The Reality of Computer Game Objects

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The Objects in Computer Games

What is the nature of the objects encountered in computer generated graphical environments such as games?

- Pictorial representation
- Independent objects
- Each aspect pull in the opposite direction

Alternatives

- A variant form of pictorial representation
- An intermediate category of "virtual" or "simulated" objects
- Proposal: Ordinary objects without a "built in" representational function

Definitions

- Object of Attention/Object of Interaction
- c-objects/f-objects

(1) Homer opened a door in Springfield

(2) Mary opened a door in Norrath

(3) John opened a door in Oslo

The hesitancy

The problem:

(4) Homer did not open a door in Springfield

(5) Mary did not open a door in Norrath

(6) John did not open a door in Oslo

(6) Is straightforwardly false, while (5) and
(4) are ambiguous.

Against Pictorial Representation

The object of attention must be the same as
the object of interaction

• Not essential - Tetris

• Not essential – The Matrix

• Action rather than interpretation

Against Virtual Objects

"Object Y is a virtual object X" explains

"Object Y is less real than object X"

- The virtual relation goes both ways
- Presupposes an evaluation

The proposal i.

The intuitive idea: The representational function dies as a
result of action

Opening, drinking, walking, shooting -> corresponding
activities of their own kinds

"Running through the woods" vs "Running through the
numbers"

Possible analogies:

Pretend tree->pillar

Pretend Saturnalia master -> real master

Pretend money-> real money

The proposal ii.

If c-objects and f-objects simply are different kinds of objects we have:

(2) Mary opened a door in Norrath

has two interpretations

(2a) Mary f-opened a f-door in Norrath

(2b) Mary c-opened a c-door in Norrath

The proposal iii.

We have that the negation of (3) is straightforwardly false:
(6) John did not open a door in Oslo

Now the negation of (3)
(5) Mary did not open a door in Norrath
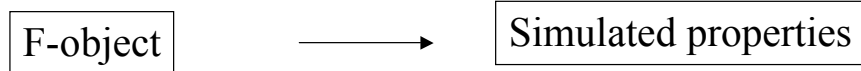
Goes from ambigious to straighforwardly true:
(5a) Mary did not f-open a f-door in Norrath

And straighforwardly false:
(5b) Mary did not c-open a c-door in Norrath

Simulation vs. c-properties

F-object simulation

| F-object | $\longrightarrow$ | Simulated properties |

C-object transmutation

| C-properties | $\longleftarrow$ | Representational properties |

Conclusion

- The entities in computer games are independent objects
- C-properties are reminiscent representations
- Representational function is left to the practices they take part in

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