

The Reality-Games-Narratives-Morality Approach

A Guide for Doing Inexact Social ~~Science~~ Storytelling

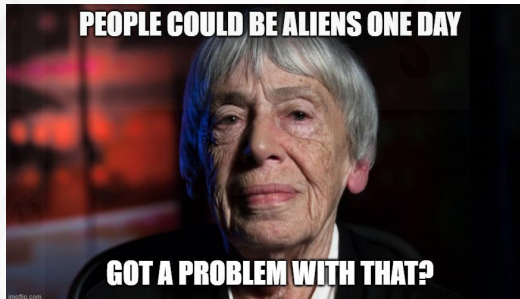
Vibe Check

“When life itself seems lunatic, who knows where madness lies? Perhaps to be too practical is madness. To surrender dreams — this may be madness. Too much sanity may be madness — and maddest of all: to see life as it is, and not as it should be!” - Cervantes

“There really is nothing to fear in fantasy unless you are afraid of the freedom of uncertainty. This is why it’s hard for me to imagine that anyone who likes science can dislike fantasy. Both are based so profoundly on the admission of uncertainty, the welcoming acceptance of unanswered questions.” - Ursula K. Le Guin

“Fed to the rules and I hit the ground running, didn’t make sense not to live for fun; your brain gets smart but your head gets dumb.” - Smash Mouth

🎵 Noam Chomsky once told me 🎵
🎵 The world is a hegemony 🎵
🎵 And I should read the Conquest of Bread 🎵



The Approach

1. There is a non-psychosocial reality, extending from physiology down to physics.
2. From this reality, games emerge that can be classified as fiction or nonfiction.
3. From games, narratives emerge that can be classified as fiction or nonfiction.
4. From narratives, moral values emerge.
5. Moral values guide choices in lives that are understood as nonfictional narratives. Moral values also inspire the composition of intentionally fictional narratives.
6. Narratives of all categories can inspire the implementation of alternate ethical social structures that are understood as nonfictional games. Narratives also inspire the composition of intentionally fictional games for exploring alternate agential modes in alternate social structures.
7. Human behavior motivated by a sense of morality, experience with psychosocial games and narratives, and carnal desire has an effect on all levels of reality.

* Religious narratives and cosmogonic games play a similarly functional role to narratives and games that can be more universally identified as fictional and nonfictional, but their provenance and veracity are left to individual interpretation.

The REALITY floor

Continental Shelf

Continental slope

Seamount

Volcanic island

Continental shelf

Continental slope

Continental shelf

Average depth of ocean floor is 3658 m

Mid-ocean ridge

Abyssal plain

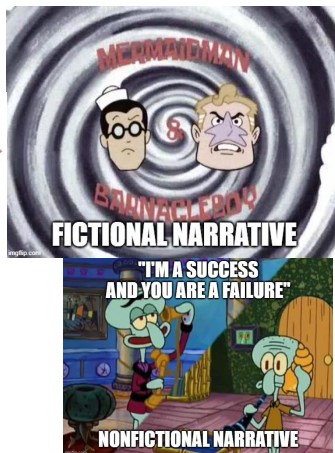
mid-ocean ridge

Rift valley

trench

Mean ocean floor is thousands of kilometers

Source: www.earth.gov



Phil Anderson's Influence: Reality

More is Different (1972)

difficulties of scale and complexity. The behavior of large and complex aggregates of elementary particles, it turns out, is not to be understood in terms of a simple extrapolation of the properties of a few particles. Instead, at each level of complexity entirely new properties appear, and the understanding of the new behaviors requires research which I think is as fundamental in its nature as any other. That is, it seems to me that one may array the sciences roughly linearly in a hierarchy, according to the idea: The elementary entities of science X obey the laws of science Y.

X	Y
solid state or many-body physics	elementary particle physics
chemistry	many-body physics
molecular biology	chemistry
cell biology	molecular biology
⋮	⋮
⋮	⋮
⋮	⋮
psychology	physiology
social sciences	psychology

But this hierarchy does not imply that science X is “just applied Y.” At each stage entirely new laws, concepts, and generalizations are necessary, requiring inspiration and creativity to just as great a degree as in the previous one. Psychology is not applied biology, nor is biology applied chemistry.

C Thi Nguyen's Influence: Games

“Games are one of the oldest artifactual practices we have. When we play games, we take on a wide range of alternate agencies. Games help us to understand new forms of agency, and to understand those new forms from the inside. And if we accept all that, then **it is not so strange to think that games can help us develop, change, and transform our social structures, by helping us to explore, from the inside, alternate social structures.** Such explorations can help us get a handle on our own social structure, and show us what it might be like to operate within a new one.”

Games: Agency as Art

Jerome Bruner's Influence: Narratives

The acceptability of a narrative obviously cannot depend on its correctly referring to reality, else there would be no fiction. Realism in fiction must then indeed be a literary convention rather than a matter of correct reference.

Narrative "truth" is judged by its verisimilitude rather than its verifiability. There seems indeed to be some sense in which narrative, rather than referring to "reality," may in fact create or constitute it, as when "fiction" creates a "world" of its own-Joyce's "Dublin" where places like St. Stephen's Green or Grafton Street, for all that they bear familiar labels, are no less real or imaginary than the characters he invents to inhabit them. In a perhaps deeper

sense, indeed, **it may be that the plights and the intentional states depicted in "successful" fiction sensitize us to experience our own lives in ways to match:**

Which suggests, of course, that the distinction between narrative fiction and narrative truth is nowhere nearly as obvious as common sense and usage would have us believe. Why common sense insists on such a sharp distinction being drawn is quite another problem, perhaps related to the requirement of "bearing witness."

The Narrative Construction of Reality (1991)

Robin Kimmerer's Influence: Morality

“In weaving well-being for land and people, we need to pay attention to the lessons of the three rows. Ecological well-being and the laws of nature are always the first row. Without them, there is no basket of plenty. Only if that first circle is in place can we weave the second. The second reveals material welfare, the subsistence of human needs. Economy built upon ecology. But with only two rows in place, the basket is still in jeopardy of pulling apart. It's only when the third row comes that the first two can hold together. Here is where ecology, economics, and spirit are woven together.”

Braiding Sweetgrass

A Robin Kimmerer Inspired Take on Bricolage

- Ideas that may be categorized as “Western” or “Indigenous” or categorized generally are *not* best conceived of as in competition with one another. They are ingredients that can be taken up now or carefully stored for later use.
- If there is use for as enduring a concept as human nature, it is that ideas transmitted in games and narratives cross-pollinate to form “new species of knowledge” and “new ways of being in and experiencing the world”
- For constructing/weaving self-identities and abstract understandings for acting in concrete reality, we may draw from our experiences with rows that may be called the **landscape**, **gamescape**, and **storyscape**.

Situating Normative Ethics

- Consequentialist approaches correspond with the landscape
- Deontological approaches correspond with the gamescape
- Virtue ethics approaches correspond with the storyscape

They have and will feed into each other!

Keep them all!

Mimetic Circular Flows

Experience with fictional games influences how we experience nonfictional games, and also the reverse.

Experience with fictional narratives influences how we experience nonfictional narratives, and also the reverse.

Examples: Nonfictional Games

- Meeting job expectations for money
- Meeting relationship expectations for continued associations
- War
- Communicating ideas
- Developing mediums for communicating ideas
- Taking a course for institutional credit
- Reading a book for social credit
- Reading a book for personal interest alone
- Building houses
- Sociology
- Sociology of Knowledge
- Economics
- Game Theory
- Philosophy
- Logic
- Ethics
- Metaphysics
- Physics/Epistemology

Examples: Fictional Games

- Chess
- Monopoly
- Poker
- Go
- Pokemon RPG
- Pokemon TCG
- Hop Scotch
- Basketball
- Skyrim
- Making Art

Examples: Nonfictional Narratives

- Success
- Failure
- Understanding of the self
- Understanding of others
- The History of the United States
- The History of Florida
- The History of Earth
- The History of the Universe
- The life story of James Earl Jones
- The life story of Dolly Parton
- An object at rest remains at rest
- The Theory of Gravity

Examples: Fictional Narratives

- Winning
- Losing
- The game is tied.
- Moby Dick
- The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas
-

John Dewey as Theoretical Glue-y

“He does not find himself living in another world but in a different part or aspect of one and the same world. **What he has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which follow.**”

“In [competitive games and cooperative activities] it is not the will or desire of any one person which establishes order but the moving spirit of the whole group.”

Experience and Education

Ken Burke's *Grammar of Motives* and the welcome porting of terminology

Burke's Dramatic Pentad is used as grammar for describing situational motivation. In the psychosocial level of reality, it is inspirationality that is a more useful concept than causality.

- Scene (materialism, board and resources)
- Agent (idealism, player)
- Agency (pragmatism, rules)
- Act (realism, move)
- Purpose (mysticism, goal)

Less imperialist aspirations, more like considering how a Babel Fish would work

The physiological-psychosocial bridge

Are cognitive process models best thought of as **partitioned**, for example into perception, feeling, and thinking?

Is it better to think of those as variants of a single **unified** underlying perfinking process?

(Bring your empiricism, romanticism, and rationalism while we're here)

Considering carnal desires and experiences, it is not necessarily true that they will always and forever lead to amoral breaches of canonically sanctioned narratives and the breaking of social game rules. Moving about the still heavily uncharted territory of conscious development, the monsters may be capable of gaming themselves into becoming evermore angelic.

