

The illustration is a complex, monochromatic scene. In the foreground, a woman lies in a bed, her head resting on a pillow, looking towards the viewer. The bed is framed by an ornate, dark border. Above the bed, a large, arched window or doorway reveals a garden scene. In the garden, a group of people are gathered around a central figure who is lying on the ground. Some people are standing, while others are kneeling or sitting. The background shows a dense forest of tall, thin trees. The overall style is reminiscent of a detailed woodcut or a fine-line drawing. The title 'THE THIRD RESIGNATION' is superimposed over the central part of the illustration, and the author's name 'Geyuan HAN' is positioned below it.

THE THIRD RESIGNATION

Geyuan HAN

Introduction

source text

- The third resignation is Gabriel García Márquez's first published short story, exploring themes of life, death, and resistance. The protagonist suffers from an strange illness described as "the living dead" and has been confined to a coffin since childhood. His doctor and mother struggled to keep him "alive after death". He is conscious of his surroundings but he can't move. With the passage of time, he gave up thinking and fighting in fear and confusion, and finally chose to endure death. Maybe from the moment he chose to endure death, he really died.

adaptation

- First, I have kept the original plot and set up a storyline, where the player will take the role of the patient and will gradually die after enduring the three resignations.
- After 'dying', the player can start a new story line, choosing to remain a patient and change his fate, or to become a mother or a doctor, experiencing the story from different perspectives.
- These timelines overlap or are completely separate.

Mode of Narration (Arjoranta, 2017)

Source text

- There is an omniscient **teller-character** who tells the story in the third person and is not involved in the story construction
- They can be unreliable and may mislead the reader
- Emotional identification is guided through the language and structure of the narrator
- the reader is kept at a distance from the character.

Game

- Players take on the role of **reflector-character**, experiencing the story and participating in its construction
- No intentional deception of the player
- The player is the protagonist (in most cases) and directly experiences his/her perceptions and thoughts

Interactivity

Interactivity is the most important attribute of digital literature (Ryan, 2006).

- Online game interactivity theory defines interactivity on three different levels: player-to-computer, player-to-player, and player-to-game (Friedl, 2003)

Types of Interactivity (this game): internal / ontological Interactivity (Ryan, 2006)

- Gamers project themselves as members of a fictional world and can change the course of the story.
- One of the most involved, realistic and emotionally invested interactions for the user, which enhances the sense of immersion.

interactive narrative

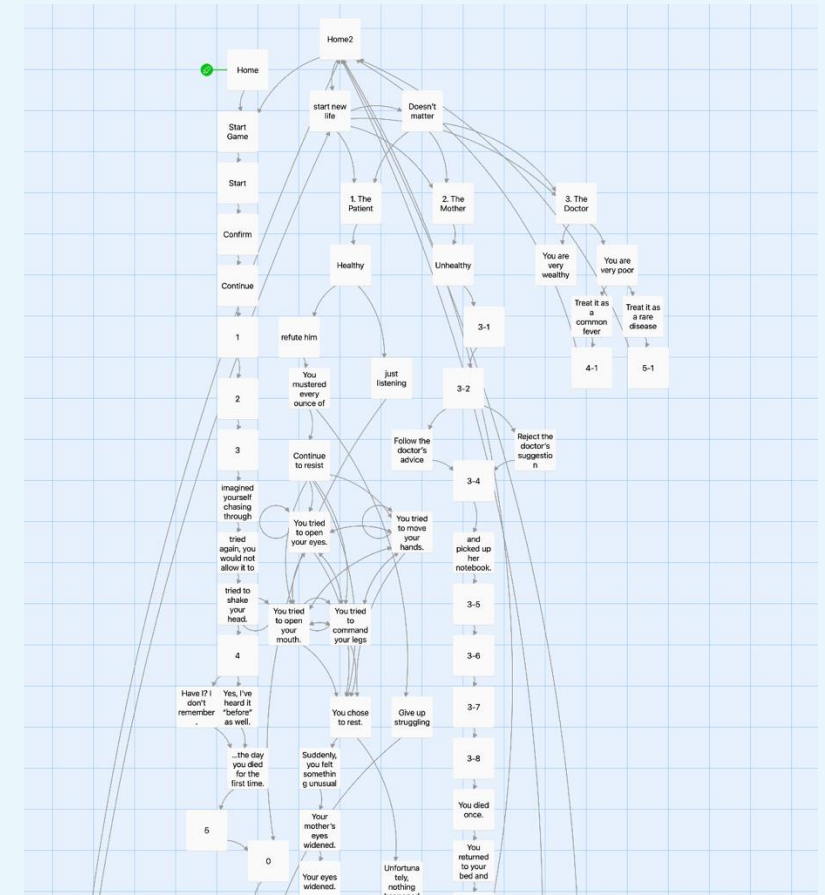
- Games are interactive media where the player is not only a spectator to the story, but also a participant in its creation.
- The progression of the story relies entirely on the player's behavior; without their choices and actions, the narrative cannot advance.
- Player participation makes the game narrative more dynamic, open and personalised. (Drab, 2014)
- Video game narratives are real-time. The player cannot jump around the storyline by turning pages like a reader of a novel.

Expansion of character perspectives

- source text: the main focus is the patient, other characters are less often depicted
- The game adds the perspectives of the mother and the doctor
- Players can experience the whole story from different dimensions, empathise with the characters, and form diversified thoughts on the theme.
- Extending the theme of the original text and increasing the richness of the narrative
 - Patient's point of view: life, death, struggle.
 - Mother's point of view: depression, love and freedom.
 - Doctor's point of view: profit and morality
- In contrast to traditional literature, game storytelling focuses on the construction of interactive story worlds. A key part of interactive story worlds is that a story world is bigger than a story (Crawford, 2013).

Non-linear Narrative and Multiple Endings

- “Every interactive application must give its user a reasonable amount of choice. No **choice**, no interactivity.” (Crawford, 2003, p.191)
- Game narratives are based on player choices, their themes and centres are uncertain
- The interactive structure of the tree diagram: the system provides a number of alternative quests and story clues, each of which leads to a different time and space, and the player can only choose one of them to complete. (Ryan, 2006).
- The game combines the hesitation of playing with the emotional experience of the character. By directly involving the player in the character’s moral dilemmas, it enhances the player’s emotional agency (Drab, 2014)



Embedded Narratives

You noticed several things.

You choose to explore:

The books on the shelf

The slogans on the wall

The scattered documents on the table

You didn't want to explore anything.

- Designers embed pre-defined narrative clues into the game world, which players explore and interpret to piece together the full story (Jenkins, 2004)
- By scattering the period setting and hidden clues throughout the game, players are encouraged to actively explore and piece together the world's context, ultimately unlocking the hidden ending.
- This approach enhances engagement and amplifies the enjoyment of discovery.
- The advantage over linear narratives is the use of 'white space', which eliminates long descriptions and focuses on key points. This allows players to construct a coherent narrative themselves, creating a more free and open narrative space that is rich in imagination.

player's agency

You suddenly felt a surge of intense...

fear

fear

fear

fear

- Games can also depict a character's internal state by suddenly removing control from the player and allowing the character to disregard the player's wishes. This sudden removal of control limits the player's agency and can be used to highlight the player's helplessness in the situation (Arjoranta, 2017).
- Similarly to removing control, I introduced repetition in the game, using “false choices” to limit the player’s range of action. This design reflects the character’s mental state has been completely taken over by fear that is beyond the player's control.
- This directly forces the player to accept the character's emotional state and makes them feel powerless.

The Death of the Author?

- “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author” (Barthes, 1977).
- The author in video game narratives does not disappear, but indirectly controls the story by designing the fictional world and influencing the player's choices
- Interactive narratives offer nothing more than the myth of free will (Ryan, 2006).
- The author's hidden control shapes the fictional world, limits the text's scope, and predetermines the player's perspective and the “true ending” of the game.

But beyond the diagnosis, a bigger problem loomed over you:

You were out of money.

Your own child was starving.

If you treated it as a common fever, your family's life might grow even harder.

You choose:

Treat it as a common fever

Treat it as a rare disease

It's over.

You are dead.

Is this the whole truth?

Perhaps... there's something you've forgotten.

You-

Try again.

No, I embrace death. The meaning of life lies in its end.

Non-linear narratives are in fact full of value judgements, and the multiple choice question in fact has the 'right answer'.

Death Narratives

- In the game, I followed the original storyline and designed the player to manipulate the character and die. The player becomes a co-conspirator in the character's death.
- But the game is not over; the player continues to try to avoid new deaths while carrying the memory of the character's demise. Here, death serves as a mediator, transforming the painful process of dying into an opportunity for rebirth and the potential for a new life.
- **Games are by far the most powerful art form for exploring tragedy and responsibility.** There is a fundamental difference between tragedy in games and in literature: in games, we take responsibility for our failures and suffering; in literature, we never do. (Juul, 2013)
- Even if the player is not emotionally invested in the process of playing the game, he is forced to take responsibility for the death of his character as a result of his choices. Even if he knows full well that it is all designed by the creators, it is inescapable that the creators have also left a way for the character to live, and that the player's choices have caused the character's death.
- The player's death and rebirth in the virtual world becomes a complement to the real-world experience of life, providing an opportunity to experience extreme situations in a safe environment. This experience allows the player to reflect deeply on self, existence and death in the virtual space of the game, thus gaining new perspectives and understanding in real life.

- **Through the transformation of narrative modes, the game adaptation grants players limited freedom, shifting them from passive recipients of the story to active participants. By incorporating interactive storytelling, it deepens the source text's themes while enhancing emotional resonance and the complexity of moral choices within the narrative.**

Reference

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THANK YOU