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Journal of Interactive Drama

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

**Volume Four, Issue One
November 2011**

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I HAVE TO RECALL SOME REAL CHARACTERS

Status and Imagination in Outcomes Based Education

Dr. C.A. DeCoursey
Hong Kong Polytechnic

ABSTRACT

This study explores student responses to scenario-based teaching and learning methods. An English-language drama was selected which involved five inter-relating generic competencies, focused on global warming, which also encouraged audience participation. Characters in the drama explored ways in which energy use implicated the consumer lifestyle, and responses involved various models of leadership and ethics. The intention was to involve student audiences in critically considering possible responses. However, the drama was never performed. Unlike 2L student actors in several previous productions, this cast did not become proficient enough to perform. Interactions and comments from student actors during rehearsals strongly suggested that status was an issue. Therefore, structured interview data was taken from student actors, and used to explore circumstances in which scenario-based learning – usually quite popular with students – functioned to undermine cognitive inputs and subject knowledge, as well as the development of generic competencies.

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents data collected as part of a funded, 18-month research project at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Data explores student responses to scenario-based teaching and learning methods, focussing on situations where the involvement of self in learning

obstructs intended learning outcomes. Data was taken from a study where scenario-based teaching and learning methods were trialed as part of a tertiary outcomes-based education programme. Five generic competencies were identified as desirable: global outlook, sustainable lifestyle, critical thinking, ethics, and leadership and informed many general education courses. An English-language drama was selected which closely involved these five inter-relating topics. In preparation for a campus-wide performance, this drama problematised global warming, and encouraged audiences to consider various possible responses. The drama's theme and the rehearsal process connected it to the broader stream of general education provision. Characters in the drama explored ways in which energy use implicated the consumer lifestyle, and responses involved various models of leadership and ethics. The intention was to involve student audiences in critically considering possible responses. However, the drama was never performed. Unlike 2L student actors in twenty previous productions, this cast did not become proficient enough to perform. Interactions and comments from student actors during rehearsals strongly suggested that status was an issue. Therefore, structured interview data was taken from student actors, and used to explore circumstances in which scenario-based learning – usually quite popular with students – functioned to undermine cognitive inputs and subject knowledge, as well as the development of generic competencies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Outcomes-based education (OBE) embraces a mix of methods which have been assessed as variously effective. The methods used by OBE are learner-centred, and aim to gain demonstrable practical and cognitive results, by identifying what the student must learn, and tracking the students' progress and achievements through multiple instructional and assessment tools (Alderson and Martin 2007). One of these is scenario-based teaching and learning. As an instructional and assessment tool, scenario-based teaching and learning offers OBE several important gains. The first is pragmatic. Scenarios offer learners a formative opportunity to explore what classroom instruction means operationally and situationally (Blatner 2006). Through enacting various

scenarios they learn to holistically integrate detailed learning with real-world and real-time interactions, achieving an “enhanced realism” (Pearce and Jackson 2006, 218). They develop critical thinking about challenging, realistic scenarios (Thompson 2006). Simulated real-time requires them to use classroom learning for decision making (Rasmussen 2008). Scenario-based teaching and learning methods are currently used in marketing, business, nursing, design, applied physics, management, social work, and a host of other fields. In the tertiary context, skills applications and integration is clearly desirable. To date, scholarly evaluations of the success of outcomes supported by methods such as scenario-based teaching and learning, framed as competencies, have been based on student self-reporting and self-assessment (Warn and Tranter, 2001). Data presented in this paper suggests that student self-reporting implicates possible and sometimes idealised selves and therefore may be unreliable in some areas including status. This has implications for teachers using this method.

The second purpose for using drama as a teaching and learning method is motivation. The pleasure and interest students feel when role playing is a major reason why teachers and tertiary institutions use scenario-based teaching and learning methods. This pleasure and interest can help them face and deal with the challenge of undertaking difficult cognitive tasks, particularly in a second language. This study took place in an English Medium of Instruction (EMI) tertiary polytechnic institution, where the great majority of learners are English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Previous studies indicated that 2L students can experience instrumental motivation, the incentive to learn as a means of achieving goals, for example employment. But scenario-based teaching uses drama techniques, and is most likely to be connected to integrative or affective motivation, learning that allows pleasurable participation in social and cultural realities desirable to the 2L student (Sandrock 2002). When motivated in this kind of situation, 2L students go through a process of revisioning their identity as they take in the new values, social relationships and culture. They reconstruct their own sense of their reality, self image, personal past and goals (Crystal 2003). At this time, the boundaries between these two kinds of motivation appear to be breaking down (Yashmina 2002). Recent studies suggest that contemporary 2L students are instrumentally motivated towards

membership in a global professional community, and integratively motivated to participate in elements of international culture, all at once. Thus they are comfortable with identities that are local and global, professional and social, all at once. They revision pasts and imagine futures easily, and repeat this process, changing their identities, easily (Dörnyei 2005). So, the self has come to the fore as the ground on which learning takes place, and motivation theory has been placed within a “possible selves” framework that valorises the imaginative and affective elements of learning (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009). However, post-structuralist studies have indicated that the contexts for learning are politically and socially ambivalent (Norton 2000). These contexts position but also marginalise learners in various ways. They co-construct, but also constrain identities and aspirations (Holstein and Gulbrium 2000). That is, 2L students will often not be successful in the selves and futures they are imagining. But, crucially, they are little aware of this, or of what is happening inside their own imagination, as they set their elastic visions of self into the scenes and narratives of the target subject. This paper’s data highlights incongruities within student performance and self-assessment, which students seem very little aware of. This indicates the limitations of self-assessment which question its validity as a measurement of competence, and indicates areas where teaching and learning requires more careful management.

Status emerged as a crucial issue during the study. In particular, the sense of discrepancy felt between self and role was a problem. Status has been noted as a factor in research on motivation, which has highlighted the importance of 2L student perceptions of the wealth and importance of the 2L community, and also the 2L students’ perceptions of the value of their parents’ support of 2L learning (Cziser and Dörnyei 2005). But motivation studies have seen anxiety solely in terms of lack of personal confidence in 2L learning (Dörnyei and Clement, 2001). In this case, student actors were English majors, so their 2L learning confidence can be presumed to be fairly strong. The anxiety they expressed related to discomfort with an imagined role. Social stratification, status attainment, and the prestige attached to various occupations, have all been extensively studied in both Hong Kong and mainland China contexts (Bian 2002). Notable factors include social and career mobility and its impact on social stratification, and diachronic changes in status

hierarchies (Zhang 2000). These studies have noticed the success of working classes in gaining employment that was previously beyond the grasp of laborers (Kung and Lee, 2001). Education holds a uniquely powerful place, in occupational attainment (Zhou et al 1997). In both Hong Kong and the mainland, people of all ages and backgrounds have a detailed awareness of occupational prestige and the relative rankings and categories of various jobs (Davis, 2000). This work shows the resilience of the connection between occupation and social status, in Chinese society. In the case of this drama, actors were invited to imagine selves or characters who were of a socioeconomic status lower than was consonant with their idealised self image, undermining their ability to rehearse, and obstructing their ability to gain generic competencies.

METHOD

A drama was selected for rehearsal and performance. The drama *Madwoman* was chosen because its subject matter provided a good platform for handling the chosen themes of global warming, energy use and consumer lifestyle, and its fictional structure and characters facilitated the development of the five specific generic competencies identified - global outlook, sustainable lifestyle, critical thinking, ethics, and leadership. *Madwoman* was based on French comedy playwright Jean Giraudoux's 1943 play *The Madwoman of Chaillot*, in which an eccentric aristocrat discovers a plot by some bankers to dig up Paris in order to extract the oil underneath it. The original script was rewritten considerably, to update and localise the play. The cafe setting was changed from Paris to Tsim Sha Tsui, a Hong Kong district adjacent to the university and known to the student actors and target audiences. Local references were included, and about 5% of the lines translated into Cantonese, to connect the play to Hong Kong life. The character of the Madwoman as "mad" in the sense of being able to see unusual truths was retained, but problematised in a way the original play had not done. In Giraudoux's original playtext, the Madwoman is clearly the protagonist and the banker the antagonist. Upon hearing of the plan to dig up Paris in order to extract the oil from underneath it, the Madwoman organizes her women friends and the cafe folk, to kidnap the plotters and hold a

people's trial. The original surreal ending strongly implies that the bankers are killed and Paris returns to the idyllic life it has been enjoying. However, in our revised 21st century script, the executives admit the rapacious nature of their original plan, and ask to participate in something more constructive. This our script questioned the urban idyll, based as it is on the assumption of the consumer lifestyle and a failure of concern about links between pollution and energy use. We balanced voices and perspectives more finely, and took on the challenges that arise from 21st century efforts to satisfy energy demands and at the same time slow the global impact of the consumer lifestyle.

Care was taken to ensure that the skeptical, searching quality of our revised script and characters was consonant with developing the five generic competencies identified in actors and audiences. The reality that contemporary students experience is one where there are several models for global outlook, for leadership in handling such complex problems. Each of these has its own global outlook, its own view of sustainable lifestyle, and each assumes its own particular ethical standpoint. Critical thinking is an essential tool for navigating realities of such complexity. We all learn to take on personal and local leadership, in addressing these challenges. Thus in the revised playtext, the Madwoman and her friends exemplify one kind of leadership, with its particular global outlook and ethical point of view. They get fine clothes at charity shops, shop and eat locally, and in their own eyes, have a sustainable lifestyle. But the CEO and his executive friends also exemplify leadership, have a recognized kind of global outlook, and can articulate an ethics based in opportunity, development and globalisation, though their vision is different from that of the Madwoman and her friends. Further, we rewrote the voices of the café folk to express still other global outlooks and ethics, including nuclear energy, alternative energies such as solar and wind, and a complete rejection of contemporary urban living to adopt a totally green lifestyle. Thus the people's trial became the heart of the show, with its purpose to question these various possible alternative responses to the challenges of our times. In order to equalise the dramatic weight of originally minor characters, so that they had voices, outlooks, ethics and positions on par with those of more major characters, lines were redistributed so that all roles contributed significantly to the trial scene. Members of the café folk took the lead in articulating various solutions

to the dirty energy that has caused global warming. The voices of the aristocratic and executive characters who had been louder voices when the problem was first enunciated took a smaller role in the trial scene, moving towards a finale which offered audiences a carefully balanced view of the options. Thus, the performance dramatised the challenges involved in our five generic competencies: global outlook, critical thinking, ethics, and leadership.

The roles in *Madwoman* were thoughtfully managed. During the rewriting process, they were given simple occupational designators like “Cook” and “Doctor”. Roles were organised into six categories which reflected a graduation of wealth, according to conventional values and attitudes towards socioeconomic class. The script was rewritten with the explicit intention of breaking this down in the play as the characters come to realise they all face the same problem, and share the same need to solve it (see Figure 1 below). The Madwoman and her two women friends were from the privileged, nonworking wealthy class. The Banker, CEO, Financier and Consultant represented a top-level executive group. The doctor and the executive secretary represented the professional middle class. The Policewoman, Cooks and Flowergirls represented the working class. The poet represented artists, and the beggar and the student represented the unemployed who would assume the lowest place on this kind of scale. We can represent this graduated scale as follows:

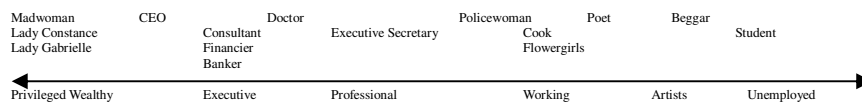


Figure 1: *Madwoman* roles by attributed socioeconomic class

A few roles had personal names such as Pierre the student, and Constance and Gabrielle, the women friends of the Madwoman. Mr. Barron was referred to using his personal name by the executives, and his function, Banker, by the café folk.

The ending of the play was also managed, to ensure that every character, regardless of its socioeconomic nature, was associated with presenting one of the six significant responses to the problem of global warming. Student actors agreed that Giraudoux’s original murderous ending was no longer a viable solution to the problems facing the world.

Thus in the rewritten script, the café folk discuss alternatives to killing the executives. As the people's trial goes forward, the executives explain their value as financial backers of new energies, and it is seen that they can play a part in solving the problem. Thus, these former antagonists join with the café folk to discuss alternatives. By the end, when the cast jointly articulates the range of options and the imperative need to choose and move forward, traditional class barriers have broken down, and all characters have regrouped along new lines depending on which alternative they support. The new groupings were very evenly balanced. No alternative received a stronger voice or more socioeconomically advantaged characters. The intention had been to ask the audience to vote. The value of the vote lay in its ability to develop generic competencies in student audiences by engaging them in considering the question, rather than advocating any specific alternative. In these ways, then, the rewritten version of *Madwoman* presumed the validity of voices coming from low on the occupational and prestige scales, and the validity of questioning and even rejecting ideas coming from voices high on that scale. It presumed that, when solutions to pre-eminently important matters such as global warming were put into the mouths of cooks, flowergirls and waitresses, Chinese 2L student actors would use their well-documented drive to succeed, to drive the play to success. It assumed that the matters of overwhelming global importance and ethical merit involved in this play would easily overcome any squeamishness related to occupational status. However, in this case, the project inadvertently constructed a case in which the drama, a specific instance of a cultural product likely to arouse cultural interest and thus motivation was placed into opposition with an imagined, and perhaps idealised, professional self. As a result, the drama obstructed the development of generic competencies.

As noted, the drama was a failure, and no live production was ever performed. This was because the rehearsal process was not smooth or efficient. Student actors initially rehearsed for a period of 3 months, the normal period required to result in performance. As problems were encountered, the rehearsal process was extended to 7 months. Problems included persistent absenteeism, ongoing lack of investment in character development, poor vocabulary retention, and severe difficulty remembering lines and cues. Compared with the process encountered in

many previous productions, this rehearsal process was uniquely difficult. The interest of this failure was that it clearly highlighted learning problems based in the self as involved in the learning process. Drama asks students to play roles, to imagine possible selves. In the case of *Madwoman*, student actors were unwilling to imagine themselves in specific kinds of roles, despite the great care taken to dignify roles of lesser socioeconomic status, and question the social warrant of those in upper echelons. When actors will not place themselves into the character being enacted, that character cannot come to life either inside the actor, or in the whole-group creation of a performance (Stanislavski, 1980). Before the rehearsal process finished, student actors participated in structured exit interviews, which were digitally recorded and transcribed. Lexical choices and intensifications used by actors to describe their roles were analysed using Appraisal Theory (Martin and Rose 2008). Some comments made by actors were also considered.

DATA

Exit interviews made very clear that the socioeconomic status of the roles was a crucial issue in actors' failure to reach performance. Interview data with most actors repeatedly indicated an anxiety about the status of roles at the lower end of the socioeconomic scale, and a failure to note the ethical problems of those in the upper echelons. The anxiety attached to student actor's feelings about performing roles with titles like Cook, Flowergirl, Waitress and Policewoman. The failure of perception attached to student actors' feelings about roles with titles such as President, and Banker.

Student actors' comments from exit interviews showed that they perceived their own character mainly in terms of social stratification, status attainment, and the prestige attached to various occupations. The question that elicited the following data was: "You played [name of the role]. Tell me about this character. What is s/he like?" Lexical choices revealing the actor's evaluation of their role were then assigned to a place along a graduated scale from strong negative through weak negative, weak positive to strong positive. Examples of lexical choices that were strongly negative include bad and selfish. Data is expressed as a percentage of the individual actor's total instances of evaluative terms.

This depicts the student actor’s evaluation of their own role. A zero indicates that there were no instances where an actor evaluated their role, in that socioeconomic category.

	negative		positive	
	strong	weak	weak	strong
unemployed	.38	.63	.13	0
artists	.20	.60	.20	0
working	.23	.54	.23	0
professional	0	.08	.42	.50
executive	.03	.03	.53	.42
leisured wealthy	0	.11	.50	.39
example lexical choices:	bad, selfish, small	suitable, not good, misguided	good, funny, nice, friendly	beautiful, strong, powerful, important

Table 1: Student actor evaluations of their roles, by category of employment

Most negative evaluations were given by students acting roles at the lower end of the socioeconomic scale, and most positive evaluations were given by those acting roles at the upper end of that scale. As students were speaking about acting roles in a play, the weak positive evaluation given by those acting roles at the lower end of the scale can be read as an index of their connection and commitment to the role. Actors playing executive and leisured wealthy roles expressed few negative evaluations of their roles. These categories received the strongest positive evaluation overall, indicating strongest actor connection and commitment. Given the small size of the cast, this data must be treated as a heuristic. However, the indication is that student actors evaluated executive and wealthy positions more positively than professional and worker positions. This is borne out when we look at the intensifications used with evaluations.

	strong (+negative)	weak (+negative)	weak (+positive)	strong (+positive)
unemployed	.25	.50	.25	0
artists	.33	.33	.33	0
workers	.36	.45	.18	0
professional	0	.33	.50	.17
executive	.03	.07	.50	.36
leisured wealthy	0	.06	.56	.38
example intensifiers	kind of, some, maybe, just a bit, a little		totally, definitely, very much, too much, whole, all	

Table 2: Student actor intensifications used in evaluating role, by category of employment (N = 20)

Actors may feel culturally or personally inhibited about expressing strong positive intensification or evaluation for their own roles. Some may tend to express themselves in weaker rather than stronger forms, and some to use more intensifications than others. But the general picture of the intensifications is the same as that for evaluations. The greatest incidence of strong intensification with negative evaluations was at the lower end of the socioeconomic scale, and the greatest incidence of strong intensification with positive evaluations was at the higher end of the socioeconomic end of the scale. It appears that student actors clearly evaluated executive and wealthy jobs most positively, despite their questionable actions at least in the beginning of the drama. Similarly, student actors evaluated working class, artist and unemployed roles least positively.

Briefly, let us review these roles. None were simply good or bad. The Madwoman and her friends, who are at the very top of the scale, are both privileged elites, and beloved among the café folk for their funny chatter and organising abilities. Thinking they can solve the situation easily, they plan to murder the executives, and carry on with life as usual. This response is rejected in the trial scene. Cook, a leading voice for ethics and reason, points out the need to balance energy demands with building a greener city, and argues that the executives, with all their money and know-how and employees, must be part of the solution.

The Banker admits to being on hard times, having lost his money in the financial downturn. The CEO, the Executive Secretary and the Consultant all admit to be exploring different alternative energies. The Flowergirls are voice the questions of the audience, probing each alternative as it gets articulated. At the lowest end of the socioeconomic scale, Pierre, the unemployed student, is in love with a beautiful Flowergirl, and their romance was a major motivator for the café people to feel the need to find a solution to the problem of energy needs and global pollution. The Beggar was a uniquely important role as a comic, but more importantly in turning the group towards rational methods of handling their problem. One of the Madwoman's oldest and closest friends, he is an eccentric voice for living completely green, and a folk hero. So, as noted above, these roles were managed, such that none was simply good or bad, and all had something important to contribute to the group. That Hong Kong university students are motivated towards status attainment through education fits well with their cultural background, as noted above. But the characters in *Madwoman* were complex – occupationally unattractive but ethically admirable working class leaders, occupationally attractive for occupational status but ethically questionable executives - would lead us to expect students to imaginatively place themselves into the *Madwoman* drama, and treat their role as a possible self.

Student actors' negative evaluation of worker and service positions seems to have been powerful enough to cause them to disregard both overt learning inputs, and the imaginative process. One actor playing a Waitress described her role as “not very suitable for me because I'm not that kind of person.” The demographic profile of students at this institution is majority working and middle class. The vast majority of these student actors had grown up in contexts like that dramatised by the café folk, not the executives and the aristocrats. One actor who had briefly played the poet before quitting the cast said, “This guy seems to be quite erm ... he doesn't come across as being smart, but he's not stupid obviously.” The poet's insights were often used to move the café folk further along in discussing their options. One student playing Cook said: ““I think she is kind of some erm how to say neutral role in the whole play” – a surprising statement given that Cook's pivotal leadership and ethical role was repeatedly commented upon during rehearsal and by

other characters in the script. The actor playing the student Pierre said: “he’s a small guy, right, he’s he’s a small person in this world, nothing, and he’s not a big potato, quite small actually.” Pierre’s romance was the reason the group sought a solution. It was Pierre and his girlfriend they all wanted to save the world for, and the centrality of their love was underwritten in speeches and on-stage action. Being loved and being able to express analytical questioning on behalf of the group seems not to be status enough, as the actor playing Pierre’s girlfriend, a Flowergirl, said: “in fact she represents one of the six choices, the green extreme green for the environment, although she sells flowers in the cafe.” Here, “although” diminishes her employment and thus her socioeconomic status. It seems difficult for this student actor to imagine that a Flowergirl could play an important ethical, critical thinking, or leadership role, in reality. Thus we see this student expressed an imagined reality that had a conflict, a disjuncture at its centre. We could restate this as, this role does something important, but she’s working class. Students playing working class roles seem to have felt a distance or discrepancy between their ideal or imagined professional selves, and their role in the drama.

By comparison, student actors playing executive and leisured wealthy roles expressed strong positive evaluations of their roles. The actor playing the Banker said: “I felt very grand because erm Mr. Barron is basically a banker who’s made millions of dollars for his bank back in the day so Mr. Barron in general in general basically like royalty in the banking business so yeah I can say I’m very proud to play Mr. Barron and yeah it’s an honor to be Mr. Barron.” In our play, Mr. Barron is completely broke, and has just been prosecuted for causing the crash of a major financial company. He is being recruited by the President of a new corporation which is frankly dishonest. Parallels between this situation and the real financial crisis of 2008-09, ongoing concurrent with rehearsals for *Madwoman*, were repeatedly discussed in rehearsal, including consideration of corporations such as Lehman’s and AIG, and persons such as Bernard Madoff. The student actor playing the Financier, an unethical character who tricks the Madwoman into signing away her personal wealth, saw his role as being: “Like the representative of wisdom of the world ... others may seek help from this character and erm he will explain those kinds of things with his wisdom with his

experience with his erm in-intellect yeah I think that's erm the basic concept of this role in this play.” Students playing executives clearly felt a positive identification with these roles, despite the fact that they were, at least before the people's trial pushes them to adopt a more constructive stance, in simple parlance, the “bad guys.” So we see that, despite the careful construction of characters in script and action, and despite at least 150 hours of rehearsal, student actors experienced congruence rather than discrepancy between their self-image and these upper socioeconomic roles. This may reflect what has been called an “international posture” or a “bicultural identity” (Lamb 2003). In the Chinese context, we can see why these kinds of roles might arouse those ideas. At the same time, it can only be so, if the actors resisted taking in the major thematic subject knowledge input, and resisted developing the generic competencies.

It should be noted that the experience of previous plays reinforces this interpretation. In the same institutional context, actors successfully developed generic competencies when taking on complex roles and roles involving issues of socioeconomic class. For example, a recent dramatization of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Austen's heroines are notable exactly for being poor. They include the wild Lydia and the poser Mary. Other characters include Mr. Darcy, composed of equal measures of arrogance and integrity, the pleasant but intellectually light Mr. Bingley, and the grasping, status-conscious Mr. Collins. Yet actors competed to play them, and did not resist imagining these roles as possible selves, or developing the competencies required to perform these roles. Similarly, student actors successfully imagined and developed the competencies required to understand and perform many of Shakespeare's lower class characters, and to critically understand some of his unethical wealthy aristocrats. We need to understand how imagining possible selves works, as a ground for learning, in more detail.

The comments of a student actor playing the Consultant show how the local and global, professional and social, imagined and revisioned self works: “I like this character because she's very clearly defined, very distinguished from the other people. And like I said there are points that I can identify with her, like I myself, I I'd like to think that I have something in me that makes me different from the other people.” The positive evaluation seen in “I like this character” is intensified using a

saturation prosody. The actor views the executive role as distinguished in two senses – different from others, and by implication, better than others. This is followed by two statements that she frames as basically identical – one asserting her “real” identity, and the other an imaginative construction of self, in “I’d like to think I”. Even if we interpret the later phrase is not a modest qualification, it is clear from their juxtaposition, from the fact that the second phrase takes over the identical function to allow her to finish her sentence, that she sees the two as the same. This realisation shows student actors’ plastic conflation of current real self and imagined successful professional self.

Dörnyei and Cziser have suggested that possible selves explain potential for student identifications with target cultures. “Possible selves represent individuals’ ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become” (Dörnyei and Cziser 2005, 29). However, this study’s data suggests that “possible” and “desired” have strong directionality, like an internal psychological wind that blows towards desired selves and away from undesired selves. Again, they see motivation as “the desire to reduce the perceived discrepancies between the learner’s actual and possible self.” (Cziser and Dörnyei 2005, 29) This study indicates that the directionality of imagination can reduce discrepancies in such a way as to reduce learning. Dörnyei identifies the need to explore how the desire to reduce discrepancies between the ideal 2L and the real self gets translated into action, in real contexts (Dörnyei 2005). One actor playing a working class role said:

In order to play this role well, I mean in in the play, I have to recall or a least think about some real characters of this kind of person, because actually erm, there is a kind of distance between myself and erm and and this character, so I cannot just represent my character, my personality erm, just impose my thoughts from this character. I have to erm think of some of the real person in my life, whether I encounter with those kind of person.

The phrase “some real characters” indicates that real and imaginary persons are present together in the actor’s mind, when talking about the act of working on developing a role. The ease of the conflation or substitution of self and role indicates that the ground on which the

student actor is experiencing difficulty lies within the self. In the first phrase, the student actor offers the clarification “I mean in the play” as if his interlocutor might not understand that this was the case from the phrase “play this role well”. So playing a role does not, in this speaker’s mind, refer clearly to acting a character in a play, even though this is the topic under discussion and both persons who are in the discussion were part of the play. The student actor presents the activity of recalling actual or real persons as somewhat onerous – “having to recall”, as compared to “thinking about” which he grades down, “at least”. Imagining is the easier task. We see an implicit negative evaluation in “this kind of person”, again graded down. The repeated “this kind of person”, “those kind of person” is a technicalised judgment, placing the source of the judgment outside the speaker and into society. The overall intensity is low, as seen in “kind of”, “at least” and “some”, but the negative evaluation is clear, and identity is the ground on which we can see this actor distancing himself from playing this role. The student actor feels that acting this role requires of him a move towards bringing his own self and the role together, and disliking the role, he rejects this movement. The distance felt by the student between himself and the working class role enacted is noticed in “real characters” which, it is suggested, are easier to recall to mind, and amplified by “of this kind” and “at least”. The challenge of the socioeconomic distance to this student is seen in disclaimers like “actually” and “just” (which occurs twice). Acting this role by imagining the character’s inner reality, the classic first step in Stanislavsky’s method acting, is presented as not very possible – “cannot just”, even as an act of “imposition”. Recalling real characters, thinking about encounters one has had with people of a social status less than one’s aspirations, is here presented as difficult. So we see that these well-motivated, self-confident 2L learners do not want to imagine themselves as selves other than their most successful idealised professional possibilities.

In this case, we must ask why actors were successful in taking on roles, or possible selves, with the same kinds of flaws, in Shakespeare and Austen plays. This gave rise to Question 11 in the structured interview, “If you could act in another play, what kind of play would you like?” Most students indicated an author, and a few indicated a genre:

Rank	Author or Genre	N. of mentions
1	Shakespeare	18
2	Jane Austen	11
3	George Bernard Shaw	5
3	comedy	5
4	classic literature	3
4	fantasy	3
5	romance	2
6	Oscar Wilde	1

Table 3: Students' choices of role in another play, ranked

Shakespeare and Austen are now considered artefacts of high culture, though they have been variously adjudicated in the past. One student actor said: “Well I prefer more erm, like Shakespeare play because in my opinion drama equals erm to Shakespeare or Jane Austen those romantic erm erm stories I think this one is quite erm not politics but in somehow for myself I think it’s too practical, boring.” This student has seen the themes of the play - global outlook, sustainability, ethics and leadership – as politics, which he equates with practical and boring. By contrasts with the rejected or resisted *Madwoman* characters, this student suggests high culture authors and romantic classics. So it seems the status attributed to literary author can confer sufficient merit on less than desirable characters – less than desirable in terms of socioeconomic class, ethics, leadership, and so on – to make them desirable, such that actors want to reduce the distance and discrepancy between their “real” and this imagined possible self.

The same focus on role as connected to status was seen in responses to Question 12, “What character would you like to play in the next drama?” One actor who had taken a worker role in *Madwoman* said: “it could be better to to pick out the erm proper characters” and “I will chose the character most like me for example the Bennet girls in *Pride and Prejudice*.” The Bennett girls are penniless and unemployable, able to make their way in the world only by marrying wealthy aristocrats,

undesirable clergymen, or deceitful soldiers. So it would be difficult to accept the second statement as sincere, coming from an undergraduate expected to shortly move into a successful career, except by understanding the directionality affecting this actor's imagination of possible self. Another who had taken a worker role said: "I don't want to maybe play the the first actress in the play but I'd like to erm you know, I am I am not really open minded girl." The inevitable desire for top roles is not the issue here. This student's explicit description of herself as not open-minded refers to her unwillingness to enact a worker's role. Her hesitation in saying so was an act of politeness towards the interviewer and director, who she viewed as having made a mistake in asking this student actor to imagine the role of a working class person. The Cook said: "It could be better to to pick out the erm proper characters. ... I don't know what kind of play but for characters erm because I I mean I'm not a a good a good actor maybe those characters with similar personality characteristics to me, student." The explicit self definition of the speaker as a student identifies her as not similar to a Cook. This actor, like many, indicated Shakespeare as "suitable" for the next play, without any apparent consideration that she did not resemble homicidal maniacs like Lady MacBeth, suicidal Egyptian Empresses like Cleopatra, or cross-dressing shipwreck refugees like Viola. This actor's knowledge of Shakespeare most probably extended only to the awareness of his high culture status. Indeed, the majority of Shakespeare's female roles are strong characters offering much to admire and emulate, including characteristics close to the generic competencies identified by the university as important for undergraduates to develop – critical thinking, ethics, leadership, a global outlook and even a sustainable lifestyle. As this study indicates that status concern may impose limitations on the use of drama as a teaching and learning tool, this may in fact indicate that Shakespeare is a good means to begin to draw these discrepancies to students' attention, and lead them to consider the contradictions inherent in their own status ambitions and the learning goals of most tertiary institutions.

Words like "suitable" and "proper", repeatedly used by students to express this distance and discrepancy, reflect an effort to justify resisting a move towards imagining themselves in the undesirable role. The Policewoman said: "so if in the next play I would like to choose a

character of some erm fun image yeah some funny image ... and actually I ... in my previous experience I- I played Cinderella". She went on to compare *Madwoman* unfavourably with Shakespeare, Austen, and Bernard Shaw. An actor taking an executive role noted: "I mean *Madwoman* is very contemporary compared with *Pride and Prejudice* or those classical literature stuff and erm perhaps in this case it's quite different from what people expect, they kind of have a prototype of what theatre should be like." This student also placed the negative judgment outside herself, into the society of her peers, putative audiences, and her society. However, we can also see that comparison is inherent in playing a role, in writing the self into possible roles and selves. And crucially, the comparison seen here is between one imagined role and another imagined role, as often as it is between an imagined or possible self and the real self. As with the student actor who noted the need to recall 'some real characters', real and imagined are not greatly distinct in contemporary students' inner worlds. So for these students, the sense of unsuitability of the role, the distance or discrepancy experiences did not refer only to their real selves. The successes these students are motivated to strive for and against are idealised professional selves, projected beyond the self and into society, which they then take as the source and definition of ideal selves to be emulated, imagined and striven for. So, these imagined future possible selves are composed of past, half-understood impressions that allow status issues and high-culture issues, which then provide the directionality, or psychological wind, to any specific instance in which they imagine a possible self. They compare their role in a drama not to real people they have experienced, but to a higher standard in their view - to their projected models of success, which they take for "real" selves. This was in fact noticed by one student in an executive role, who said: "one of the underlying theme of this play is how people no matter what circumstances or what background we have to work with each other right? Even I myself did not see this until late in the process." The status anxiety these actors felt was caused not by any awareness of comparing their current actual status as real persons who aim at real jobs in the real world, but by comparing the role they are playing in drama class to the executive role they cast themselves in imaginatively. This has significant implications for teaching and learning outcomes. This privileges the role

of the imagination and subjectivity over the details of subject knowledge, or their application in real time and decision-making. It devalues instrumental teaching and learning objectives that sit in what tertiary institutions would refer to as the real world.

DISCUSSION

The interview data indicates that there are some important limitations on scenario-based teaching and learning, particularly in the 2L context. The accepted understanding is that, “through drama, students build a sense of empathy for all sides of the issue” and “students gain skills and perceptions that they may carry into their professional lives” (Kana and Aitken 2007, p. 679). In our case, we see this disconfirmed in four ways. First, imaginative identification was expressed for roles of high occupational status but low ethical standards, where little was expressed for the reverse case. Second, teaching input directed to specific developmental gains can be lost when students experience resistance to a role offered, or a conflict with the imagined idealized self. We have seen that important current issues including sustainable lifestyle and global outlook were a casualty of this imaginative failure. Similarly, the development of generic competencies such as leadership was impaired when the role meant to allow students to explore, situationally and operationally, complex, realworld challenges conflicted with the actors’ idealized or desired possible. So, it seems that when status of an imagined role is felt to contradict the ideal self, the result can be a failure of empathy, a lack of imaginative identification, resulting in the obstruction of teaching input and a failure of holistic integration of subject knowledge details with real-time interaction.

Third, it seems that skills and perceptions may be selectively gained, based on the perceived proximity, or lack of discrepancy, between the idealised self and the role offered by the drama. This constitutes a significant limitation on scenario-based teaching and learning methods. Any serious concern for learning outcomes must support students’ need to acquire the gains already identified as being offered by scenario-based teaching and learning methods. These desirable gains include exploring subject knowledge operationally and situationally, holistically integrating classroom instruction with

real-world, real-time interactions, and developing critical thinking in challenging scenarios. These competencies can help students achieve the enhanced performance university graduates require. But in the event that scenarios used require imagined selves and roles that the student feels are discrepant and obstructs, then it seems that this teaching method actually undermines the development of competencies. This may indicate the need either to use other teaching vehicles when handling status-connected materials. At the same time, it may be objected that matters of status, power, position and self are matters of such importance, both socially and in the employment context, that a better approach would be to retain scenario-based teaching and learning methods and attempt to make students aware of their reaction to the sense of discrepancy. In this case, scenario-based methods could be used in conjunction with a measured, stepped programme of highlighting, exploring and problematising the experience of discrepancy, such that students become aware of their own responses, and ultimately, could competently perceive the related issues, discuss them, and make much more understanding choices of response. This would greatly strengthen graduates in terms of ethics, and their ability to contribute in employment and social situations. The decision whether to use scenario-based methods when handling status-related content would then rest on the amount of time teachers could give to this in the teaching and learning context.

Fourth and finally are the implications for tertiary graduates entering the workplace. If imaginative identification can block learning gains and ethics in highly motivated, confident learners, we must wonder how our graduates will function in the increasingly difficult search for, and performance of, their jobs. The data provided in this study, though limited by the small size, suggests that some teaching and learning situation set up situations in which tertiary students continue to see themselves as ethical and analytical, and yet fail to see working class roles as speaking in equally valid voice. This suggests they will perform poorly in some areas, as team members and decision makers. The undesirable consequences of this in the workplace are part of the reasons behind the use of practical and applied teaching and learning methods. The data from these exit interviews suggests why this is happening. Consonant with recent motivation studies, it seems that contemporary

students have little ability to distinguish the fictional from the real, and little awareness of the what is going on inside their own imaginations. Despite considerable input, they did not clearly distinguish fictional executives of *Madwoman* from “some real characters” who have made millions, but also recently lost millions, causing financial dislocation and unemployment across the world. Thus, students’ desire to move away from the discomfort created by a sense of discrepancy and towards an idealised professional self can function to block teaching input, when delivered via scenario-based methods.

Students’ retreat from the sense of discrepancy, in circumstances where imagining possible selves connects to learning outcomes, holds significant implications for outcomes-based tertiary teaching which intends to prepare graduates for the workplace. In our post-financial crisis reality, graduates find it increasingly difficult to find employment. The results of this study suggest that, in the workplace, even when highly motivated, confident learners will frequently end up taking jobs which create a sense of distance or discrepancy between the real self constructed on the job and the ideal self. Finding themselves in this situation they are likely to respond by moving away from the undesirable possible self offered by the employment realities. And they may be very little aware of their own interior, subjective response. Thus, workplace challenges may not be able to generate competent engagement and performance. We have seen that actors compared their roles not with their real selves or their real context, but with their idealised or professional self. We have seen that, when experiencing a discrepancy between ideal self and dramatic role, actors chose a subjectivity that failed to develop generic competencies, and ignored subject knowledge details including global outlook, sustainable lifestyle, ethics, leadership and critical thinking. This was because the idealised or desired possible self functions as the standard against which other roles, both real and imagined, were judged and responded to. Our students enjoy imagining possible selves. But in a time of financial crisis, global warming, and other problems, where the average workplace will bring serious challenges to young graduates, tertiary institutions cannot treat learning outcomes as if they were imaginary. Tertiary institutions support scenario-based teaching and learning methods exactly because they are believed to offer gains useful to outcomes-based education. Recently, the

goalposts have been moved, both in terms of employment and in terms of selves.

The profound immersion definitional of our media-engaged society will continue to increase subjectivity and to privilege the imagination of possible selves in the way learners engage with subject knowledge and generic competencies. Thus, tertiary teachers using scenario-based techniques must focus students analytically on their subjectivity, in order to be able to turn them towards the kinds of operational understandings that are needed in the workplace. Otherwise, the same techniques that used to deliver enhanced workplace realism and the integration of classroom instruction with realtime decision making, might simply produce more Bernie Madoffs, or an epidemic of Walter Mitty's. First, teachers must pre-teach guidelines for participating imaginatively, ethically, practically and cognitively. Second, teachers must concretely build connections between these levels of participation, and between ideal, real and aspirational selves and contexts. Third, teachers must expose the process of imagining roles to analytical scrutiny, and engage students in deconstructing roles, selves and realities. Fourth, teachers using scenario-based teaching and learning methods should structure exercises that routinely move student actors back and forth between being immersed and being analytical, being a player and being a critic. This will mean reallocating the time assigned to various aspects of the drama exercise being used in the classroom. This approach resembles Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Boal 2000), which focus actors, director and audiences together on the social and power relations which maintain undesirable situations and move them towards more desirable ones. Boal pioneered techniques which move actors back and forth between trialing imaginary scenarios and explicitly trying out possible responses to them, in analytical conversation with directors and audiences. This exposes actors and audience to greater ethical and critical analysis, and make plain the implication of versions of self in outcomes attained.

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Author's Biography

Dr. DeCoursey has taught theatre in second language contexts from Turkey, Bulgaria and Azerbaijan, Taiwan and Hong Kong. She is the Programme Leader of the MA in English Language Arts at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, where she teaches Drama for Language Learning. Her research interests include drama and popular culture in teaching English, and Appraisal analysis. She has produced more than 20 productions over the past decade, and recently produced an Asian version of Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross*.

AN ELLIPTICAL PILGRIMAGE OF ASCENT: USING DECONSTRUCTIVE PEDAGOGY TO DESIGN TOURIST MARKERS AT HIGH-LEVEL OBSERVATORIES

Jerry C. Jaffe
University of Otago

“. . .[O]ne takes refuge in tautology as one does in fear, or anger, or sadness, when one is at a loss for an explanation: the accidental failure of language is magically identified with what one decides is a natural resistance of the object. In tautology, there is a double murder: one kills rationality because it resists one; one kills language because it betrays one.”

-Roland Barthes
Mythologies, 152

“Man places before himself the world as the whole of everything objective, and he places himself before the world. Man sets up the world towards himself, and delivers Nature over to himself. We must think of this placing-here, this producing, in its broad and multifarious nature. Where nature is not satisfactory to representation, he reframes or redispes it.”

-Martin Heidegger
Poetry, Language, Thought, 110

While those who look out from high vantage points may derive some personal pleasure from panorama, the nature of the viewing experience is aesthetically complex and never absolutely personal. A variety of

influences surrounding each viewer in the instance of viewing monologically narrow the reading of the view. Among such influences include tourist markers that explain the “significance” of the view. Such markers present the view in a synecdochical fashion, as if the view itself was part of the information contained in the markers and vice versa.¹ Thus, the knowledge presented objectifies the view in a circular tautology. The presentation of educational signs and the reading practices of those who ascend raise ethical issues about the relationship between reading practices and the production of knowledge. “In what ways does the world rise or fall in value when a reader or groups of readers perform and let loose in the world this particular meaning or reading of a text or event”(Ellsworth, 127).

High-level towers and observatories present one significant genre of panoramic interaction. Such towers, like the famous Eiffel Tower (Paris), the Canadian National Tower (Toronto), the Empire State Building (New York City), the Marriot Renaissance Center (Detroit, MI) or the Gettysburg National Battlefield Tower (Pennsylvania), to name but a few, all present an edutainment narrative; the planners of each site combine leisure-time pleasure with educational experiences.

In many tourist edutainment venues, one of the main strategies for framing the educational experience is the offering of selected information. Both the selection of the information to be presented and the artistic/ rhetorical strategies employed for their presentation suggest that the goals of edutainment design intersect with the goals of traditional pedagogic concerns. That is, how do the teachers teach, the learners learn, and what are the consequences of our teaching on the object of our study.

Dean MacCannell in his analysis of the tourist experience claimed simply that such a scopic regime presents the view as object, “[*As if they are pictures, maps or panoramas of themselves*”](122, his italics). Michel de Certeau described the “Looking at” of a panorama as “reading,” and the panorama itself as a text; ascending to such high places “transforms the bewitching world by which one is ‘possessed’ into

¹ I have discussed the nature of synecdoche elsewhere, in particular in “Reading Between the (Sky)Lines: Deconstructing the Narratological Dynamic of Scenography Upon Towers and their Observatories” (Jaffe 2002).

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a text that lies before ones eyes”(92). De Certeau links this scopic fetishizing to the creation of knowledge, or a particular type of knowledge. “[T]he fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more”(92).

If the cityscape is presented as text, which the viewer then reads, what dynamic exists between these three factors of presentation of object, interaction with the presentation of object, and the object itself? Narratologically, the view as presented as an object of itself thus is molded or modeled by those who control access to the view. While it may be the viewer who treats the view as text, it is those who frame the view who turn the view into a particular type of object with a particular ontological status. Miki Bal, in her deconstruction of museum displays, suggests that such displays are authored in “first person” by those creating an exhibit, are read in the “second person” by those who read the exhibit, and the objectification of the display objects renders them into a voiceless “third person” (1-12). In such displays, the authors of the first person objectification present their interpretation as a lesson in reality. Her analysis of some displays at the New York City American Museum of Natural History focuses on the pedagogical implications in displaying exhibits as “reality,” “[A] museum that claims to ‘show’ how peoples and animals ‘really are’,”(9-10).

As this might apply to viewing practices from high-level towers, access to the view is controlled by those who control the tower itself. “They” allow access and that access (in all of its related threads) becomes the frame through which the view of the panorama is experienced by the looker. In other words, the panorama itself is never phenomenologically accessed. It disappears into the simulacrum of the edutainment experience. Referring to “myth,” Barthes attempts to demonstrate that often such rhetorics are cloaked in what seems politically-neutral aesthetics. “Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of a justification but that of a statement of fact”(Mythologies, 143). In deconstructing the relationship between the three elements of such edutainment “readings,” the curriculum/ teaching- style analysis of Ellsworth begins to suggest

alternative ways of constructing the selection of and presentation of the narrative elements of the viewing experience.

Pedagogically, Bal's analysis of museums that claim to 'show' how peoples and animals 'really are', matches Ellsworth's criticism of teachers who present or understand their curriculum as reality. Interestingly, both Bal and Ellsworth use film studies as aspects of their own analysis, although perhaps Ellsworth makes some film studies concepts much more central to her arguments. In this regard, I am particularly interested in her development of the relationship between continuity editing and classroom curriculum. "Every new shot in a realist film threatens to disrupt the viewer's suspension of disbelief. . . . The purpose of continuity editing is to bridge the spaces of difference-between"(86).

When educators and others equate learning with the achievement of understanding, we are assuming that 'absolute representation' is possible and desirable. . . . And it's further assumed that if I use that matching word as I am speaking to you, and if you understand that matching word, then the idea or meaning present in me will also be made present in you.(91)

Ellsworth challenges these traditional notions, offering analytic dialogue and discontinuity editing as pedagogical alternatives. "Because meanings of the world, events, and our experiences of them cannot be read directly off of the world or ourselves, the meanings that we do make are the products of interpretation-of particular routes of reading. They are not products of absolute representation or direct understanding. And this is why the processes and routes of our acts of interpretation become so crucial"(125).

If then we consider the pedagogical underpinnings of display design, then we must also determine what view of reality and what nature of readership guide our design goals. If we consider the text unstable and the ideal reading an act of ambivalence (as described by Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, 121-131), then our design still reaches to capture an ontological stand, though one in which reality as text/ text as reality remains essentially unstable.

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Understanding such presentation of panorama as text with the framers of the view as authors also brings to mind Barthes's analysis of political language. As compared to speech-acts, modes of writing are much more monologic, "closed" as he terms it, in that they attempt to fix meaning. "[W]riting is a hardened language which is self-contained and is no way meant to deliver during its own duration a mobile series of approximations. It is on the contrary meant to impose, thanks to the shadow cast by its system of signs. . ." (*Writing Degree Zero*, 19). Overtly political modes of writing, be it papal decree, Stalinist order, or constitutional amendment, particularly seek to present a seamless existence between language and ontology through repeated self-referentially (tautology). "[W]riting is meant to unite in a single stroke the reality of acts and the ideality of the ends," (*ibid.*, 20).

A book is only a book by virtue of its being utilized as a book. That is, the active user adopts a stance in which they treat a "book" as they believe a "book" should be treated. Some people feel that a "book" should never be written in; others can not read without copious marginalia. To some, a book need never be opened, as it is ornamental; to others, it can be pounded as a hammer; to others, it is law. Thus, the meaning of "book" is never finalized, but deferred until a moment of usage, and then the user acts as if that particular use is the value/meaning of the "book." So, as a text, a book is utterly unstable, and without meaning outside of its use. And, in using that book, one acts *as if* that is what a book *is*.

Further, each return to a book (or a politics, or a curriculum) for that book's utilization requires a constant (if not necessarily consciously recognized as such) re-decision about the use/value/meaning of the nature of "books." So, Jacques Derrida described the repetition of the book as elliptical. Book-users return again and again to books, yet the meaning of book is never absolutely, essentially *one* thing, so books users must re-new their faith in books.

If in the return to the book a book user denies this moment of decision by giving the "book" an ontologically *pure* status, that user gives the self over to hegemonic determination (again, the shadow of Barthes' critique of tautology); the movement is circular, there is little self-discovery and only much self-containment. If the book user admits into his usage the instability of the book, always deferring interpretation

and denying practical application, this movement is likewise circular, for the user sees only the pores in the paper and the history in the ink. To destabilize hegemonic control and make even possible the journey of self-discovery, the user must ambivalently oscillate between both of the former use-models. We must use the pores and the ink. Barthes in *Mythologies* promotes this model of reading.

Regardless of the book, the user, or the approach, when the three intersect in a moment of utilization, it is the user who expresses their faith in the nature of books through their repeated (and unavoidable) decision-making as to that nature. Of course, this is why the first model of reading is always conservative, because it rests on traditional, cultural norms regulating the status of and utilization of words. Governmental agencies, religious leaders, captains of industry want their followers to read conservatively (which does not mean that absolute agreement is required topic-by-topic, only that the truth status of words be regarded according to the demands of various hegemonic forces).

Such unity suggests that reading as an act may be a circular act, one in which reading doesn't dispel ignorance or enlighten minds but rather reinforces ideological positions. Ellsworth contrasts circular reading practices with elliptical ones, suggesting that circular readings (perhaps similar to Barthes's first position of reading as if the signifier was empty, that is, "where the signification becomes the literal again," (*Mythologies*, 128)) retrace to a beginning where the journey through "elsewhere" repeats with continual reinforcement of the original position. By contrast, elliptical reading practice return a "difference," meaning perhaps that the instability of the original position becomes an ironic "return to its own incomprehensions, to its riddles disguised as knowledge"(Ellsworth, 148).

The notion of radical reading practices is taken up Deborah P. Britzman in her essay "Is there a Queer Pedagogy? Or, Stop Reading Straight." While readers are presented with texts (books, panoramic views, tourist markers, etc.), what approaches to textuality tap into the centrifugal velocity of semiotics? Britzman offers a variety of suggestions, including a pedagogy based upon limits, ignorance, and reading practices. She emphasizes reading for alterity, in dialogue with the text, and as a theory of reading(163-165). "How one reads, matters"(163). Semiotically, this is the ground covered by Barthes and

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Derrida (as suggested throughout this essay), but Britzman brings these concerns into a pedagogical focus. “Reading practices might well read all categories as unstable, all experiences as constructed, all reality as having to be imagined, all knowledge as provoking uncertainties, misrecognitions, ignorances, and silences”(164).

For the designer of an edutainment experience, is it possible to construct the social space surrounding high-level observation decks around a curriculum of subversive ellipses rather than ideological circles? De Certeau contrasts the high-level voyeur with those “walking in the city.” For him, walking is a kind of poetics, in which ones poetic biography is written in between the names of places and the spaces without names. So, a walker in New York City create asyndochic elision, fragments which refuse a whole in that it “disconnects them by eliminating the conjunctive or the consecutiveit undoes continuity and undercuts its plausibility”(101). But, as the walker approaches the specific place of the tower, and enters, and ascends, continuity editing (as Ellsworth uses the concept) defines the spatial arrangements until the pent-ultimate moment of the Tower experience: the viewing of the view. The experience becomes a repressed and repressive panopticism and the viewing pleasure a scopic fetish in which the simulacrum of the city becomes a simple text of a “reality” whose readability becomes a satisfaction.

Necessarily, the concluding moment of the high-level observatory experience is the return to the city. The elevator descends, perspective becomes daily street perspective, and the panorama turned out to be exactly what was expected, so the return is literally a circular one. Is there a way to disrupt this circle and create an edutainment curriculum which is ambivalent and asynechdochal? In one strict sense, ultimately perhaps not. As suggested by Barthes, all writing tends towards self-referentially and thus the monologic. And, the city must be left to see the city, so the model of the “walker” can only suggest limited alterations.

Nonetheless, I can begin by suggesting a comparison between the Gettysburg National Battlefields Tower and the Renaissance Center in Detroit, Michigan.² To enjoy either tower, one must leave the

² The fieldwork for these two sites was conducted on several occasions

generalized area as walker, enter an architecturally defined space, and then ascend along a highly monologic path (an elevator being one of the most, no doubt). Given these similar confinements, the historic mandate which the edutainment curriculum followed by the Gettysburg National Tower results in a plethora of monologic influences: markers, paths, and histories follow narratological claustrophobic threads. There is only one parking lot, one path, one history.

The Renaissance Tower is not only centrally located in a major urban environment with more of the poetical potential analyzed by de Certeau, but even once in facility the architectural space, the layout is maze-like with five small towers surrounding the 75+ floor central tower. The central tower is associated with a hotel chain, making it consistent with certain tourist ideologies, but the other towers are primarily private offices, suites, and shops, so that the thousands of people who enter the center daily do so for a variety of specific personal reasons, unlike the majority of tourists in Gettysburg who are there primarily to learn about American history related to the famous battles near that Pennsylvania town.

Certainly not all of the guests to the center ascend to the observatory floor near the top of the tower, and so there is some separation as to who does so. To ascend, there is a specific ticket kiosk (as in Gettysburg) which is in the hotel, and again only two elevators. But in contrast with the Gettysburg Tower, there are no informational markers of any kind upon the viewing levels. No maps or telescopes. Nothing in the view or in the tower itself is explicitly identified in markers as noteworthy. There are some murals of the cityscape, perhaps reinforcing general panoptic tendencies. And there is an expensive restaurant, linking the viewing experience to leisure consumption. But in comparison, the narrative is loose, light, and not as politicized mode of address.

Of course, one question for the pedagogue which this comparison suggests is whether or not it is appropriate to understand the Renaissance Center as having an edutainment curriculum at all. If there appears to be a general lacking of the evidence of the selection process of

throughout 1998. Please note that the Gettysburg National Tower has since been demolished (in 2000).

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curriculum design, or of the presentation aspects of curriculum design, then what can be drawn from the comparison of the two locations?

One is the lack of ordering, of a plot, narratologically speaking, on the part of the “authors” of the Detroit observatory. One can identify as one moves from the battlefields in Gettysburg to the Tower, markers are arranged according to a fairly clear and certain evident plotting. First, the final approach to the Tower is along a single path. Then, even though the tower has four floors, the displays are organized around specific plotting decisions, including one floor having a sound show which includes necessary visits to specific stations. Another plotting device evident is the matching of displays to sights available from each window. In Detroit, the ordering of visiting windows is inherently self-selected and no plot or path is required or even recommended. Also, which elements of the view are noticed or ignored is self-selected, due to the relative lack of markers. So, like de Certeau’s walkers, guests to the Renaissance Centre are allowed more mobility in their viewing habits.

Such mobility, whether somewhat literally (or relatively, if you prefer) such as at the Renaissance Centre, or more theoretically in a pedagogical sense of implications for curriculum design, begins to suggest an approach different from the Gettysburg National Tower (which in fact is one of the most strongly narrative panoramic experiences I encountered in my fieldwork). Is it possible to design both architectural space and also edutainment markers which attempt to exploit or encourage ambivalent readings of the view? Is the only alternative the relative un-curriculum of the Renaissance Centre?

As expressed in *Teaching Positions*, Ellsworth promoted as one strategy a curriculum design which recognizes engagement with the unconscious. Calling it the third participant in pedagogical situations, she claimed it “brings two complications to the traditional pedagogical relationship. . . First, it brings a passion for ignorance, that is, resistances to knowledge. . . . Second, it brings a discourse that is neither the teacher’s nor the student’s” (63). While one of my own resistances to focusing on the unconscious comes from the paradox of teaching to that

aspects of personality which most can not be accessed,³ I do feel that Ellsworth's passion for ignorance and investigation into resistance as curricular goals contain potential for changing the nature of the production of knowledge and of knowledge as cultural capital.⁴

De Certeau contrasts the nature of the map to the nature of a tour. Maps delineate a place one might go. It is aesthetically theorized ideologies of goals and intentions. Maps always contain both inherited traditions of art and inherited traditions of ways of seeing. In a sense, they attempt to capture a place. Someone moving through the place creates a specific, one-time use-path which then defines space. So, with or without map in hand, the pilgrim on a walking tour traces a movement. The map presupposes a path and so presupposes an action. Walking the path of the map includes performing a quest for knowledge, not questing after knowledge.

I would advocate an approach to designing displays which attempt to destabilize any monologically narrow narratological view. Using computer-based medium, I have experimented with presenting images of panoramic views with a variety of other "texts" in an effort to create examples of how such displays might be realized. Photographs from the National Tower have been juxtaposed with texts from a variety of histories, including quotes from Lincoln, passages from slave narratives, and painterly renditions of Civil War battles. As a work in progress, I have taken panoramic photographs from the Hancock Tower in Boston and from cliffs in Guam and created collages with quotes (some of which appear in this essay) in an effort to make the viewer consciously aware of his/her viewing practices and what the implications of such might be. The use of abstract (or other non-Realism) art objects could both provoke the unconscious⁵ and/ or inspire a more asynecdochal viewing experience.

In effect, all of the markers describing or effecting an observation deck create a map of reality. Curriculum too creates a map of reality.

³ For example, why is it at all useful to describe the unconscious of either the student or the teacher as a third party not belonging to one of the two corporeal participants?

⁴ After that, I'll let the unconscious take care of itself, for the time being.

⁵ Of course, how we might measure that or judge that or "know" that is so problematic that even suggesting it makes me queasy.

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All are politicized. In designing information displays, creating or encouraging an ambivalent reading of the panorama would materialize according the maps of reality that are created. Irony, contradiction, personal narrative, performance and aesthetics, these will be the approaches to mapping out an ambivalent path to facilitate a poetics of viewing not mired in a panoptic regime of realism. Rather, the viewer might be forced to construct their own elliptical pilgrimage of ascent.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Theatre Studies, University of Otago, New Zealand.
E-mail address: jerry.jaffe@stonebow.otago.ac.nz



INTERACTIVE PYNCHON
Teaching Thomas Pynchon's
Crying of Lot 49
with Roleplaying Games

Brian David Phillips
National Chengchi University

INTRODUCTION

Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* is not the easiest of novels to teach in Taiwan. This is partly due to the distance in time and culture the typical Chinese university student finds him or herself from the author. The twists in the plot are often difficult for the average student to follow. There are many traditional methods which the classroom teacher may employ for overcoming the difficulties of this or other texts. These range from lecture, class discussion, to tests and examinations, and other structured methods.

One teaching technique which is little used in most literature classrooms that is very effective in making the literature come alive for the student is that of *Interactive Literature* or *Role-Playing Games (RPGs)*. In a RPG, players create fictional characters and then talk them through a story (the basic plot is designed by a *Game Master*, or *GM*, who tells the players the circumstances, setting, and conflicts in which their characters find themselves with actions resolved through the

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GM's interpretation of the rules and through randomizing factors such as die rolls). RPGs are usually thought of as belonging strictly to the realm of recreation or hobby, but the activity is readily adapted to the language and/or literature classroom. This paper will explore just how the literature teacher might employ RPG techniques when teaching Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*.

WHAT IS INTERACTIVE LITERATURE?

First, as I have demonstrated elsewhere, *Interactive Literature* should be distinguished from *Language Role Plays*, *Classroom Dramas*, and other more commonly employed classroom language learning exercises which teachers of English as a Foreign Language - including those who specialize in the teaching of literature - may be more familiar with (although these techniques are less often employed in the literature classroom). RPGs are games played on a tabletop with pencil, paper, dice (*often polyhedral*), and a large dose of imagination (*unlike the more usual language role plays which are acted out before a class, these games are non-performance oriented - a benefit for the student who is less competitive or performance apprehensive*). As noted in the introduction, players can be divided into two types: the referee (*commonly called a Game Master or GM*) and the players. The *GM* creates a scenario which he then sets in motion by explaining the situation to the players who have created *Player Characters (PCs)* to interact with one another and the *GM's* characters (*Non-Player Characters or NPCs*) during the game. Following a set of rules or guidelines, players determine the success of their actions by rolling dice and consulting tables. Sometimes players will use miniature figures placed upon the tabletop to represent themselves in the game.

In essence, RPGs are *Interactive Stories* in which the *GM* furnishes the basic plot elements (*often based in fantastic or heroic genres*) and the players shape the narrative through their actions within the context of the game. The game is played through the verbal interchange of the players, making it ideal for language learners. The literature teacher may find the games useful as a means of making a particular story come alive for the students in a way that reading does not allow. The scenario for the game is usually directly based upon the plot

of the literary piece currently being studied and the players either create characters directly based upon those found in the text or they create others who are presented with similar circumstances - the approach depending upon the time constraints of the class, the abilities of the students, and the expectations of the teacher regarding the exercise.

Because they are cooperative games, RPGs don't have *winners* or *losers* in the traditional sense of the terms. In most games - board games, card games, and dice games - there is a clearly defined way to win, and a clearly defined way to lose, and winning is the goal of the game. In RPGs, the concepts of *winning* and *losing* do not exist. The goal as a player is to "help to create a story and to have fun. You may give your character other goals, but the success of your character does not determine any sense of *winning* or *losing*. Like life, it's not so much whether you win or lose, but how you play the game" (Stratton, *What Is Role-Playing*). Players (*as PCs*) involved in an interactive literature activity don't compete against one another; they cooperate in overcoming other obstacles created by the *GM*. In an activity conducted in the literature class session, they work together to overcome the obstacles of the author, usually finding new understandings of the literary work. While playing, the students try to approach the events of the story from the perspective of the characters they create. They have their characters react as the characters would in the story, not how they would. The *GM* tries to help the characters remain "*in role*" by maintaining the tone of the original piece through their storytelling abilities. In other words, players tend to be primarily interested in the success of the characters that they create, *GMs* in the success of the game (Dayan, 1222).

Commercial RPGs can be found which are suitable for play in almost any genre. Most are based upon fantasy or heroic literature. Many are based upon films or books. Literature teachers who choose to use RPGs in their classroom may wish to create their own scenarios from one of the more common commercial systems or to develop their own game. If commercial systems are used, I suggest that the teacher learn the system well beforehand or adapt the published system to a simplistic model for classroom use.¹ In my own classes, I use a simplified form of

¹*It should be remembered that most commercial systems are written for the*

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the *Generic Universal RolePlaying System (GURPS)* basic rules by Steve Jackson with success.

BENEFITS OF RPGs IN THE LITERATURE CLASS

Role-playing has long been an important part of the EFL classroom, but is rarely seen in the literature class. For the language learning benefits of RPGs, see my "*Role-Playing Games in the English as a Foreign Language Classroom*" and *Interactive Literature and the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language: History, Theory, and Application (Roleplaying Games in the Language Classroom)*.

As Rev. Paul Cardwell outlines in his "*Role-Playing Games and the Gifted Student*," there are several language and non-language based learning skills developed directly when students become involved with interactive literature. According to Cardwell, these include but are not limited to *Following Directions, Vocabulary, Research, Independent/Self-Directed Study, Planning, Choice/Decision Making, Mental Exercise, Evaluation, Cooperation/Interaction, Creativity/Imagination, Leadership, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Predicting Consequences, Figural/Spatial Reasoning, Taking Other Points of View, Asking Questions, Ethics, Prioritizing, Interrelated Learning, and Continuity of Learning* (4-6). There is also some evidence to suggest that *role-playing* methods facilitate attitude change, increase self-concept, and produce behavioral change (Swink & Buchanan, 1179).

For the literature student, interactive literature holds both these language and non-language benefits as well as a fresh perspective on the workings of the literary piece used as the basis for the activity. The student is able to step inside the story and puzzle out the problems presented from the perspective of the characters. This is possible only

native English speaking hobbyist and not for the EFL literature student. As such, they are often much too complicated for occasional classroom use. There are a few systems that are very simple and thus appropriate for the classroom of non-native speaking non-hobbyists, these include the Ghostbusters and TWERPS systems which readily could be adapted to other genres.

to a limited extent through class discussion, solitary or group reading, viewing of film or dramatic adaptations, or even through participation in a drama based upon the piece. While a dramatic acting out of the story might put the student into the role, the lines and behavior of the character are all pre-arranged - nothing changes. In an interactive literature activity, the basic plot elements are pre-planned but the actual behavior and speech of the characters are up to the players at the time of the activity. In an RPG based upon *The Crying of Lot 49*, Oedipa Maas may or may not give the old drunken man with the tattoo on his arm some money, it's up to the student who plays the character to decide. The actual events and outcome of the story may be different than that Pynchon wrote, but in the playing of the game the students try to puzzle out the motives and characteristics of the characters, reacting to the events as they believe the characters would. Sometimes things end up the same - Oedipa still finds Mucho "changed" from his LSD trips or she still winds up at the auction house unsure if there's really a conspiracy or if she's crazy - or they wind up differently - Oedipa does not have an affair with suave lawyer Metzger or perhaps she decides she does want to join the Housewives LSD program run by Dr. Hilarius. In any case, the students are afforded the opportunity to explore the characters and gain new insights.²

COMMERCIAL SYSTEMS AND ADAPTATIONS

Commercial Role-Playing Game systems intended for the hobby industry are legion. Many of these systems are professional adaptations of literary works. For the teacher of literature they may or may not be appropriate, dependent upon the needs of the teacher and students as well as the English language proficiency of the students. For example,

²*Obviously, interactive literature activities are not appropriate to all literature classes. They take a great deal of time and preparation on the part of the teacher and require imagination and insight on the part of the students. The activity usually takes up quite a bit of classtime too - a precious commodity in the Chinese university. However, even with its drawbacks, the activity is well worth the while for the teacher willing to put forth the extra effort.*

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while Chaosium's *Pendragon* game may be the best interactive literature adaptation of the Arthurian materials, it is hardly appropriate for most EFL classes in literature - the rules are just far too complicated; however the teacher may find it possible to adapt the game and simplify it for the EFL setting. Since more than one teacher at NCCU currently uses RPGs in conversation classes, we have informally agreed to use a common system so that students need only be exposed to the basic rules once. We are using the *Generic Universal RolePlaying System (GURPS)* by Steve Jackson Games as it's an universal system capable of simulating any genre of fiction. For the lower level classes, we use a simplification of the basic rules while upper level courses use the entire rules set (particularly in my Junior/Senior Interactive Role-Playing course devoted to RPGs). So, if I were teaching some of the King Arthur texts (and I will be doing so the next time my *Literature & Film* course is offered), I would adapt the *GURPS Camelot* materials for class use.³

While there is no professional adaptation of *The Crying of Lot 49* for the RPG hobby, the literature teacher has several options from which to proceed. The teacher may simply create an original basic system and proceed from there, adapting the text as necessary.

Another route is for the teacher to adapt one of the simpler playing systems in much the same way. The most easily mastered role-playing rules sets currently on the market include *The World's Easiest Role Playing System (TWERPS)*, *Dungeons & Dragons First*

³This is the same strategy I used when teaching Bram Stoker's *Dracula* in my Film & Literature course. I adapted two games, *Castle Dracula* and *Vengeance of Dracula*, written for the *Chill* horror RPG rules system to the NCCU version of the *GURPS* rules. The students read the first four chapters of the novel and then played the first game (which is a direct adaptation of those chapters). We then continued with our reading and viewed three separate films based upon the novel - with extensive classroom discussion and lecture. After the unit was finished, we played the second game which is set seven years after the events of the novel. By the end of the unit, the students (and the teacher, for that matter) had a much deeper and comprehensive understanding of several approaches to the novel than the simple lecture-test format could have supplied.

Quest⁴, DragonQuest, HeroQuest, Over the Edge, and Ghostbusters. While TWERPS certainly lives up to its name, it is at best a simplified combat system and hardly capable of expressing much of the variety of characterization found in Pynchon's novel. The various "quest" games are appropriate for beginners to interactive literature, but they're systems will only work with fantasy and/or sword & sorcery stories - certainly not the appropriate system for a Pynchon novel. They also have the added drawback of requiring polyhedral dice to play (such as four-, eight-, ten-, twelve-, and twenty-sided dice). While the Ghostbusters game is intended for playing interactive stories based upon the characters and events found in the Ghostbusters films, the system itself is very easily learned and adapted for playing in other genres.⁵ The system would be appropriate for a Pynchon game, although it still falls short in some respects. The Over the Edge game has at its core a very simple system which can easily be ported to other backgrounds. However, the teacher would need to cut out the background that comes with the game and separate it from the rules explanations - the OTE world is very psychosurreal and extremely interesting, but not Pynchon (actually, it's based heavily upon the works of William Burroughs - not explicitly but implicitly).

A third alternative is to adapt the Pynchon setting using one of the more advanced - but better supported - RPG rules systems. While not the best alternative for a one-shot game intended to be played only once or twice in a semester, this is such a procedure does work well for a class in which the teacher intends to use RPGs fairly often as a supplement to the literary discussions or once or twice in depth. There are a few good choices when it comes to this sort of multipurpose rules choice. For the multigenre or multi-literary work class, an universal

⁴Another of TSR's games, the Dungeons & Dragons basic game comes with a tutorial pack of lesson sets for teaching one how to play the game. While inappropriate for the literature teacher, this set may come in very handy for the language teacher employing the game for conversational purposes.

⁵I have used this system with good results for several genres of play. Lower level students find it easy to master and begin playing in - allowing more time to be spent on their stories and language and less on learning the rules.

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system such as *GURPS* or *HERO* are appropriate. Of these two, *GURPS* already supports several literary adaptations which the teacher and students may use as models for their own interactive literature explorations. The *Basic Roleplaying System* which serves as the basis for all of Chaosium's games might also prove appropriate as they have published the *Pendragon*, *Elric*, and *Call of Cthulhu* adaptations using this system. These are all excellent adaptations worthy of modeling. Game Designers Workshop also has their own house system, but it has not been used to adapt any literary works and thus provides no models to work from when adapting Pynchon's novel. Of the systems mentioned here, I prefer the *GURPS* option as it has the most streamlined and easy to learn process for literary adaptation, making it more useable by the non-hobbyist teacher.

THE PROCESS OF ADAPTATION

Once the teacher has decided on which system to use for an interactive literature adaptation of *The Crying of Lot 49*, there are a few definite steps he or she must go through in the adaptation process. In any case there are several distinct methods which could be used. We will now examine the more popular methods and procedures.

GOALS

One of the major elements behind adapting any literary work to an RPG is the art of maintaining the atmosphere of the original text while transferring the plot to the new medium of story telling. This is just as true when adapting *The Crying of Lot 49*. If the students have already read the piece then setting the mood is easier, but there are also benefits to playing the game before they have had a chance to read the work. In this case, setting the mood becomes more difficult. Steffan O'Sullivan, a veteran RPG designer who has adapted several literary works to games, has this advice:

I've translated a few books to roleplaying, with mixed success. The major problem is setting the atmosphere for people that haven't read the book. You'll need to be

a good storyteller to pull that off. While doing that, you have to impart enough information that the characters would know, without overloading them. This is a fine balance.

In his own adaptations, Paul Cunningham is less concerned about the details of the story than conveying the mood and general feel of the piece:

I usually am not too concerned about getting the exact details of people, places, or things into the game, as long as I get the general feel of the world and the kind of adventures that take place there. For example, if I were to run a game in Middle-Earth, I could care less whether the Shire had a pond nearby called Gladwin Pool. The books don't say so, but it's a nice detail and it saves me a lot of time trying to find out what is exactly around the Shire.

While this sort of loose adaptation might seem counterproductive to the literature teacher who wishes the students to understand Pynchon's ***The Crying of Lot 49*** the way Pynchon wrote it, it could actually be more successful in allowing the teacher to experiment with ways to help the students *feel* Oedipa's frustration and state of mind. The crux of Cunningham's approach is that "as long as you get the atmosphere of your game similar to that of the book, you'll be happy, and your players will probably be even more so" [Cunningham].

GENERAL METHODS

When Joshua Levy adapts a literary work to a role-playing game, he follows the following steps:

- A. Read the book, recording page numbers of character and plot information. This includes anything regarding the setting which might be relevant as well as skills and abilities the characters might have (for instance, we know that Oedipa is in her late twenties and has research skills).
- B. Write up an introduction for the players which would cover how to create their characters and any background

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information they might need - the details needed would be different for those who have read the book than for those who have not (the teacher controls this through the design of the course).

- C. Write up the rules modifications (for the game master, particularly if the teacher will not be running the game).
- D. Translate the things found in step (A) into the game system.
- E. Reread the book, checking for contradictions and omissions.

This approach, while simple, is rather effective for most adaptations and would work just as well with an adaptation of any of Pynchon's novels, particularly *The Crying of Lot 49*.

GOOD EXAMPLES OF LITERARY ADAPTATION

One of the best published RPG adaptations of a literary work is the *Thieves World* campaign setting published by Chaosium and based upon the works under the same name by Robert Lynn Asprin. Any teacher working on a Pynchon adaptation would do well to consult these game settings first.

There are also several other excellent works that one can look at such as the *Pendragon*, *GURPS Camelot*, *GURPS Riverworld*, *GURPS Witchworld*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and *Etric* adaptations mentioned on pages eight through nine above. One game in particular should be of interest to the Pynchon adaptation writer/teacher: *GURPS Illuminati*, loosely based upon the novels of Robert Anton Wilson. This book captures much of the flavor, mood, and setting of Pynchon's conspiracy novel and could very easily serve as a background for any classroom interactive roleplaying done with Pynchon's characters and story.

CONCLUSIONS

While an experiment in interactive literature may be more work for the literature teacher, there are certain advantages such an approach might have when exploring works such as Thomas Pynchon's *The*

Crying of Lot 49. For the right class and the right teacher, there are various ways of handling the adaptation: original game system, adapted game system, and conversions. Any of several published systems might be appropriate although those which are easier to learn are more useful for the classroom. I would suggest either the very minimalist **TWERPS** rules for the teacher who does not want to spend too much time on the project and is unfamiliar with table top conversational RPGs or the more advanced and highly adaptable **GURPS** rules for the more advanced class and the teacher more familiar with the activity.

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CORRESPONDENCE

*Brian David Phillips, English Department, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan,
<http://www.briandavidphillips.com>, E-mail address: brian@briandavidphillips.com.*

THE USE OF STRUCTURED GOAL SETTING IN SIMULATION DESIGN

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

ABSTRACT

Games are written for different purposes: LARPs to entertain, Serious Games to inform and educate, and simulations as training tools or to discover how people might respond to different situations. No matter the reason, they all need to keep the participants actively involved and interested in the scenario. A failure to maintain interest means that the simulation or game fails in its purpose. Structured goal setting, as described in Locke & Latham (2002), is proposed as a technique for maintaining player focus and interest, and for putting the plot into the hands of the players. Relevant research is reviewed, and application within a variety of games is discussed. Suggested methods of applying goal setting to simulation design are provided.

STRUCTURED GOAL SETTING IN SIMULATION DESIGN

Games are written for a variety of purposes. Most LARPs are for entertainment; Serious Games are written to “inform and educate,” as well as entertain. Simulations are run to discover how people might react in a situation or to train participants in appropriate behaviors. For the

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sake of this discussion, the terms, “simulation,” “game,” and “serious game,” are used interchangeably.

A key element of any simulation, whether done as a LARP for entertainment, or as a serious game, is keeping the participants acting within the game. That is, participants need to suspend disbelief and act within the parameters and world of the simulated environment, not outside it. When the participants move outside the constructed world, they start to see the figurative plasterboard and duct tape holding the game together; this acts to destroy disbelief and undermine the game.

Related to this problem is that of keeping the participants focused on accomplishing their objectives within the simulation. The strength of a well-designed game is that it keeps the players actively involved with one another and with the fictional world of the game. When players lose interest in their objectives, they are likely to become bored, disruptive, or even leave the game. As the number of participants falls off, the consensual reality of the game is slowly unraveled. Boredom can, in other words, become a contagion that undermines and destroys the game for everyone.

A final related problem is that games need to be resilient: if a key player does not show up, leaves early for some unexpected reason (e.g. illness), or is eliminated in the course of play, the game needs to continue on. The remaining players need to be sufficiently invested in their objectives to continue to pursue those objectives, to be motivated to develop creative solutions, and to devise unexpected ways of looking at the problem.

In addition to all these needs, for a game to be successful, the participants need to have fun. In a game written purely for entertainment, this is obvious. However, it is just as true in a serious game or educational game. In both those scenarios, if the participants are not enjoying the experience, they will not focus on it, and the lessons they are supposed to learn will be lost.

So the big question at this point is: is there a mechanism or game mechanic that will satisfy all these needs, and also be easy to use and easy for the GameMasters to implement. Optimally, the solution should be transparent to the players, require no special rules or complex mechanics, and little or no run-time intervention.

Fortunately, there is a simple means of meeting all of the above constraints: based on the personal experience of the author and a study of the psychological research, it appears that structured goal setting, when properly applied, is the best tool for the job.

REVIEWING RELEVANT RESEARCH

Structured goal setting, described in Locke & Latham (2002), provides a comprehensive mechanism for achieving the desired results. Structured goal setting creates a number of desirable effects:

- Focus – Clear goals naturally direct the mind toward goal directed tasks.
- Increased energy – Clear goals are energizing. When someone has a clear, well-constructed goal, they tend to exhibit a high level of energy when pursuing goal related tasks.
- Increased persistence – The clearer the goal, the more likely someone will continue to pursue it in the face of adversity. This is a clear advantage in a game scenario when different groups of players may have contradictory or conflicting goals.
- Decreased distractibility – Events and information not relevant to the accomplishment of the goal is more easily ignored.
- Improved task related learning and discovery – when something does not go as planned, or when unexpected obstacles surface, people with clear goals are considerably more likely to make considerable effort to devise alternative means of accomplishing the goal.

In addition, accomplishing a well-constructed, meaningful goal can be incredibly enjoyable (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and builds self-efficacy (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Both of these last two points deserve further explanation.

As Locke & Latham (2002) point out, a key component of a well structured goal is that progress on the goal is obtained from the environment. In other words, there is, if not continual, then at least regular feedback available on progress toward the goal. Because this

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feedback is a natural part of the process of goal accomplishment, a person does not need to constantly evaluate where they are; instead, they can focus themselves totally on the goal-directed behavior. This produces a state of total absorption known as flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). When in a flow state, a person's concentration is totally taken up by the activity and there is simply no room for anything else to intervene. The experience is described variously as "exhilarating," or intensely enjoyable.

Self-efficacy, as distinct from self-esteem, is the belief that one's actions matter and that one has the ability to influence a situation. Bandura & Locke (2003) point out not just that accomplishing goals leads to self-efficacy, but that belief about whether the goal was accomplished and how well also strongly influences self-efficacy. The structure of the goal therefore makes a significant difference to the lessons that a person takes away from the experience of goal accomplishment.

Goal setting when applied to groups is a bit more complex than when applied to individuals. The most important points are that group members must believe the goals of the group, and believe that they will benefit through seeing the group accomplish its goals (Brown & Latham, 2002). When individuals believe that their personal goals are better served by ignoring the group and going their own way, they will tend to do just that, despite all exhortations and pep talks to the contrary (Seijits & Latham, 2000; Schein, 1990). However, certain styles of charismatic communication can increase allegiance to the group and support of the group's goals (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996), specifically reverse goal chaining (Balzac, 2004). Support for reverse goal chaining as a way to increase agreement with goals can also be found in research conducted by the Harvard Negotiation Project (Ury, 1991, and Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 1991).

DISCUSSION

Structured goal setting appears to meet many of the needs of well-designed simulation. The obvious question, of course, is whether structured goal setting has been used successfully to design individual and group goals in simulations. In fact, goal setting techniques were used

very successfully in a number of games such as *Operation: Atlantis*, *Secrets of the Necronomicon*, *Dragon*, *Nexus*, *Game of Empire*, and *Long Ago and Far Away*. Structured goal setting had mixed results in *Stopover*, *Starfire*, and the *National Capitol Region Pandemic Flu Exercise*. The latter was a serious game, attended by members of the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Health, the US military, and local businesses and non-profits. All of these games were written or co-written by this author.

Examining the different situations and comparing the games where goal setting produced the results indicated by the research and where it did not, several points become obvious. Player goals needed to be carefully structured to provide strong goal-path clarity: in other words, it had to be very clear to the players that the actions they needed to take would lead them to the desired goals. Goal-path clarity is known to increase motivation (Yukl, 2002) and focus (Locke & Latham, 2002), so this result is not terribly surprising. However, what is much more significant is that goal-path clarity needs to be much greater than the game writers originally thought.

A key element of building goal-path clarity turned out to be the style in which information was presented. Consistent with Kirkpatrick & Locke (1996), one of the most critical pieces was the clear, vivid, description of how each team's goals would change the world and benefit the team both collectively and individually. Whether that goal was world domination by the Secret World Organization for Retribution and Destruction (SWORD), in *Operation: Atlantis*, or the destruction of the world by Cthulhu in *Secrets of the Necronomicon*, the key to successfully motivating the group started with the dramatic presentation of the vision. Each participant knew exactly how their individual needs would be satisfied by helping the group accomplish its goals. This held true even in *Secrets*, where for the Cthulhu cult to succeed meant certain death for the cultists as well as everyone else.

It is highly likely that the presentation of the goal result as a vision of success, coupled with the breakdown into the goal path, produced the equivalent of reverse-chained goals. Because reverse-chained goals cause a person to become significantly more committed to each individual goal along the way, the self-concordance, or personal relevance, of the goals are also increased. The high levels of goal-path

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clarity also likely serve to increase implementation intentions, or the desire to accomplish a specific step at a specific point. Self-concordance of goals, especially when combined with implementation intentions, drastically increases goal commitment and completion (Koestner et al, 2002).

When goals were clear and well-defined, player enjoyment increased dramatically, as one would expect. Because social interaction is itself a flow experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), adding the goal structure of the game world dramatically increased the intensity of the flow experience. Vague goals or the lack of a clear group vision, on the other hand, decreased player enjoyment even more dramatically than clear goals and vision boosted enjoyment. Enjoyment is a subjective measure, gauged by the intensity of player involvement versus players sitting around complaining, and the level of positive versus negative feedback during and after the game.

Considering the connections between goals, beliefs about success, and self-efficacy (Bandura & Locke, 2003), a clear implication for educational games is that teaching a skill must be accompanied by the opportunity to use the skill successfully in the game. It is not enough to merely present the information; rather, the player must take the skill and apply it successfully in a variety of situations in order to develop the belief that they can apply the skill. Further, it appears to be important as well that the background of the character being played speak of the character's prior successes. This appears to help the player develop self-efficacy within the role, which then makes them more likely to be successful.

Of the games that demonstrated successful goal-oriented behaviors, there were several key points in common.

- A dramatic and clear vision of the outcome, which includes a description of how the team and its members will benefit from accomplishing their goals.
- Team's big goal broken down into subgoals, and it is clear which team member is responsible for which piece.
- The goal structure is further detailed for each individual team member.

- Goals that complete prior to the end of the game feed into or generate further goals that will carry the character and the team through to the end of the game.
- The following questions are answered for each person:
 - Exactly what is the character seeking to accomplish? Do what extent does the character have control over the outcome, versus needing to recruit others?
 - How will the character and the team know that they are making progress? How will they know if they are succeeding or failing? In other words, how will the game provide the players ongoing feedback?
 - What steps are necessary? What resources? How big is the goal? The bigger the goal and the more resources required, the more other players need to be involved, and hence the more intricate the plot can become.
 - For each character, how will their actions matter to the game? How does pursuing their goals help them to become significant characters in the game? How will their activities benefit them and their team?
 - How will the character break up a large goal? What triggering events or activities in the game will interact with the goal? Is there a specific time or event in the game that puts a deadline on the goal? If the goal triggers significantly before the end of the game, how will it feed into the remainder of the game?

The proper use of structured goal setting has tremendous potential to improve game quality and strengthen the level of interaction. It is a powerful tool to maintain player interest and enjoyment. It does take some work on the part of the game writers to use it effectively, but the results are well worth the effort.

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CORRESPONDENCE

7Steps Ahead, Stow, Massachusetts, United States, <http://www.stevebalzac.com>, E-mail address: steve@7stepsahead.com.

A Critical Appreciation of THE GREEN BOOK by Nathan Hook

Michael Cheng
National Chengchi University

I just directed a LARP. There were 27 people dashing around a room full of vampires and fairies, aliens and immortals, secret agents and criminals. They plotted, spied, counterplotted and killed each other, and in the end they saved the world. For those of us who have experienced LARPs as a chance to escape into a fantasy realm, stepping into the scenarios of *The Green Book* can be a shocking and intense experience. How often do your LARPs suggest using a safe word?

The potential need of a safe word becomes apparent when we see the complete title of Hook's compilation of three psychologically focused scenarios: *The Green Book: Psycho-dramatic role-play scenarios. Volume 1: love, despair and truth.*

In *The Green Book*, Hook pushes the players to focus on the emotions their characters must face as they act out a scene. And the type of emotions? These are all painful, dark, heart rending emotions. In his introduction, Hook explains that:

“These scenarios are designed to tackle difficult serious material. Falling out with your lover is more far scary than fighting monsters and the blackness of depression is worse than the darkest pit in the darkest dungeon. As a good friend said to me, role-playing is dangerous. Find your own limits, have the confidence to

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test them, and tread carefully when doing so.”

Looking inside *The Green Book*, we find three short scenarios. These are not meticulous plotted scenarios, with rigidly defined characters. Instead we find frameworks that guide the players in creating their own characters, allowing the players to infuse their characters with their own darkness, their own personal fears, shadows, and memories of betrayal.

The scenarios are short and can be completed in about an hour, and are designed for from 3-6 players. The smallest can be played with only two players without an organizer, although it is designed for three players; the largest only needs 3-6 players along with an organizer. The scenarios are also simple to run without a lot of physical preparation, but they do require an investment of psychological preparation.

The first scenario is *Passion Fruit*, in which the players experience the turmoil a loving relationship undergoes when one partner is unfaithful. There is no rigid arc to follow to win the game, no secret surprise twists to the characters. All players read through the scenario and define who their characters are before play commences.

Next *Hooks* introduces what he calls a “hyperfocus” technique for preparing the players to accept the real emotions their characters will experience in the scenario by visualizing their fellow actors as people for whom they have real attractions.

“The aim here is to create a real sense of emotional attraction for the target, and a real emotional experience for you. The ‘story’ would work fine if you merely pretended this, but the drama and tension will be stronger and everyone actually feels it.”

Hook explains the process of the “hyperfocus” technique as follows:

“Before play starts but after you have all created characters sit down and take a good long look at the person playing the character you will be attracted to. Hold them in your mind’s eye and find one small real aspect of the other player you find attractive – perhaps their smile, or their hair, or their sense of humour.

Focus your thoughts for that person on that narrow point to begin with to the exclusion of other features, and let your admiration for them grow around it.”

After using the *hyperfocus* technique to make the scenario emotionally real, the participants act out a series of scenes that allow the participants to work through their feelings and issues about an affair in the open. The players end up being able to see the situation from another person’s perspective. Hooks sums up *Passion Fruit* with these words:

“Unlike many role-play games, this is about an everyday series of events. This isn’t fantasy, it isn’t soap opera, and while it can be intense I don’t think it can be called ‘brutal.’ Love is a positive thing, isn’t it, so this is about nothing more than positive emotions?
Be honest and play nicely.”

The second scenario, *Black Dog*, is about depression. It is designed for one organizer and 3-6 players with 4-5 being optimal. It is best if only the organizer reads the entire scenario.

The players or the organizer create an identity called the Protagonist. Some sample Protagonists are provided that can be used to play the scenario or can be used as models for creating your own Protagonist. Each player takes on one aspect of the Protagonist, such as the Protagonist’s role in a family or identity at work. Each player is responsible for facing the trials one aspect of the Protagonist’s character must face. For example, one player may be required to confront how the Protagonist’s career failure, while another player lives out how the Protagonist’s family is deteriorating. This constant bombardment of bad news will lead the Protagonist to depression and finally utter despair.

I’m not sure if the mechanics of the scenario will work, in which the players take turns being the Protagonist and the remaining players pile on abuse, criticism, and bad news, but the scenario is unique and emotionally challenging.

The final scenario is *Balanced Scales*, in which the players confront the consequences of taking a human life. The scenario is designed for 4 players and takes about 1 hour. The players act out the taking of a life in

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flashbacks from the perspectives of the defendant and the prosecutor in a trial like setting.

The defendant will, for example, provide a simple narration of the events that lead to the killing, which the Killer and Victim flesh out as they act out the scene. Neither the actors nor the narrator are fully in control of the scene, which creates the dramatic tension.

In summary, I found the first scenario, Passion Fruit, to be the most compelling. Reading it was an intense experience, and I could see the potential for raw rending emotions to play out.

Personally, I felt that there was no way I would want to participate in this, but I also felt a voyeuristic curiosity in seeing how the scenes would play out if others were doing the acting. And then after further thought, maybe, one day, I would want to try out these scenarios.

The Green Book may not be everyone's cup of tea, but Hook succeeds in creating the opportunity for participants to experience intense and painful emotions. I think the *hyperfocus* technique is an especially effective way to prepare the players to invest themselves emotionally in their players. These scenarios are not highly scripted and detailed, but guides for the players to create their own characters, characters that are personal and in which they can easily invest themselves emotionally.

If you have faced pain in your past and want to confront the issues that lead to the pain, or if you are just interested in experiencing emotional suffering, *The Green Book* offers a unique role playing experience.

CORRESPONDENCE

Michael Cheng, instructor, English Department, National Chengchi University; Taipei, Taiwan., E-mail address: mikecc@nccu.edu.tw.

JOKER QUEST

A Storytelling Interactive Drama Scenario

for one player

Nathan Hook
The Open University

PREPARATION & SETUP

This game uses one normal deck of playing cards. No other equipment is needed.

Randomly select a picture card from the deck – this will represent your Protagonist.

Shuffle the deck, and pull out the bottom half. Shuffle one Joker into these cards, then place them on the bottom of the deck, so that the joker is somewhere in the bottom half.

Decide on a genre / paradigm for your story, one that involves a heroic journey or quest. Examples are given below.

Deal out five cards. These form your starting ‘hand’ of cards and are referred to here as such, but it’s easier to lay them out face up on the table rather than holding them.

Start by describing your character based on their card and starting hand – see ‘What the Cards mean’ and the example below



FLOW OF PLAY

The objective for the Protagonist is to journey until they find the object of their quest, represented by the joker card.

Turn over the top card of the deck. This represents some kind of challenge or obstacle that the Protagonist faces. See 'What the cards mean' and tell of the story of how the Protagonists approaches this obstacle.

You then play one or more number of cards from your hand, stopping when the total value of the cards added together is more than the value of the challenge. Tell the story of how using these heroic traits the Protagonist over comes the obstacle. If you lack the cards in hand to do this, the Protagonist has failed.

Remember the number the obstacle was exceeded by. The Protagonist is now able to journey up to this distance through the deck. Start turning over the cards from the deck, one at a time. You will need to stop on one of them and face it as the next obstacle, but you can choose which one you stop on. You could press on as far as you can go, or you could stop early because you have drawn a low value card which you'd rather face it as the next obstacle rather than an unknown card.

Once you have decided to stop, face this card as the Protagonist's next obstacle, as before.



DRAWING A JOKER

When the Joker is drawn, the Protagonist has caught a glimpse or found a clue of what it is they are seeking. This ends the current act.

Shuffle up all the remaining cards with the used cards (but keep out your hand, and any picture cards that have already come up). Cut this new deck in half, and shuffle the joker back into the bottom half of the deck.

Begin the next round as before. When the joker is found the third time, the quest is completed, and the Protagonist wins.



PICTURE CARDS

Picture cards represent encounters with allies, friends and mentors along the Protagonist's journey. When a picture card is drawn for any reason, set that card to one side, draw and add one card to the Protagonist's hand – this the help given by this ally, and then draw a replacement card from the deck and carry on. The picture card itself and the gained card do not count as a 'card drawn.' Tell the story of meeting this ally / mentor.

If table space allows, place the picture card with the card in hand it added. When the card is used, include in the story how the ally is 'spent,' used up, goes away or sacrificed.

WHAT THE CARDS MEAN

Cards in your hand represent positives traits of the Protagonist. Cards drawn from the deck represent obstacles or challenges that the Protagonist faces. The higher the number is, the more powerful that trait or obstacle.

♣ **Clubs** refers to the element of **fire**. In the Protagonist's hand it refers to **physical traits**, such as strength, speed or endurance. When dealt from the deck, it refers to physical obstacles, such as a hostile foes or difficult terrain.

♦ **Diamonds** refers to the element of **earth**. In the Protagonist's hand it refers to **objects**, such as personal wealth, a good horse or good set of tools. When dealt from the deck, it refers to obstacles that tax such resources, such as a chasm that requires a bridge to be built, or a toll that must be paid.

♥ **Hearts** refers to the element of **water**. In the Protagonist's hand it refers to **emotional traits** (and/or spiritual traits), such as courage, compassion or purity. When dealt from the deck, it refers to obstacles that challenge these, such as temptations or self-doubt.

♠ **Spades** refers to the element of **Air**. In the Protagonist's hand it

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refers to **mental traits**, such as Wisdom, knowledge or intuition. When dealt from the deck, it refers to mental obstacles, such as a puzzle to solve, or a riddle contest to fight.



EXAMPLE GENRES TO SET YOUR STORY IN

Sword & Sorcery,
Folklore & Fairytale,
Wild West,
Modern Superheroes,
Space Opera,
Spy Action Movie,

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Genre chosen: Arthurian Legend

Protagonist: King of Diamonds – ‘an old wealthy Baron’

Starting Hand: 8♣, 9♦, 4♦, 9♠, 7♠, - ‘well equipped and learned, strong but lacking in feelings. A miser perhaps’

First Obstacle: 10♥ – ‘The Baron must find the courage to leave the comfort of his home’

Resolution: 9♠ and 4♦ – ‘The knight researches the course he must travel and puts on his finest armour, which empowers him to overcome his fear.’

Difference: $(9 + 4) - 10 =$ up to 3 moves.

Draw: King of Hearts, which adds 8♦ to his hand – ‘Merlin inspires the night onward, and gives him a magic item’ (doesn’t count as a move)

Draw: 10♣ (first move)

Draw: 4♠ (second move, but player decides to stop since this is a low card) – ‘The Baron must find a route around the Castle of Peril.’

Resolution: 8♣ – ‘The Knight uses his strength to wade through across a swamp to go round.’

Difference: $(8) - 4 =$ up to 4 moves.

Draw: 8♠ (first move)

Draw: 5♥ (second move)

Draw: 2♦ (third move, but player decides to stop since this is a low card) – ‘The knight comes to a toll bridge, where he must pay to cross.’

DESIGNER NOTES

I was prompted to create Joker-Quest in response to an open contest by Emily Care-Boss to create solitaire RPGs.

<http://rpgsolitairechallenge.blogspot.com/>

The strong influence on my design was Vogler’s (1998) interpretation on Campbell’s (1949) Mythic structure, the same theory I used to develop my Passion Fruit scenario published in the Green Book. My feeling was that a ‘storytelling’ game was the most appropriate sort of roleplaying for a solo player game. While I could have tried to write a more introspective immersive solo game, I felt that would only appeal to the most dedicated immersionists.

I’d toyed with the idea of using normal playing cards to control story flow before, but never to this extent. Considering the concept of a ‘journey’ I came up with the notional of ‘digging’ through a deck of cards for a target to represent a journey.

I played around with a deck of cards for a little while, tossing ideas back and forth. An initial idea that challenges had to be faced by the matching suit was far too restrictive. Starting hand size also varied, since that was an easy way to adjust the challenge of ‘winning’ the game.

The real strength of thinking of it in abstract Campbellian terms is that unlike the other competition entries, I could present the game without locking it into a particular genre.

The meanings of the different suits were adapted from actual Cartomancy; the elemental meanings are the same as the equivalent suits in a tarot deck. I did consider including a more complex table of correspondences (such as to social classes, humours, etc) but felt this was over complicated. People familiar with such concepts are quite able to include or be inspired by those models in any case without my instruction.

Nathan Hook

In terms of the contest, the drawback I found was that the game didn't match the set contest categories very well. I managed to submit it under the 'use stuff lying around your house' category. Joker-Quest won an 'honourable mention' from the Judge, with one of the criticisms being it didn't use very much of what was lying around (and paradoxically, the judge also pointed out the strength that it was easily portable and could be played anywhere).

After the contest I sharpened the text slightly, added additional notes about narrating the loss of allies (previously unmentioned, if implied). None of the hard 'game mechanics' were actually changed.

The overall design time was extremely short, perhaps 2-3 hours. Again, I was partly inspired by a separate contest (that I didn't submit to), which was to write in 24 hours. Inspiration happens quickly when it comes.

Possible lines of future development: (all of which outside the bounds of the original contest)

- two-player opposed play.
- A co-operative party based version where everyone has a deck of cards each and the game is made a lot more challenging but the protagonists are able to help each other out.
- Combined these two into a party vs dungeon keeper style game.

REFERENCES

'The Writer's Journey,' Vogler, 1992
The Hero with a Thousand Faces, Campbell, (1949)
Wikipedia was used as a reference for research on Cartomancy.

CORRESPONDENCE

Nathan Hook, , <http://nathanhook.netti.net/>, E-mail address: hook_nathan@hotmail.com.

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.

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

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Dr. Scott Beattie
Editor, Journal of Interactive Drama
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