Is our actual world interactive?

Some philosophical reflections about video gaming and real life

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Openness

- “Little Red Hat went into the woods”
Openness (2)

- “Little Red Hat went into the woods”
- Is Little Red Hat male or female?
- Is she a human, an animal, a robot?
- Does she wear a red hat?
Why did Little Red Hat take the wood path?

- Because she thought it would have been better to take a riskier path than to arrive late.
- Because she did not care about her mother's prescription.
Why did Little Red Hat take the wood path? (2)

- Because she thought it would have been better to take a riskier path than to arrive late
- Because she did not care about her mother's prescription

The kid learns how to manage a valour conflict  The kid learns the importance of social rules
Disjunctions in a story

An open detail in the story

Past events | Present of the story for the reader | Forthcoming

“The gun fires”

“The gun does not fire”
Disjunctions in a story (2)

The author closes the story

Past events

Present of the story for the reader

Forthcoming

“The gun fires”

“The gun does not fire”
Kinds of stories

1. Details that are immediately declared by the author

2. Details that will never be clarified (open stories)

3. Details left open for a while, that are closed later by the author
Kinds of stories (2)

1. Details that are immediately declared by the author

2. Details that will never be clarified (open stories)

3. Details left open for a while, that are closed later by the author

4. Details left open for a while, that will be closed later by the reader (interactive stories)
Model Author and Model Reader

Instance to which are attributed the decisions taken in the story

Model Author
Model Author and Model Reader (2)

Text

Model Author

Story

Model Reader

Author

Instance to which are attributed the decisions taken in the story

Reader

Conceivable alternatives the story told can take
Non-interactive stories

Text

Author

Model Author

Story

Model Reader

Reader/Player
Not every game has an interactive story

*Videogames with non-interactive stories*

There is an open point
Not every game has an interactive story (2)

Videogames with non-interactive stories

There is an open point

The author has already chosen what must happen
Not every game has an interactive story (3)

Videogames with non-interactive stories

There is an open point

The author has already chosen what must happen

The player has to take the path
Not every game has an interactive story (4)

Videogames with non-interactive stories

There is an open point

The author has already chosen what must happen

The player has to take the path

Videogames with interactive stories

There is an open point
Not every game has an interactive story (5)

Videogames with non-interactive stories

Videogames with interactive stories

There is an open point

The author has already chosen what must happen

The player has to take the path

There is an open point

The player can choose the path
Interactive stories

**Text**

- **Model Author**
- **Model Reader**

**Author**

**Story**

**Reader/Player**
One example

- Thriller novel
  - The author selects the suspects
  - The author choses who is guilty
- Thriller hypertext (1)
  - The author selects the suspects
  - The reader choses who is guilty
- Thriller hypertext (2)
  - The reader selects the suspects
  - The reader choses who is guilty
Access to the Model Author

Limited access to the Model Author

Full access to the Model Author

The reader/player must choose between a or b.

The reader/player can choose whatever he prefers.
When the reader becomes an author

Diagram:

- Author
- Model Author
- Story
- Model Reader
- Reader/Player
- Text
The issue of free will

Freedom requires:

– the existence of real alternatives
– the possibility to take control of them (auto-determination)
The Semiotic Threshold

- Non-semiotic phenomena
  - Stimuli and responses build deterministic series

- Semiotic phenomena
  - Between a sign and its interpretation there is a space for indeterminism
• Ontological discontinuity

Predictability depends on determinacy
The Semiotic Threshold (3)

- Ontological discontinuity
- Epistemological discontinuity

Predictability depends on determinacy

Determinacy depends on predictability
The language of reality

A novel

– is open

Our world

– is open
A movie
- is open
- has time and movement

Our world
- is open
- has time and movement
A video game

- is open
- has time and movement
- may have an interactive story

Our world

- is open
- has time and movement
- has an interactive story
Degrees of interactivity?

- We can choose among some given options
  - Every morning, at breakfast
- We can find new possibilities
  - Inventing something
- We cannot go beyond some limits
  - Subverting the laws of nature
Conclusions

- To be readers is a necessary condition to be authors or players; but it's not possible to reduce the actor or player of a practice (like video gaming) to the reader of a text.

- In real world practices the subject is at the same time interpreter of what he sees, character in the story he is in and author of his decisions.