

Assignment 3 Reflection

Requirement 1

The virtual story contains 15 rooms. First, the tiles in each room adding meaning. For example, the tiles of the main building convey that the room is indoors (see Figure 1), the grass field tiles convey that the room is naturalistic (see Figure 2) and the dark tiles conveys the research facility in the basement (see Figure 3). Second, the colour palate choice further emphasizes the first point. By defining the rooms, it adds a sense of familiarity allowing the player to predict the possible sprites and items that can be found in each room. Third, this is similar to the idea of “story location translator” where the room matches what can be found inside such as the example of the pizza maker found outside the pizza store (Riedl, 2016). For example, it is logical that indoor items such as fridges or beds are found in the building (see Figure 1), the trees and the large tank is found outside the building (see Figure 2), and the hidden research material is found in the basement of the building being the research facility (see Figure 3).

On the other hand, not all visual elements evoke story association. The use of the flashing arrows, similar to the blue arrows in *Grand Theft Auto III* (DMA Design, 2001) demonstrate “extradiegetic indices” guiding the player to throughout the story without contributing to the storyline (Fernandez-Vara, 2011).

In addition, 11 rooms are used to create the video which should not count towards the room count. This allows visual communication of information, unlike the sprites which communicates through dialogs due to the limitation of graphics. (see Figure 4).

Requirement 2

The sprites and items will have dialog attached to them in order to tell the protagonist information about the location of the game world and what happened prior to the player's arrival through interaction, resulting in a non-linear exploration of the game. This is similar to Porpentine's "Their Angelic Understanding" (n.d.) where the player interacts with the keywords through clicks. Furthermore, the information given by the sprites and items requires interpretation by the player. Examples would be the diary being played by the computer which tells a biographical version of the past through the author's perspective (see Figure 5), the pet that explains that no human being has been around for the past 20 years (see Figure 6), the War Machine conveying that there has been a war threatening human existence (see Figure 7), or radio updating the player about the daily forecast (see Figure 8). Through these interactions, the player should have been able to figure out parts of the past world and how it resulted in the futuristic state through warfare. The indirect storytelling used by the sprites is similar to the NPC in "Balloon Diaspora" (ASDF), where the NPC indirectly conveys that balloons are important in that game world. In addition, Super Computer (see Figure 9) is the only sprite that offers direct information to the player. Before doing so, the player is required to interact over 25 times with the sprites preventing spoiling the game for the player. This serves as an answer key allowing the player to see if they understood the story.

Requirement 3

There are 7 items and 5 sprites that are associated with these items resulting in some control of progression. Rather than simply trying to satisfy the requirement, the relationship between the item and the sprite conveys additional information about the story. For example, the unreadable old books being the sprite and the liquid being the item (see Figure 3) convey that

data are being encrypted which raises questions for the player on why that is done. Another example would be the Broken War Machine being the sprite and the arm being the item (see Figure 10) and this raises the thought that the war must be really severe, for a powerful War Machine to lose its arm.

To further control the progression of the story, the paths in some rooms such as the hallway are very narrow and mazy and certain sprites are placed in front of other encouraging the player to interact in a certain (see Figure 11). This uses the concepts of “landscape control navigation” and “pragmatic considerations” where the landscape controls the navigation resulting in a control of progression of minor events without affecting agency as exploration (Packer et al., 2017).

Requirement 4

As previously mentioned, the rooms, sprites, items and dialog will convey information about the game world to the player. First, as previously mentioned, the rooms being the main building (see Figure 1), the naturistic outdoors (see Figure 2), and the research facility in the basement (see Figure 3) conveys the setting and time of the story. Also, when the player sees through the window (see Figure 12), they will realize that they are no longer on Earth. Second, the sprites use many different methods to convey information, whether it is directly by the Super Computer (see Figure 9), indirectly through the view of another person being the diary (see Figure 5), indirectly through dialogue that requires analysis such as the old books as previously mentioned (see Figure 3). Third, the items also tell the player a lot about the world. The futuristic food portions or the gun arm (see Figure 10) portrays the game world as not only being futuristic, but also violent which gives the player an idea of the game world’s history. Unlike the rooms which communicates through visual graphics, the sprites and the items rely on the dialog. The

combination of the elements allows the player to explore the game in a non-linear way and each interaction further deepens the players understanding of the game world which results in agency as exploration.

To ensure that the story does not have a fixed order or encounter, Jenkins' (2004) idea of spatial stories was implemented. The story is divided into larger episodes being the three different types of rooms and each individual episode will have smaller events being the sprites and items. Individually, the smaller event does not have a significant impact on the story, but together they do (Jenkins, 2004). Also the order of exploration does not influence the story since the player is piecing together information gathered in each episode (Jenkins, 2004). This is also similar to Fernandez-Vara's (2011) ideas of "history of the game world" and "detective work". In other words, the player is the detective who is piecing together story events by gather information in a non-linear order in order to gain a full comprehension of the history of the game world.

References

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Jenkins, H. (2004, October 07). Game Design as Narrative Architecture. Retrieved April 6, 2019, from <http://electronicbookreview.com/essay/game-design-as-narrative-architecture/>

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Figures

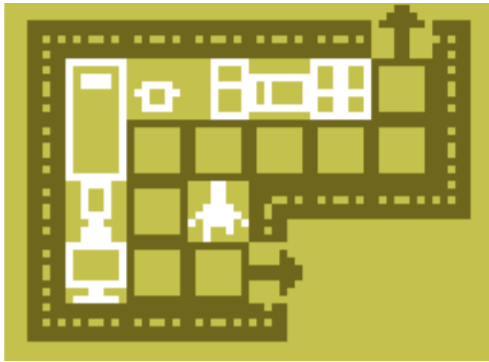


Figure 1. This is a bedroom location in the main building with a bed, computer, daily forecast, and other expected utilities.



Figure 2. This is the open grass area (technically everything is enclosed in a pod) where large and naturistic outdoor objects can be found such as the tank.

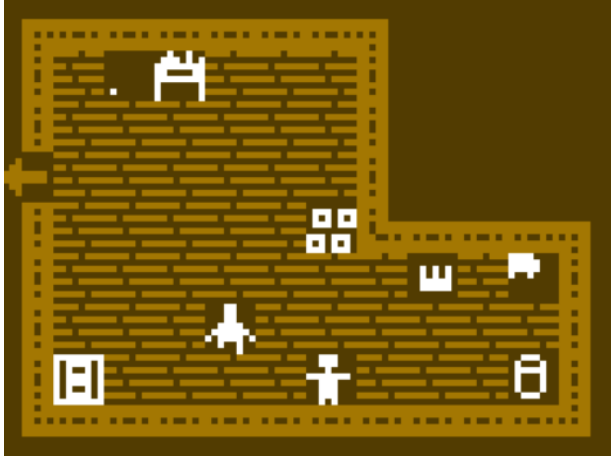


Figure 3. This is a room in the research facility located in the basement bedroom location in the main building with a bed, computer, daily forecast, and other expected utilities.

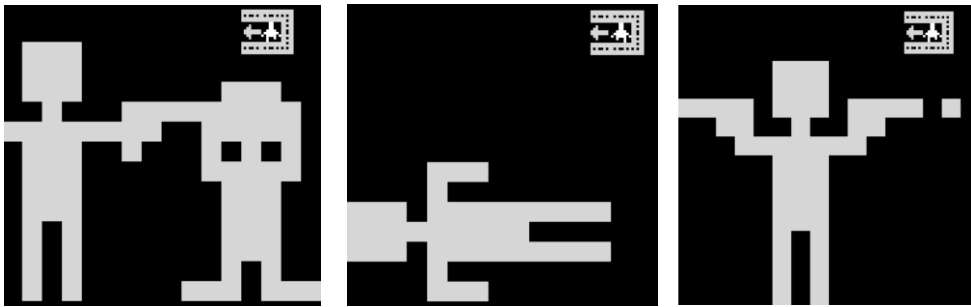


Figure 4. This is the one of the footages that is being played.



Figure 5. This is the computer playing the digital diary.



Figure 6. This is the pet who need a battery.



Figure 7. This is the War Machine.



Figure 8. This is the Daily Forecast.



Figure 9. This is final sprite, the Super Computer.



Figure 10. The player is trying to retrieve the Broken War Machine's arm through the hidden path.

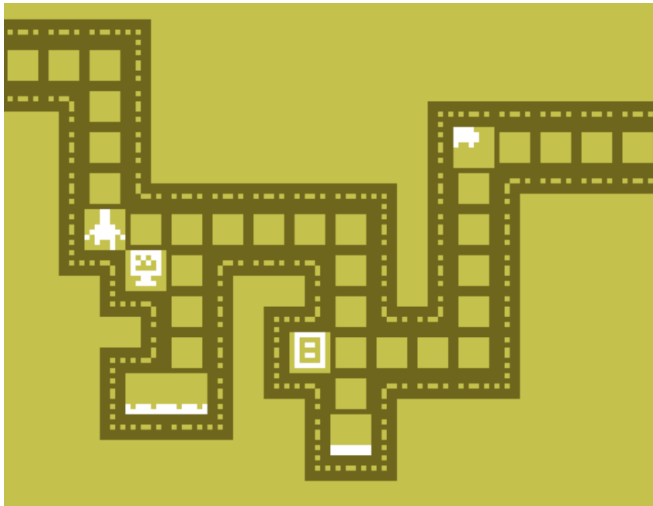


Figure 11. The paths are created in the way that the player will interact with some sprites prior to others.

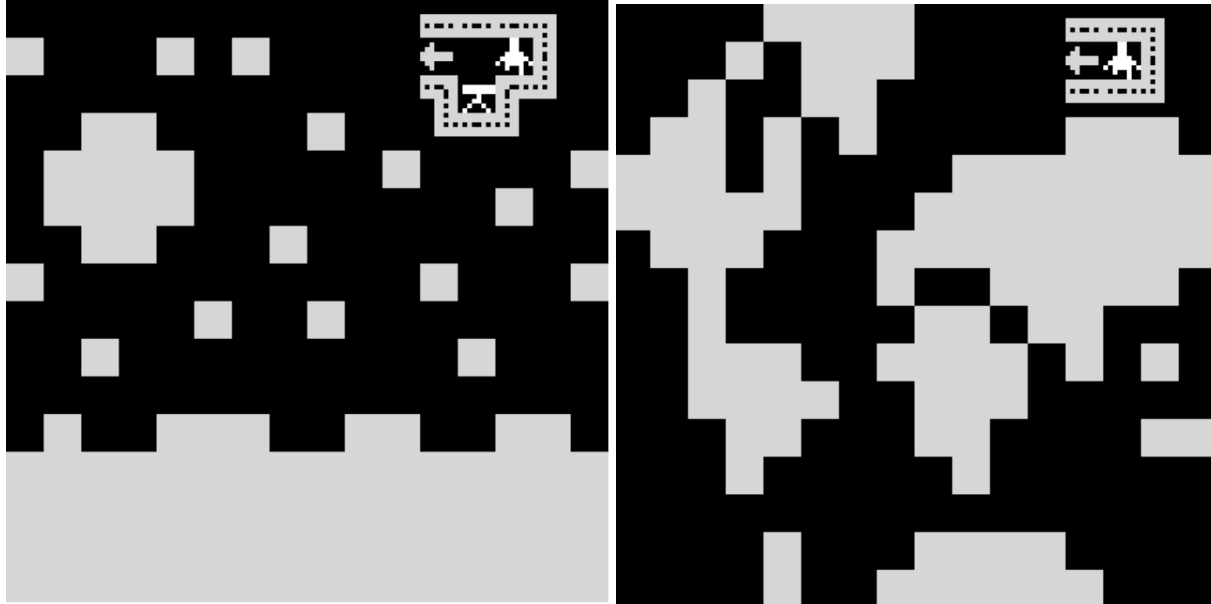


Figure 12. The large round spherical object represents earth.