still emulated - with a tremendous and beneficial legacy. Moreno was also very interested in improvisational theatre - his *Theatre of Spontaneity* is still worth study by serious scholars in the field.

It is with psychodrama that Interactive Drama shares a great deal - closed performance venues for performers only, brief scenarios, loose improvisational performance, and the like. Some Interactive Dramas - such as the Australian convention Holocaust freeforms - are in fact little more than trauma-intense psychodramas disguised as games.

A key difference between psychodrama and Interactive Drama though is catharsis and purpose. The psychodramatist creates a scenario for therapeutic purposes in order to help achieve a specific healing purpose for the participants. The interactive dram artist's first concern is pleasure in terms of "game play" or entertainment. This doesn't mean the interactive dramatist may not have catharsis and release built into her scenarios - we've all read Aristotle on this subject - but it is not the chief goal of the performance.

DECONSTRUCTED DRAMA

Most of the experimental drama forms discussed thus far in one way or another attempts to challenge our preconceptions regarding theatre. Interactive Drama never set out to do that but it may very well be the most successful in creating a kind of *Theatre of Deconstruction*. As we're all aware, Deconstruction is the philosophical and critical movement expressed in the writings of Jacques Derrida which questions the foundations of the expression of thought and literature by questioning the very premises upon which they are grounded. The ideas caught on quickly amongst academics and spread like wildfire into just about every discipline in the humanities and then into the arts. We've seen Deconstruction Criticism, Deconstruction Architecture an d Painting, Deconstruction Fiction and Non-Fiction, and even Deconstruction Film. There have also been a few experiments in

Deconstruction Theatre.

Many of these experiments in Deconstruction were less than successful, most being little more than some pedant or "artiste" trying to steal some thunder or to jump on the Deconstruction Bandwagon or by rather low-talent charlatans trying desperately to do something new and shocking to somehow prove they weren't as lacking in talent as they believed they knew in their hearts they were.

All that may or may not be so, but the Deconstructionists might find it fruitful to take a good look at Interactive Drama as it may very well have accomplished by point of unconscious practice what they couldn't do through contrivance. Taking into account the need to somehow question or turn over the original premise of drama and still preserve it as drama, there are in fact quite a few ways in which Interactive Drama behaves very much like a form of Deconstructed Drama:

- In traditional forms of drama, the audience and performers are separated by space and function. In Interactive Drama, they are one and the same. The audience becomes the performer and vice versa.
- Traditionally the actors know the outcome of the plot and the audience watches patiently waiting to passively discover the outcome of the play. In an Interactive Drama, the actors/audience has no idea of the final outcome. Everything is "improvised" - each performer tries to achieve the goals of her character while discovering, helping, or hindering those of others.
- While a standard play presents the dialog and lines for the character, the story reveals the "character" and nature of the personality. In an Interactive Drama, the participant may be given a very detailed run down of her character's personality, des ires, goals, experiences, but she may not be told how she fits in with the other characters or what to say.
- A traditional play is usually written linearly - even one with a very complicated plot with many off-shooting sub-branches or subplots. That is the story goes from point A to point B in a logical and orderly fashion. By

the end of the evening's performance, the audience has all of the information the playwright intended to be revealed with no loose ends. Everything leads to a single conclusion. However, in an Interactive Drama, there may be no single conclusion. A piece of evidence may be hidden by one of the participants, or lost. The scenario is not written linearly but in the structure of a geodesic dome with characters having relationships with many other characters - some active others passive depending upon the particular run of the scenario and "how things go." This sort of story structure can be very exciting . . . and extremely frustrated to write or perform.

Given these factors - and others I will have to go into at a later date - one can very easily see how Interactive Drama, by its nature, challenges the very premises of traditional drama but manages to retain much that makes drama drama.

COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE

Over the centuries, there have been many different improvisational styles.   The most direct ancestor of modern improvisational theatre is probably the *Commedia Dell'Arte*, which was popular throughout Europe for almost 200 years starting in the mid-1500's.   Troupes of performers would travel from town to town, presenting shows in the public squares and on makeshift stages.   They would improvise all of their own dialog, within a framework provided by a set "scenario."

The *Commedia Dell'Arte* scenarios extant bear some resemblance to Interactive Drama scenarios with the notable exception that the performers knew the outcome and often had favorite "bits" that they would place into the performance at convenient locations.   Another obvious difference between Commedia and Interactive Drama is the presence of an audience.

After the *Commedia Dell'Arte* died off, improvisational theatre faded into obscurity until it was separately and spontaneously

re-invented by two people who have shaped the craft as it exists today —
Keith Johnstone and Viola Spolin.

LONGFORM IMPROVISATION

Improvisational Theatre has seen a huge growth in interest and
importance in the last thirty years particularly due to the influence of
Spolin and Johnstone.   The former upon the fledgling Compass Players
which became Chicago's reknowned Second City and the latter largely to
his championing of improvisational Theatresports competitions.

While there is obviously a great deal of improvisation in Interactive
Dramas, this stems mainly from the nature of role play and has little in
common with Theatresports style short form improvisational theatre.
However, the development in recent years of the Longform
Improvisational Play has much more in common with Interactive Drama
in terms of performer participation.   In these pieces, the audience
provides the subject and nature of the piece and the performers then
improvise a complete play.   Like Interactive Dramas, the performers are
unaware of how the piece will end or what will happen, however since
they are still "performers" for an audience the nature of the activity is till
somewhat unique.   Interactive Dramatists may learn from the Longform
Improvisor but they are not the same thing.

GAME, GAMING, THE GAME

In all honesty, the most exciting aspect of Interactive Drama is not
related to performance but to game play. Here we see some of Cary
Clasz's ideas about play (as in drama) and play (as in game play)
stretched to their natural limits. Predominately those who participate in
Interactive Drama do so because they consider it to be a social game -
not because they consider it to be a new and exciting form of theatre
(that's for the academics and the theorists to argue about).

Now, as far as the serious "thespian" goes, even the game elements
of Interactive Drama can be useful. More and more working theatres are
using Interactive Dramas as rehearsal techniques - particularly as they

can be used as improvisational acting training. A few companies have incorporated elements of Interactive Drama into their roles as dinner theatres or they've used "real" actors mixed with customers to create more realistic and "professional" runs of mystery interactive dramas. Some of the murder mystery dinner theatres and weekends, such as the Murder Mystery Weekends created by Keith O'Leary and Margo Morrison, have used this formula very successfully.

WRITING AN INTERACTIVE DRAMA

For many interactive dramatists, the first thing they think of when writing a new scenario is the theme they would like to explore in the piece. Themes can range from politics, inheritance, rivalries, funerals, whatever and the issues, emotions, and ideas related to them. A simple exercise for creating themes is to write the "blurb" for the scenario. A blurb is a simple one-sentence description of the scenario. Often blurbs are used in advertising to attract players for Interactive Dramas held at conventions (very common in Australia, England, and the United States).

Once you have your blurb, then you can start thinking seriously about the setting or world background. The most popular settings and genres are high or heroic fantasy, science fiction, and gothic horror. Often scenarios are based upon popular films, comic books, television series, or games. However, most of the best scenarios are completely original.

Once you know your theme and your setting, you should think about the size of the scenario. Many scenarios are written for already established troupes so the interactive dramatist knows to write as many characters as there will be players. However, Interactive Dramas are just as often commissioned for science fiction or gaming conventions which have different resources. Troupes and special events groups range in size from six or eight (the common size for social groups that meet in a member's home), to fifteen or so for small ongoing chronicles or one-shots, to as many as one hundred for many active troupes in metropolitan areas. There is at least one chronicle style troupe that I know of based in New York City that meets once a month for new scenarios with over 350 regular members. University troupes vary in

size as well, the M.I.T. Assassin's Guild is one of the most influential of the university groups in the United States and has a regular membership of about 100 players.

Once you know how big your scenario will be and how much space the players will have to move around in, then you start developing your characters and the plot. Character descriptions may range from short one paragraph basics to full length ten page stories complete with information on what the character knows about every other character in the piece. Some scenarios have realistic characters while others are fantastic pieces in which characters may have special or magickal abilities (for instance, the character of the Shadow might have the ability to *"Cloud Men's Minds"* which would mean the player could walk about the scene invisible so that other players would have to pretend not to see him). Personally, I prefer the fantastic to the realistic pieces as it adds a level of dynamics you don't find in mundane settings, but everyone has their own preferences.

INTERACTIVE DRAMA PLOTS

Interactive Drama plots can be simple or complex. The plots are not revealed in the same way that the plot for a narrative or drama is presented. Rather, the character descriptions with backgrounds, motivations, and goals get individual players pointed in the right direction but how it all plays out depends upon how the players interact and handle challenges. Do keep in mind that it is usually a good idea to put opposing forces into a scenario so that characters can naturally create cliques and begin reacting and interacting to others within the world you have created. While characters try to accomplish their character goals within the play, the goal of the piece is for everyone to feel important and to have fun.

Some scenarios are basically widget hunts where characters need to find an item and the various pieces are useful for different factions. Sometimes a character may have an heirloom from old Aunt Hortenzia which has sentimental value only to find it is actually the gemstone power source for the Wand of Ultimate Good or the Scepter of Real Badness. Others are more along the lines of a game of Diplomacy

where different factions try to bargain and negotiate to accomplish their factional and personal goals.   Still other times it's just an excuse to act out and have fun (which I believe should be one of the primary goals of any scenario).

In his introduction to the *Nexus* scenario, Sandy Petersen puts players into 3 categories: *Gamers* who are out to accomplish goals and "win" the games, *Roleplayers* or (also called *Simulationists*) who will do whatever their character would do for the sake of playing the character realistically and simulating reality, and *Actors* who want "kool scenes" to perform in.   In your scenario, you should cater to all three types to some degree.   Your mechanics should also imply action, not observation.   Each player should feel that her character is important, from the Queen to the Serving Maid (give them interesting stories and worthwhile goals and you should be okay).

Usually, storyline is based upon your character description and the little asides you put in the *"Who You Know"* section of their character sheets.   The *greensheets* and *bluesheets* (rules mechanics on how to do things and wider background sheets) also give both atmosphere and *"suggestions"* for plot.   The real indicator for plot though in terms of how the game is expected to progress is the various goals you give characters (either expressed in terms of a *"Goals"* list or implied in the character's background story).

Many scenarios also have special events that occur at certain times during the run of the drama.   For instance, the scenario *A Family Matter* has events that are timed occurrences for the run that include the beginning of a storm, the disembodied voice of a little girl's ghost speaking to her mother, the breaking of a window, and a human sacrifice ritual (the player's have to decide who is sacrificed to exorcise a demon). Other scenarios have things like the murder of the host or the loss of power in the building (the interactive dramatist turns the lights out, steals something, and lets the players figure out who did it).

Thus plot turns can be character-internal based upon individual character goals or character-external based upon dramatist-timed events. Either way is okay.   One of the classic miniscenarios is The Last Voyage of the Mary Celeste which has a climactic ending with the *Rising of Atlantis*, an *Attack by an Elven Army*, and the *Detonation of a Bomb* as well as other events set to happen at the same time (the climax of the

scenario).   In political pieces, the climax is often a vote, election, or coronation of some kind.   In murder mysteries it is often the discovery of the killer's identity . . . albeit more often than not it is the false discovery of an innocent's motives (especially in the pieces we've played in my Conversation classes).

NOW GO PLAY THE THING

Once you have written your Interactive Drama, go and find some players and play the thing.   The interactive dramatist, or someone acting as a moderator, needs answer any questions players may have and make certain things run smoothly.   Often spur of the moment decisions will have to be made when a player asks to do something the mechanics haven't covered.   If the scenario allows combat, then it needs to be safe (I prefer quick contests of the children's game *rock-scissors-paper* to resolve any physical disputes or questions).

The real kick for the dramatist though is sitting back and watching the characters come to life.   They will develop minds of their own as the players are individuals.   It's always a good idea to have a debriefing after a run to find out what the players found to be the strengths and weaknesses of the piece, which plot points were lost in the shuffle, and how the scenario can be improved.   While any one group can only play a scenario once, others are out there who can play so feedback will help improve a specific scenario for later runs and it will help an interactive dramatist improve her own writing so that the next scenario will be even better.

CONCLUSION

This paper's purpose was never to turn any of the readers of the **Journal of Interactive Drama** into advocates of Interactive Drama in any of its forms – I would suspect most readers of this journal are already advocates of freeforming, LARPing, or interactive drama in one form or another. Rather, I merely wanted to introduce some of the major types, styles, and theoretical background to this new and vibrant

dramatic form. Interactive Dramas are quite exciting and well worth consideration by any group. They certainly are not practical for every group and will never replace more traditional spectator-based forms of dramatic performance but they do have a place in theatre dialogue and are well worth the investment in time and energy and effort for those with the interest.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agelasto, M. (1991). Roleplaying helps inactive students. *English Teaching Forum*, *29*(1), 32-33.

Alptekin, C. (2002). Towards intercultural communicative competence in ELT. *ELT Journal, 56*(1), 57-64.

Al-Saadat, A.I. & Afifi, E.A. (1997). Role-playing for inhibited students in paternal communities. *English Teaching Forum, 35*(3), 43-44.

Amtzis, W. (1993). Conflict and roleplay: Using film adaptations of American short stories. *English Teaching Forum, 31*(2), 6-9.

Baker, W. (2003). Should culture be an overt component of EFL instruction outside of English speaking countries? The Thai context. *Asian EFL Journal, 5*(4).

Bryant, W. H. (1986). Realistic activities for the conversation class. *The French Review, 59*(3), 347-354.

Beattie, S. (1996). White Collar Crime.

Brooks, N. (1960). Language and Learning. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Cakir, I. (2006). Developing cultural awareness in foreign language teaching. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education, 7*(7), Article 12. Retrieved August 29, 2006 from http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr/tojde23/pdf/article_12.pdf

Carlson, V. (1982). Should we pretend? The 'real' use of drama in the classroom. *English Teaching Forum, 20*(1), 22-24.

Cheng, M. (2004). *All I Wanted was a Nice Quiet Vacation.*

Cheng, M. (2005). *Ferry Boat.*

Cheng, M (2003). *Revenge in Penghu.*

Cheung, C. (2001). The use of popular culture as a stimulus to motivate secondary students' English learning in Hong Kong. *ELT Journal, 55*(1), 55-61.

Chou, Y. (2004). Compliments: Integrating cultural values into oral training classes. *The Internet TESL Journal, 10* (12). Retrieved August 30, 2006 from http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Chou-Compliments.html

Cowling, M. (1989). Writing your freeform. *The Freeform Book* (pp. 25-34). Australian Games Group.

Dayan, D. (1986). Review essay: Copyrighted subcultures. *American Journal of Sociology, 91*(5), 1219-28.

Dean, S.O. (1998)   *Live Roleplaying Frequently Asked Questions.* news:rec.games.frp.live-action.

DeRenard, L. A.& Kline, L.M. (1990). Alienation and the game dungeons and dragons.

Psychological Reports, 66(3-2), 1219-1222.

de Smet, A. (n.d.) Starting Interactive Drama Troupes. Available on the web at http://phillips.personal.nccu.edu.tw/tits/startingtroupe.html.

Di Pietro, J. J. (1983). Scenarios, discourse, and real-life roles. In J.W. Oller, Jr. & P. Richard-Amato (Eds.), *Methods that Work: A Smorgasbord of Ideas for Language Teachers,* (pp. 226-237). Rowley: Newbury House Publishers.

Douglas, J., Douglas, M., Doyle, M., Fountain, J., & Moores, L. (1994). *Unscripted Theater: Guidelines for Running Cross-Genre Live Action Role Playing Games.* Newark: Dead Earth Productions.

Dutton, R. & Freitag ,W.O. (1994). *Nexus: Live Action Roleplaying (Play This Book, Volume One).* Oakland: Chaosium, Inc.

Ellis, R. (1999). Theoretical perspectives on interaction and language learning. In R. Ellis, *Learning a Second Language Through Interaction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co.

Gredler, M. (1992a). Language skills/communication simulations. *Designing and Evaluating Games and Simulations: A Process Approach*, (pp. 117-128). Houston: Gulf Publishing Company.

Gredler, M. (1992b). Other Interactive Exercises. *Designing and Evaluating Games and Simulations: A Process Approach*, (pp. 160-69). Houston: Gulf Publishing Company.

Griffee, D.T. (1986). Listen and act: From simple actions to classroom drama. *English Teaching Forum, 24*(2), 18-23.

Hall, J. (1999). A prosaics of interaction: The development of interactional competence in another language. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Culture in Second Language Teaching and Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Holger. (2000). Cultured gaming. *Gaming Outpost*. Retrieved August 30, 2006 from http://www.gamingoutpost.com/articles/holger_nahm/390/cultured_gaming/

Holmes, J.E. (1980). Confessions of a dungeon master. *Psychology Today*, Nov. 1980, 84-94.

Jones, K. (1982). *Simulations in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jones, T. (1996)   The Great Pretenders.   *Washington Post* 14 July 1996: F01.

Judd, E. (1999). Some issues in the teaching of pragmatic competence. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Culture in Second Language Teaching and Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kaplan, R.B. (1966). Cultural thought patterns in inter-cultural education. *Language Learning, 16*, 1-20.

Kim, J. (2002). Teaching culture in the English as a foreign language classroom. *The Korean TESOL Journal, 5*(1), 27-39.

Kodotchigova, M. (2002). Role play in teaching culture: Six quick steps for classroom implementation. *The Internet TESL Journal, 8* (7). Retrieved August 30, 2006 from http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Kodotchigova-RolePlay.html

Ladousse, G.P. (1987) *Role Play*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lightbown, P. & Spada, N. (1999). *How Languages are Learned, 2nd Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Livingstone, C. (1983). Role Play in Language Learning. Essex: Longman.

Mugglestone, P. (1977). The Primary Curiosity Motive. *ELT Journal*, *31*(2), 111-116.

Paliatseas, (E). 1998. *Archangels*.

Phillips, B.D. (1995). Foreign language education and role playing games. *The Journal of Role-Playing and Story-Making Systems 1*(3), 96-103.

Phillips, B.D. (1999). Improvisational language structures: improving conversational spontaneity through ILS theatre games. *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Conference on English Teaching and Learning in the Republic of China. Taipei: Crane Publishing, (p. 551-565).*

Phillips, B.D. (1994). *Interactive Literature and the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language: History, Theory, and Application (Roleplaying Games in the Language Classroom).* Taipei: The Crane Publishing Company, Ltd.

Phillips, B.D. (1999). Interactive drama: Act I, scene one (The Taipei Interactive Theatre Society brings a hybrid form of entertainment to Taiwan). China Post (Prime Time supplement), Taipei, Friday 02 July 1999 (p. 1).

Phillips, B.D. (1996). Interactive drama: Deconstructing theatre. *Theatre Central Journal 1*(2).

Phillips, B.D. (1995). Language learning benefits of role playing games. *Gaming & Education 2*(1), 4.

Phillips, B.D. (1995). Methodology for using role playing games in English conversation classes. *Games & Education 2*(2), 2-3.

Phillips, B.D. (1996). Role playing games: Before computers there was table talk. *Amazing Computer Entertainment* June 1996, 181-183.

Phillips, B.D. (1994). Role-playing games in the English as a foreign language classroom. In W.P. Li, Y.M. Yin, H.S. Chang, B.I. Lin, & C.Y. Lin (Eds.), *Papers from the Tenth Conference on English Teaching and Learning in the Republic of China*, (pp. 625-648). Taipei: Crane Publishing, Ltd.

Phillips, B. & Cheng, M. (2004). Interactive drama: Freeform live action role playing games for the classroom (adapting unscripted theatre methods to language learning). *Selected Papers from the Thirteenth International Symposium on English Teaching,* (pp. 236-248) Taipei: English Teacher's Association of the Republic of China.

Phillips, B. & Cheng, M. (2005). Writing interactive drama role plays for the language classroom: Bridging the gap between learning and teaching (teacher-centered and learner-centered methods for creating role plays). *Selected Papers from the Fourteenth International Symposium on English Teaching.* Taipei: English Teacher's Association of the Republic of China.

Redfield, M. (1981). Role-play dialogues: An excellent way to practice 'skill using.' *English Teaching Forum, 19*(3), 36.

Rees, Alun L.W. (1981). The why and how of TEFL whodunits. *English Teaching Forum, 19*(4), 24-27.

Rodriquez, R.J. & White, R.H. (1983). From role play to the real world. In J.W. Oller, Jr. & P. Richard-Amato (Eds.), *Methods that Work: A Smorgasbord of Ideas for Language Teachers,* (pp. 246-255). Rowley: Newbury House Publishers.

Rose, C. (n.d.). Intercultural learning 1. *British Council teaching English*. Retrieved August 31, 2006 from http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/methodology/intercultural1.shtml

Sanchez, G. (1984). *Castle Dracula*. Pacesetter.

Scarcella, R.C. (1987). Socio-Drama for Social Interaction. In M.H. Long & J.C.

Richards (Eds.), *Methodology in TESOL: A Book of Readings*, (pp. 208-213). New York: Harper and Row Publishers.

Shaftel, F.R. & Shaftel, G. (1982). *Role Playing in the Curriculum*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Sharim-Paz, S. (1993). The dramatic game and the conversational act. *English Teaching Forum, 31*(2), 18-21.

Simon, A. (1987). Emotional stability pertaining to the game of Dungeons & Dragons. *Psychology in the Schools, 24*, 329- 332.

Sobol, D.J. (1985). Two minute mysteries. *English Teaching Forum, 23*(4), 30-36.

Stern, S.L. (1983). Why drama works: a psycholinguistic perspective. In J.W. Oller, Jr. & P. Richard-Amato (Eds.), *Methods that Work: A Smorgasbord of Ideas for Language Teachers,* (pp. 207-225). Rowley: Newbury House Publishers.

Swink, D.F., & Buchanan, D.R. (1984). The effects of sociodramatic goal-oriented role play and non-goal-oriented role play on locus of control. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 40*(5), 1178-1183.

Thanasoulas, D. (2001). The importance of teaching culture in the foreign language classroom. *Radical Pedagogy, 3*(3).

Yermish, A. & Balzac, S. (1992). *Long Ago and Far Away*.

CORRESPONDENCE

Department of English, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan
Waking Dreams Hypnosis, http://www.BrianDavidPhillips.com
E-mail address: phillips@nccu.edu.tw

FERRET FURORE
An Interactive Drama Scenario

Scott Beattie
Victoria University Law School

EDITOR'S NOTE

This straightforward scenario was written by Beattie for a university course, as were many of his scenarios.   I have used this particular piece as part of my own university courses in a sequence related to communication, particularly as a means for students to practice influence and negotiation skills.   In addition, Michael Cheng and I (Brian David Phillips) use another piece by Beattie, White Collar Crime (available for download from the Interactive Drama Archive at http://www.interactivedramas.info with other pieces) as part of a large-scale scenario activity in which we combine Oral Training our classes in the English Department for a special event at National Chengchi University.   You may see photographs of university students playing these and other scenarios in the online photo galleries at http://public.fotki.com/briandavidphillips/interactive_drama/ (note that some classroom scenarios are with costume but many are not). – Brian David Phillips (Taipei, Taiwan)

The pacific island nation of   Monica is facing a period of turmoil.   The popularly-elected government has been racked with scandal and there are rebels hiding out in hills waiting for any excuse for a military coup.

The latest trial for the government comes from the rural sector. Farmers are claiming that the native ferret (Bitus Malevolentus) is running in plague proportions and is driving their sheep off the land. They are seeking a culling of the ferrets and want the government to ban or at least restrict domestic ownership of the animals.   Most of Monica's economy depends on agriculture, particularly wool.

The Monicans are proud people and cherish their heritage. Legends say that the Portuguese explorer DiChirico who discovered the island was befriended by the native ferrets who brought him food. He later became the patron saint of the Monica Reformist Church. Many locals see ferret ownership as an expression of their individuality and belief in personal freedom. The constitution includes a clause which gives every citizen the right to enjoy their national heritage. It may be argued that this protects, to some extent, the rights of ferret owners.

The issues include:

Level of regulation: At one end of the scale ferrets may be banned outright. At the other, citizens hold an absolute freedom of ownership, unfettered by government regulation. A compromise position may be some kind of licensing system.

Type of Regulation

Should domestic ferrets be desexed? Or perhaps only male or female ferrets could be owned. How many should someone be able to keep? Can they be kept in urban areas? If there is a license, is there a fee?

The Interest Groups:

The Government - The elected lawmakers

The Department of Agriculture and Animals - The department responsible for implementing law and policy.

The High Court - The guardians of the constitution and interpreters of laws

FFABT (Ferrets for a Better Tomorrow) - A pro-ferret lobby group

The Anti-Ferret Army Coalition - A paramilitary group opposed to ferrets in any form

The Government

The Government is facing a crisis of confidence. The Agriculture minister has been accused of unspecified scandals in his personal life. The ferret issue seems to be a trivial one on the surface, but it strikes deep chords in the nation consciousness. The rebels are waiting for any sign of weakness to strike. This group's aim is to maintain control over the nation, acting decisively as leaders. The only problem is deciding what to be decisive about...

Prime Minister

You are nervous at the best of times and you are terrified of the rebels. You want to show a strong government front, whatever the decision. You are firm on mortality, particularly as you have an Minister for Agriculture and Animals who has been rumoured to have been taking the latter part of his portfolio a little too personally (and intimately...). Actually you are corrupt as they come, your department buys supplies through a family company at grossly inflated rates. You just have to bluster loud enough so that no-one suspects you.

The Government

The Government is facing a crisis of confidence.   The Agriculture minister has been accused of unspecified scandals in his personal life.   The ferret issue seems to be a trivial one on the surface, but it strikes deep chords in the nation consciousness.   The rebels are waiting for any sign of weakness to strike. This group's aim is to maintain control over the nation, acting decisively as leaders. The only problem is deciding what to be decisive about...

Minister of Agriculture and Animals

Your department is really in the firing line here.   You are responsible both to the farmers and the ferret owners.   Any type of regulation will have to be done by your department.   You are worried that the prime minister is throwing you to the wolves on this issue.   You are already in trouble over the 'personal scandal' issue.   Actually, you started the rumours yourself to prevent reporters getting onto the real story of how you take bribes from pastoral companies in order to give them advantageous leases.   A moral scandal you can weather but corruption is a bigger problem.

The Government

The Government is facing a crisis of confidence.   The Agriculture minister has been accused of unspecified scandals in his personal life.   The ferret issue seems to be a trivial one on the surface, but it strikes deep chords in the nation consciousness.   The rebels are waiting for any sign of weakness to strike. This group's aim is to maintain control over the nation, acting decisively as leaders. The only problem is deciding what to be decisive about...

Health Minister

You are vindictive and seek to get your cabinet colleagues in as much trouble as possible.   One day you want to be PM and you are willing to plot, scheme and betray your way to the job - all the time keeping up a friendly and supportive facade.   Actually, deep down you are a closet ferret fancier and would like to see the little fellows protected, but you will not let this get in the way of progress.

The Government

The Government is facing a crisis of confidence.   The Agriculture minister has been accused of unspecified scandals in his personal life.   The ferret issue seems to be a trivial one on the surface, but it strikes deep chords in the nation consciousness.   The rebels are waiting for any sign of weakness to strike. This group's aim is to maintain control over the nation, acting decisively as leaders. The only problem is deciding what to be decisive about...

Treasurer

The government is running out of money.   This is a big problem, but you don't want to draw everyone else's attention to it, in case they blame you.   A fee-paying ferret licensing scheme could help you out.

The Department of Agriculture and Animals

This department is caught in the crossfire.   Its responsibilities cover both the farmer's interests and the ferret owners.   The department also realises that it is likely to be scapegoated if something backfires. Therefore everyone is trying to avert a crisis before it happens.   This group's objective is to plan a scheme of implementation and enforcement, following the lead of government.

Senior Ministerial Adviser to the Department of Agriculture and Animals

Politicians come and go but the civil service is for life.   You are dedicated to preserving the interests of your department.   You report to the minister who is only technically in charge of the department.   Ministers cannot possibly know the expertise it requires to manage this kind of administration, so you have to treat them gently like backward children.

The Department of Agriculture and Animals

This department is caught in the crossfire.   Its responsibilities cover both the farmer's interests and the ferret owners.   The department also realises that it is likely to be scapegoated if something backfires. Therefore everyone is trying to avert a crisis before it happens.   This group's objective is to plan a scheme of implementation and enforcement, following the lead of government.

Head of the Department of Inspection

You are in charge of the inspectors who check for feral, prohibited or licensed animals.   You are terribly inefficient and, as a result paranoid about corruption which runs rampant through your department.   You are too lazy to clear up the mess, so you like to create as much bureaucracy and paperwork as possible so that no-one can ever understand what is supposed to be happening, let alone check up for corruption.

The Department of Agriculture and Animals

This department is caught in the crossfire. Its responsibilities cover both the farmer's interests and the ferret owners. The department also realises that it is likely to be scapegoated if something backfires. Therefore everyone is trying to avert a crisis before it happens. This group's objective is to plan a scheme of implementation and enforcement, following the lead of government.

Senior Animal Inspector

You are the most experienced animal inspector in the field. You are not the union representative, but you see yourself in a similar role. You want to protect your team from the sinister manipulations of the bureaucracy. If they are threatening to give you all more work, you demand that there be accommodations made. In addition, you know that inspectors get kick-backs in the course of doing their job. You would never approve of this per se, but you know it is the only way many of them make ends meet. More licensing means more 'creative enterprise solutions'.

The Department of Agriculture and Animals

This department is caught in the crossfire.   Its responsibilities cover both the farmer's interests and the ferret owners.   The department also realises that it is likely to be scapegoated if something backfires. Therefore everyone is trying to avert a crisis before it happens.   This group's objective is to plan a scheme of implementation and enforcement, following the lead of government.

Senior Administrator of the Department of Agriculture and Animals

Your fancy title basically means that you are the book-keeper for the department.   You are concerned with counting the beans and making sure that everything adds up.   You seek to ensure that any scheme of regulation will be funded properly (ie the department makes a profit out of it).   It is the day of the 'user pays' scheme and you don't do favours for nothing.

The High Court

The High Court is the custodian of the constitution and the ultimate body for determining the validity of laws of the parliament.   The contentious sections of the Monican Constitution (1876) reads as follows:

> *s26 - Every man (sic) has the right to enjoy his national heritage and to pursue his culture without the interference of government*

> *s44 - No section of this Constitution should be read granting rights which interfere with or harm the rights of another man (sic)*

This group's role is to interpret legal documents and advise government on constitutional issues.

Chief Justice White

You are neutral on the ferret issue.   What concerns you is the prestige of the High Court.   You don't want the court to be seen getting its hands grubby, dabbling in politics.   On the other hand you see the court as a force for insuring   the stability of the nation. You believe the court should change with the times, or at least stay no more than 10 years behind the times.

The High Court

The High Court is the custodian of the constitution and the ultimate body for determining the validity of laws of the parliament.   The contentious sections of the Monican Constitution (1876) reads as follows:

> *s26 - Every man (sic) has the right to enjoy his national heritage and to pursue his culture without the interference of government*

> *s44 - No section of this Constitution should be read granting rights which interfere with or harm the rights of another man (sic)*

This group's role is to interpret legal documents and advise government on constitutional issues.

Justice Pink

You are a bit of a ferret fancier and you don't mind who knows. Ferrets are a part of Monican national heritage and you are willing to adopt a flexible, 'purposive' interpretation of any laws which benefit the furry little fellows.   You believe that there are rights implied in the constitution and the right to own ferrets may be one of them.

The High Court

The High Court is the custodian of the constitution and the ultimate body for determining the validity of laws of the parliament. The contentious sections of the Monican Constitution (1876) reads as follows:

> *s26 - Every man (sic) has the right to enjoy his national heritage and to pursue his culture without the interference of government*

> *s44 - No section of this Constitution should be read granting rights which interfere with or harm the rights of another man (sic)*

This group's role is to interpret legal documents and advise government on constitutional issues.

Justice Blonde

You don't like ferrets. They smell and have nasty dispositions. You would never admit to this kind of prejudice but you will obstinately read any legislation in the worst possible light for ferrets.

The High Court

The High Court is the custodian of the constitution and the ultimate body for determining the validity of laws of the parliament.   The contentious sections of the Monican Constitution (1876) reads as follows:

> *s26 - Every man (sic) has the right to enjoy his national heritage and to pursue his culture without the interference of government*

> *s44 - No section of this Constitution should be read granting rights which interfere with or harm the rights of another man (sic)*

This group's role is to interpret legal documents and advise government on constitutional issues.

Justice Blue

You are a 'black letter' lawyer.   You are obsessed with the plain meaning of a piece of text and will interpret legislation with a pedantic eye for detail.   You will interpret words according to their strict dictionary definition, regardless of how   ridiculous this may be in the circumstances.

Ferrets for A Better Tomorrow

The FFABT is a citizen's lobby group which espouses the virtues of the fun-loving furry chum known as the ferret.   The organisation believes in pluralism, that change comes with the government recognition of the rights of interest groups.   FFABT resists government moves into the private domain of ferret ownership and provides a voice who stand up against such tyranny. They are not, however, extremists and prefer peaceful democratic protest, condemning the violence of the guerilla rebels.   This group's objective is to plan their lobby action.

FFABT Chair

You are a fluffy, inoffensive new ager who wishes that everyone would just meditate more and fight less.   You see the ferret as a primal totem of wisdom and a great gift from Mother Earth.   You believe that all ferrets should be free and you a prepared to use the constitution to guarantee their rights.   You have met Justice Pink of the High Court before (at a nature weekend) and you believe that he is pro-ferret.

Ferrets for A Better Tomorrow

The FFABT is a citizen's lobby group which espouses the virtues of the fun-loving furry chum known as the ferret.   The organisation believes in pluralism, that change comes with the government recognition of the rights of interest groups.   FFABT resists government moves into the private domain of ferret ownership and provides a voice who stand up against such tyranny. They are not, however, extremists and prefer peaceful democratic protest, condemning the violence of the guerilla rebels.   This group's objective is to plan their lobby action.

FFABT Environmental Committee Facilitator

You are a committed environmentalist who believes that ferrets should be made protected species in special habitats.   You think that it is demeaning and paternalistic to keep ferrets as pets, it is just cruelty to animals.   You believe ferrets should run free in their own environments.

Ferrets for A Better Tomorrow

The FFABT is a citizen's lobby group which espouses the virtues of the fun-loving furry chum known as the ferret.   The organisation believes in pluralism, that change comes with the government recognition of the rights of interest groups.   FFABT resists government moves into the private domain of ferret ownership and provides a voice who stand up against such tyranny. They are not, however, extremists and prefer peaceful democratic protest, condemning the violence of the guerilla rebels.   This group's objective is to plan their lobby action.

FFABT Secretary

You like to think of yourself as a realist.   You know that it is inevitable that the government will regulate ferrets in some way or another.   It is futile to fight against this.   Besides, there are some people who just shouldn't be allowed to keep ferrets.
You can envisage some kind of management/regulatory scheme, perhaps involving a license.   There will probably be some kind of administrative fee, but you don't want to see the Government lining its pockets from this.   Besides, you know that some of the government inspectors are regularly on the take.   You want to make sure that they do their job in an accountable manner.

Ferrets for A Better Tomorrow

The FFABT is a citizen's lobby group which espouses the virtues of the fun-loving furry chum known as the ferret.   The organisation believes in pluralism, that change comes with the government recognition of the rights of interest groups.   FFABT resists government moves into the private domain of ferret ownership and provides a voice who stand up against such tyranny. They are not, however, extremists and prefer peaceful democratic protest, condemning the violence of the guerilla rebels.   This group's objective is to plan their lobby action.

FFABT Special Executive Member

You are a pro-Marxist agitator with contacts in the rebels, although you would not admit this to other FFABT members.   You managed to weasel your way into a 'special executive' membership just so you could corrupt the institution from inside. The Government is looking shaky at the moment, the Prime Minister has had his department buy stationery at an inflated price from his own companies.   Once this scandal breaks, the ferret issue will be the least of his woes.   For the moment you want to lobby pro-ferret freedom in order to embarrass the government and undermine faith in it.

Anti-Ferret Army Coalition

A group of paranoid militant anti-ferret subversives who use codenames and meet wearing balaclavas to protect their identities. They have sympathy for the rebels hiding out in the hills, but are more arm-chair spectators than guerilla material themselves. They do propound survivalist methods and have plenty of tins of braised steak & onions waiting in the cellar for 'the big one'. The Coalition prefer peaceful and anonymous tactics - letter writing campaigns, agitation of other conservative groups and bomb threats (not actual bombs).   You all believe that the person with the loudest voice gets heard the most often. This group's objective is to plan the lobby and propaganda process - make the government sweat.

Codename Abel

You are the unofficial commander of this little company of steel eyed soldiers of fortune.   You have a particular vendetta against ferrets.   You were mauled by one as a child, your right hand little finger still bears the disfiguring scars.   Sure you were provoking the little bugger at the time, but there is no excuse for them. Ferrets are a genetic cesspool and must be exterminated.

Anti-Ferret Army Coalition

A group of paranoid militant anti-ferret subversives who use
codenames and meet wearing balaclavas to protect their identities.
They have sympathy for the rebels hiding out in the hills, but are
more arm-chair spectators than guerilla material themselves.
They do propound survivalist methods and have plenty of tins of
braised steak & onions waiting in the cellar for 'the big one'.
The Coalition prefer peaceful and anonymous tactics - letter
writing campaigns, agitation of other conservative groups and
bomb threats (not actual bombs).   You all believe that the person
with the loudest voice gets heard the most often. This group's
objective is to plan the lobby and propaganda process - make the
government sweat.

Codename Baker

While the Coalition has no official leadership, you like to think
that the others respect you and follow your orders.   You are a
'Nimby' (Not in My Back Yard).   You have nothing personal
against ferrets, but you dislike their smell which drives down
property values.   As a fairly wealthy owner of flats and units you
don't want to see the hoi-polloi letting ferrets infest your buildings.
Sensible regulation is the way to go.

Anti-Ferret Army Coalition

A group of paranoid militant anti-ferret subversives who use codenames and meet wearing balaclavas to protect their identities. They have sympathy for the rebels hiding out in the hills, but are more arm-chair spectators than guerilla material themselves. They do propound survivalist methods and have plenty of tins of braised steak & onions waiting in the cellar for 'the big one'. The Coalition prefer peaceful and anonymous tactics - letter writing campaigns, agitation of other conservative groups and bomb threats (not actual bombs).   You all believe that the person with the loudest voice gets heard the most often. This group's objective is to plan the lobby and propaganda process - make the government sweat.

Codename Charlie

Everyone knows that you are the brains of this outfit.   You are a professional agitator for the new right.   You want to stir up stupid yokel grassroots conservative groups   (such as this one) with anti-government sentiment. You have met Justice Blonde of the High Court at a CWA Anti-Pornography Scone fundraiser and he was complaining of how nasty and smelly ferrets were.   Perhaps he is a good contact.

Anti-Ferret Army Coalition

A group of paranoid militant anti-ferret subversives who use codenames and meet wearing balaclavas to protect their identities. They have sympathy for the rebels hiding out in the hills, but are more arm-chair spectators than guerilla material themselves. They do propound survivalist methods and have plenty of tins of braised steak & onions waiting in the cellar for 'the big one'. The Coalition prefer peaceful and anonymous tactics - letter writing campaigns, agitation of other conservative groups and bomb threats (not actual bombs).   You all believe that the person with the loudest voice gets heard the most often. This group's objective is to plan the lobby and propaganda process - make the government sweat.

Codename Dougal

You distrust power and authority in all forms.   That's why the coalition has no leadership.   Everyone is equal.   However as one of the original founders, you have experience to share with the younger members of the troops.   You are a deeply religious member of the Monica Reformist Church   which reveres the explored DiChirico as a saint and the ferret as a blessed animal. You are concerned that this 'worship' of the ferret is idolatrous and sacrilegious.   You do not believe that the furry fiends have any part to play in Monican national heritage.

<u>Note to facilitator</u>:   These headlines should be presented during intervals in the discussion in order to convey the shifting tides of public opinion on the topic.   How much this influences the debate is up to the participants.

1.

Ferret overbreeding problem reaches plague proportions

2.

New study shows trained ferrets aid the disabled and the elderly.

3.

The Monica Daily News

Are our ferrets feral? Historian claims that ferrets were introduced by DiChirico, not tamed by him.

4.

Ferrets save farms. Mutated rabbit plague driven off by enraged ferrets

5.

Savage ferret mauls small child.

6.

Cancer cure in ferret urine. Scientists astonished!

CORRESPONDENCE

Law School, Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia
E-mail address: Scott.Beattie@vu.edu.au

Journal of Interactive Drama

A Multi-Discipline Peer-Reviewed Journal of Scenario-Based Theatre-Style Interactive Drama Freeform Live Action Roleplaying Games

Call for Papers

The *Journal of Interactive Drama* is an online peer-reviewed journal on scenario-based interactive drama freeform live action roleplaying games which provides a forum for serious discussion of live roleplaying game theory, design, and practice. The journal is published regularly. The journal provides a forum for the discussion of any of the various scenario-based theatre-style live action roleplaying games, freeforms, and interactive dramas and invites contributions in all areas of literature, theory, design, and practice for educational, entertainment, and recreational roleplay. Formal and informal essays, articles, papers, and critical reviews are also welcome.

This is a peer-reviewed journal that may include formal papers and informal essays for and by the roleplaying community from a wide variety of disciplines. The focus is general enough so that authors should feel comfortable submitting material of either a formal or informal nature, albeit all submissions are peer-reviewed and should be appropriate to a serious and thoughtful discussion of that type -- we encourage articles, essays, and formal papers on all manner of live roleplaying, freeform, and interactive drama-related topics. Discussions of related ludology, techniques, and good solid critical book and roleplay scenario or event reviews are quite welcome as well. As this is a multi-disciplinary journal, material related to a wide range of scenario-based learning, social psychology, critical theory, performance studies, popular culture, design, and

more as they intersect with the interactive drama are also welcome. Pure design pieces related to scenario construction and review are also encouraged. Each issue will showcase one to three longform or four to six shortform interactive drama freeform live action roleplaying scenarios; creative scenario submissions of this type are very sought after. Scenarios for submission should include a section of self-reflective critical thought and formal designer's notes that discuss issues related to the creation of the piece as well as a formal section which reviews the author's performance experiences with the scenario.

As an international journal, the language of publication is English. Submissions are accepted throughout the year.

Journal of Interactive Drama

A Multi-Discipline Peer-Reviewed Journal of
Scenario-Based Theatre-Style Interactive Drama Freeform Live Action
Roleplaying Games

Notes for Contributors

The ***Journal of Interactive Drama*** is a peer-reviewed journal which publishes one volume per year in an ongoing rollout schedule based upon acceptable submissions.   Both *Microsoft Word* (6.0 or above) and txt files are acceptable. Once received, manuscripts will be sent to reviewers immediately.

1. Manuscripts submitted to ***Journal of Interactive Drama*** should follow the style sheet of the current *MLA Handbook* as appropriate. Scenario submissions may use informal formatting conventions as long as they stay within the guidelines here.
2. If your submission has notes, please use footnotes, not endnotes.
3. The font used is *Times New Roman* (11pt) – creative pieces, such as scenarios, may use other font sizes but should stay within the same font type. If you use a special font that is non-system, you <u>must</u> include a copy of the font file with your submission. Please do not use columns in your piece.

4. Use a separate sheet to include your name, title, affiliated institution, and contact information (email) as well as a brief author's biography of 150-250 words to be included in the contributor's notes.
5. Include a brief summary or abstract of the submission.
6. If you use illustrations or photographs, you must include all pertinent information as well as statements of permissions and copyrights to demonstrate you have the rights to include the images and that they may be published within the Journal of Interactive Drama under the same online and print rights as the accompanying paper. In the event of rights disputes, the author is responsible and liable for any material included in that author's submission.

Publishers wishing their books, products, or other materials reviewed may send hard or soft review copies to the editor's address above and a reviewer will be assigned.

The journal is published online at http://www.interactivedramas.info/journal.htm in special press format using pdf file media.

Submissions may be sent by regular mail to:

> Dr. Scott Beattie
> Editor, Journal of Interactive Drama
> Victoria University Law School
> Footscray Park Campus
> PO Box 14428
> Melbourne Vic 8001 Australia
> Ph +61 3 9919 4784
> Fax +61 3 9919 5066

Please include hardcopy and disk for regular mail submissions. You may also send submissions in electronic format to Brian David Phillips, Associate Editor, *Journal of Interactive Drama* at phillips@nccu.edu.tw via email.

Visit http://www.interactivedramas.info/journal.htm for more information.

Call for Papers
Guidelines for Submission

互動式戲劇學會

角色扮演遊戲真人版

Society of

Interactive Drama