WHAT CAN SERIOUS GAMING LEARN FROM THEATER

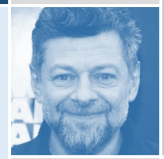


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STORIES TO BE PLAYED BEFORE OR BY THE AUDIENCE

People are enthralled with games in the same way as other people love theatre.

Andy Serkis



THEATERPLAY

- Theatre play is a form of fiction presented through performance. It is a story specifically written to be enacted before an audience.
- Performed by actors on a stage, the meaning and impact of a play are shaped by the collaborative efforts of its production team and the collective reception of the audience.

SERIOUS GAME

- Serious game is a structured play activity designed for learning or research purposes. Unlike traditional games, it focuses on achieving educational or practical outcomes rather than purely entertainment.
- Interaction within a serious game is governed by a set of rules, and its content is experienced through overcoming challenges. Players are rewarded or penalized based on their actions, resulting in changes to the game's state.

SIX GUIDELINES FROM THEATRE THAT ARE ALSO RELEVANT FOR SERIOUS GAMING

Unless the theatre can ennoble you, make you a better person, you should flee from it.

Konstantin Stanislavski













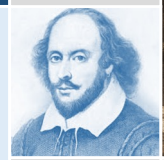
- The most interesting and groundbreaking achievements often emerge at the intersection of disciplines, resulting from unexpected synergies and the discovery of mechanisms that can be transferred between them.
- Rather than analyzing theatre as a phenomenon in itself, the aim is to draw upon its centuries of knowledge on social engagement to support the development and implementation of serious games that enable change.

GUIDELINE | **I**

DILEMMAS ARE UNIVERSAL



- Theatre transports us into another world, aiming to provoke reflection by holding up a mirror that reveals aspects of reality and fleeting phenomena often overlooked in our daily lives.
- This mirror acts like a concave mirror, focusing scattered rays into a single luminous image, allowing us to perceive our challenges and opportunities with greater clarity, as though viewed through a looking glass.



The purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold the mirror up to nature.

William Shakespeare

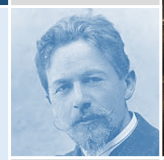
SERIOUS GAME

- The dilemmas presented in games often reflect the complex, interconnected challenges and opportunities that organizations and societies face daily, even when these issues appear isolated on the surface.
- Games not only act as a concave mirror, reflecting reality with focus and clarity, but also offer a pathway through the mirror, allowing players to explore, experience, and test potential solutions in a simulated environment.

WHAT IS IN, MATTERS



- The world created within a good drama must be coherent and free from unforeseen or unplanned elements. However, it should not merely reconstruct reality passively but rather craft a possible and imaginative reality.
- Recognizing the discrepancy between reality and fiction is what gives rise to aesthetic satisfaction and pleasure, which the audience perceives both cognitively and artistically.



One must not put a loaded rifle on the stage if no one is thinking of firing it.

Anton Chekhov

SERIOUS GAME

- A game reflects those aspects of reality that are of interest to us, creating a coherent and credible world that can be experienced during play and critically examined during debriefing.
- To maintain its coherence, consistency, and impact (suspension of disbelief), there should be no arbitrary elements in the selection and arrangement of this created reality – every roll of the dice must be purposeful and justified.

IRONY IS POWERFUL



- A performance must be realistic and convincing enough to fully immerse us, leaving no room for critical distance. At the same time, however, this mirror should distort reality in a way that allows us to see beyond what is normally visible.
- To create this critical distance and enable reflection, playwrights often employ irony, humor, or unexpected elements that disrupt the audience's immersion and draw them back from the world they have entered during the performance.



When something seems 'the most obvious thing in the world' it means that any attempt to understand the world has been given up.

Bertolt Brecht

SERIOUS GAME

- A well-designed game acts as a clever trap, immersing players in familiar, comforting, and seemingly simple situations, only to suddenly disrupt their expectations, surprise them, and provoke deeper thought.
- Game designers often employ irony and humor to push players out of their comfort zones, enabling them to recognize their inconsistencies, gaps in reasoning, or flawed assumptions.

STRONG EMOTIONS HELP



The function of tragedy is to induce catharsis – a release of deep feelings to purge the senses and the souls.

Aristotel



- A theatre play allows us to experience both shock and pleasure through catharsis. These powerful emotions not only enhance our engagement but are sometimes the only way to truly perceive and internalize its content.
- The success of a good theatre play lies in its ability to evoke emotions and dilemmas that the audience may not even be consciously aware of, challenging their views on religion, morality, or politics.

SERIOUS GAME

- Emotions in games are essential for enhancing engagement and deepening learning. Challenges should consistently push players beyond their comfort zones and perceived capabilities, as growth often requires discomfort.
- Emotions provide not only the energy needed to activate and sustain various cognitive processes but also facilitate better self-understanding and help individuals choose more effective strategies.

CONFLICT IS CRUCIAL



No conflict, no drama.

Georg B. Shaw



- In drama, there must be an ongoing tension between values, rules, and objectives on one side, and the desires and capabilities of different characters on the other.
- What truly captures the keen interest of an audience is some form of struggle, whether it is between conflicting individual goals or between individual and collective aims.

SERIOUS GAME

- In games, tension arises from the structure of the simulated situation, where different scenarios reflect real conflicts of interests, values, and rules.
- The aim of many games is to provide relief from both real and imagined conflicts. For real conflicts, games should support the process of change; for imagined conflicts, they should reveal and replace false perceptions.

KEEP TENSION ALIVE



- The ability to gradually build and sustain dynamics and tension is what distinguishes exceptional playwrights and theatre directors.
- During a well-executed theatre play, most of the audience senses the same tension and experiences the same dilemmas as the actors on stage.



The way to make a film is to begin with an earthquake and work up to a climax.

Alfred Hitchcock

SERIOUS GAME

- When designing a game, it is important to identify the easiest and most conventional solutions in the real world – and then remove them to create meaningful challenges.
- Successful games build and maintain tension by ensuring that each subsequent phase becomes progressively more difficult, whether through stronger opponents, increased complexity, or demands for greater speed.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THEATER PLAY AND SERIOUS GAMING

Almost all creativity involves purposeful play.

Abraham Maslow



THEATERPLAY

- The aim of theatre, rooted in ancient tradition, is to catalyze change in the real world by integrating aesthetic and social functions within the play.
- Its primary social function is to create a community that unites stage and audience, serving a ritual purpose of affirming the existence of society as it triumphs over the often-agonising forces of history and nature.

SERIOUS GAME

- The primary function of serious games is to develop insights, knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential for navigating conditions of uncertainty and constant change.
- Serious games can and should have a purifying effect, fulfilling an important role in enhancing both individual and collective capabilities to engage with others, recognize opportunities, and commit to action.

WHAT CAN SERIOUS GAMING LEARN FROM THEATER



THANK YOU

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