Designing in Emerging Media through Linguistic Forms

THESIS

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Fine Arts in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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Abstract

As technology evolves, media changes, and the existing paradigms fail to describe the emerging platforms. When a new form emerges, it can be seen as a blend of the existing narrative philosophies. Today emerging narrative platforms, like VR and portable media apps, have qualities of interactive media (games), literature, and video, but lack a coherent overarching structure. Through an abstraction of J. L. Austin's performative formula from “Speech Act Theory”, the designer’s intended psychological effect of narrative devices become more clearly understood, judged, applied, and translated across different platforms. This paper documents an applied project, Tuba-Goose, that engages linguistic structures defined by Austin with visual design choices to create a digital storybook using animation, interaction, and text.
To my nieces, Noelle and Veronica, who will one day fail before they fly.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my Thesis Committee and the instructors at the Advanced Computing Center for Art and Design for the opportunities and challenges.
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Fields of Study

Major Field: Design
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Chapter 1: Emerging Platforms as Blended Media

Problem

As technology evolves, media changes, and the existing paradigms fail to describe the emerging platforms. When a new form emerges, it can be seen as a blend of the existing narrative philosophies. For example, when cinema was new, it had qualities of 2D imagery, theatre, and literature, but the established conventions of painting, live performance, and written word were also disconnected. Eventually the motion picture industry developed its own protocol and dialogue, but with the rapid evolution in interactive narrative tools, forms that defy established boundaries are developing faster than a system of conventions can emerge. Today emerging narrative platforms, like VR and portable media apps, have qualities of interactive media (games), literature, and video, but lack a coherent overarching structure. Trying to construct a narrative from the existing frameworks leads to a string of disjointed components that either do not take advantage of the new form or do not contribute to the story. Examining emerging media as a blend of existing conventions yields idioms with a structure that is only possible in the new blended form. Through the adaptation of existing linguistic structure, designing for the psychological effect of narrative devices become more clearly understood, analyzed, applied, and translated across these different platforms.
Research Statement

I am interested in the composition of a form that blends cinematic animation, interactive media, and literature in a complementary way and the development of a logical structure that can inform the analysis and construction of narrative regardless of medium. My approach is rooted in the established philosophies of the mediums, understood through a common logical linguistic form developed by J.L. Austin (see Figure 1). The theory and approach are explored through the creation of a thesis project, “Tuba-Goose”, which is a user driven animation with qualities of a bedtime story. The text, animated characters, and live action in Tuba-Goose share a platform through camera movement, turning pages, and touch screen in a way that I am working to compile seamlessly and coherently. The final product is intended as an emotionally complex artifact that children and parents will find meaningful to share together. My research yields revelations into narrative creation and analysis on platforms that have yet to be envisioned. The research extends beyond this project because the linguistic approach describes any narrative form, regardless of dialect.
The story, *Tuba-Goose*, is an anti-fairytale/fantasy about a goose who finds a tuba and decides to try to be a human. I have always been attracted to stories that challenge the audience, rather than pandering to the desire for immediate gratification. Mary Poppins' subversive undertones, the tragic ending to *The Little Mermaid* (the Hans Christian Anderson version that ends with Ariel turning to foam because the prince was in love with someone else), and the end of A. A. Milne's *The House on Pooh Corner* when Christopher Robin explains to Pooh that he will not be coming back to the hundred-acre wood because he is growing up, are all unsettling elements. But tragedies foster empathy, and stories that have unsettling traits have the potential to set off an ethical contemplation in the audience that lingers in the mind of the reader in a way that stories that hand the audience satisfying closure do not. Unsettling elements are not as prevalent in contemporary children's stories, the social ramifications of the trend toward a “believe in yourself, and you can do anything” philosophy are explored in Dr. Jean M. Twenge’s
book *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled-and More Miserable Than Ever Before* (Twenge). I deeply value models of virtue in defeat and injustice, and I have found them useful through reflection when confronted with insurmountable obstacles. For this reason, I constructed the Tuba-Goose story to end in heroic defeat.

The character and tone of the narrative developed through a dialogue with my niece. Initially the project was going to be a short movie that brought our character to life with computer animation, but as the animated work began to develop essential qualities of the traditional book format of a bedtime story, primarily the intimacy of two people sharing a story, were being lost. So, the direction of the project shifted toward a more cooperative merger of a book and interactive animation. The resulting project, Tuba-Goose, is a user driven animation with the performative function of a book. The intended experience is fundamentally more like a bedtime story read from a book than a movie or video game. The project differs from a traditional book in several ways. The illustrations are animated, and in some parts the text is also animated. The book conveys the story through cinematic conventions, and it uses interactive elements to create a common experience between the audience and the protagonist, like a video game. Illustrations typically serve a supporting role, subordinate to the text; if a reader omits the pictures from Alice in Wonderland, they have not lost a critical piece of information because the illustrations portray what the text has already described. But the animations in this project are integral to the story, giving the audience information that is needed to understand important events and changes in the character and story arcs.
One of the primary goals for the project was to create an intimate experience shared between a parent and their child (see Figure 2). When a parent is reading a story to their child they are physically close, the form of a bedtime storybook enables the two to be near one another to show the pictures. A book is small and private, it is held in the audience’s hands. Tuba-Goose is designed for a mobile device with a screen to be shared and viewed by two people. The story is designed with elements of a pop-up book enhanced with interactive animations that complement the sharing experience, turning the picture, in the hands of the user, into a little world. When parents and children are reading a digital book together their awareness of the other person is active in a way that is absent when watching a movie. The child is dependent on the parent to read and help them understand the story.

Figure 2. Bedtime Story Interaction
To adapt interaction ideas that occur in traditional book reading, the animation is designed as user driven, so the audience controls the pace by turning digital pages with a swiping motion, allowing them to pause for dialogue. Animated illustrations and interactive elements are mixed in a way that make them important to the narrative in hopes of further encouraging the parent and child to be close, experiencing the story actively together.

As part of the background research process, similar digital pop-up books were examined, but the examples failed to integrate the media in an effective way. The interactive animations did not serve any clear narrative function, but constructive corrective criticism was problematic because the new form did not have an established structure to analyze, criticize and guide creation. Interactive digital books have elements of several different existing conventions (cinema, literature, and interactive media). Each of these fields has their own established theory of narrative communication, but an overarching theory of narrative device proved elusive.

The search for an overarching logical structure led to J. L. Austin, and the project became an applied study of his performative analysis to the new form as a blended media project; integrating and constructing narrative devices through cinematic, interactive, and literary media.

Theory of Performative Function

The linguistic form employed for this project is an abstraction of J. L. Austin's performative formula from “Speech Act Theory”, detailed in his lecture How to Do Things with Words (Austin). Austin was trying to quantify statements that are
grammatically descriptive, but function to change the environment, from statements that describe the environment.

Austin’s performative analysis describes the relationship between the speaker and the audience, through the form, with relationship to the illocution (message or subtext intended to be carried by the form), the locution (the form, i.e. words, images, phonemes etc.), and the perlocution (reaction or psychological change in the audience) (see Figure 3).

![Figure 3: The Performative Structure of Statements - The Relationship between the Audience and the Author through the Form](image)

The performative formula distinguishes statements that describe the environment from statements that change the environment (Austin 67 - 82). For example, the statement "There's the door" can be interpreted as a description of the location of the door in a room (this is the constative form of the statement, something that can be judged as true or
false), or an order to leave (the **performative form**, a statement that changes the environment through the act of utterance) (see Figure 5). The differentiating element between the constative statement and the performative is the **primitive**. The primitive is the activating element; a performative statement becomes a constative statement without the primitive. In a situation where the statement is an order to leave, the primitive could be the mood, conveyed through the tone of voice. If the statement is heard in an employer's office after an employee has asked if they still have a job, the primitive would be the context. In a declaration of termination (the performative form), the employer’s illocution would be to end the employment of the employee, the locution would be the words used (“There is the door”), and the perlocution (if effective) would be an understanding that the audience (the employee) is no longer working for the employer. Functionally, the performative formula separates the communicative form with implication from the theoretically inert statement, isolating the element that carries the message and clarifying the change in the audience (see figure 4).

![J. L. Austin's Performative Formula](image)

**Figure 4. J. L. Austin's Performative Formula – Inert Statement made into Transforming Statements with an Activating Element**
Figure 5: Constative vs. Performative - The statement as descriptive (without implication) Austin terms constative, and the active statement (subtext) is a performative.

In creating the Tuba-Goose story, I apply the abstraction Austin’s formula as framework for translating, analyzing and generating design solutions for communicating the story and its visuals to the audience. The following chapters detail the theoretical
underpinnings of the established story structure for Tuba-Goose as well as a deeper explanation of Austin’s formula and its application to this project. Then I discuss the Tuba-Goose concept and project construction and provide a summary and reflection on the project and the future possibilities for the usefulness of this adapted linguistic framework based on Austin’s formula.
Chapter 2: Background

The search for an overarching structure to inform the creation of narrative in the “digital pop-up book” platform started with Joseph Campbell’s Hero’s Journey or Monomyth theory, detailed in the series *The Power of Myth* (Campbell) and his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces) and the monomyth adapted as guide for storytellers by Christopher Vogler in *The Writer’s Journey*. Joseph Campbell describes common features of myth through *The Heroes’ Journey*. It consists of seventeen stages that fit within the three-act structure (see Figure 8). The first act starts in the "ordinary world" where the protagonist gets the "call to adventure", which is initially refused (usually because of fear). He or she then meets the mentor who gives the hero something (e.g. a magical object, skill, or advice), which gives the hero the courage to cross the threshold into the unknown realm (going to the spirit world, the dark side, or some dangerous land) marking the beginning of the second act. In the second act the hero meets "tests, allies, and enemies" who act with and against the hero in "the ordeal". The triumphant ordeal yields "the reward" which the hero must protect on "the road back" and through the climactic "resurrection". The hero’s journey concludes with a return to the normal world with the reward, resolving the initial problem (Vogler 236).
Figure 7: Tuba-Goose’s Journey modeled after Christopher’s Diagram of Joseph Campbell’s Monomyth or Hero’s Journey (Vogler 237)

There are several features from the monomyth in the Tuba-Goose story. The structure is cyclical (i.e. It begins where it ends, in the protagonist’s safe/home environment) (see figure 7). The “call to adventure” for Tuba-Goose happens when he finds the tuba. The threshold between the natural and the supernatural/unknown realm from the monomyth
occurs when Tuba-Goose enters the human world. Both the monomyth and Tuba-Goose share a build up to a final battle with a powerful enemy, Tuba-Goose’s foe is a butcher, whom he does not conquer. But in defeat, Tuba-Goose gains the insight into himself and the reward, acceptance of himself with his limitations. The Hero’s Journey and Tuba-Goose share the resurrection/flight home in the 3rd act and resolution, and both conclude with the protagonist back in their home environment, enriched with the wisdom from their journey.

Tuba-Goose’s “call to adventure is the discovery of the tuba, but unlike most examples of the monomyth, Tuba-Goose is not particularly desperate, and his impetuousness interferes with his perception of the danger. Tuba-Goose is a very short story, and the phase where the hero adopts responsibility for his/her own adventure/journey has been abbreviated and combined with the exposition. Despite the abbreviations and deviations two key features of the Tuba-Goose story I borrowed from the monomyth remain central to the theme; the circular form (ending the story where the story begins) and the hero’s acceptance of the need to reevaluate the view of themselves. Acknowledgement of limitations and a humble sense of his finite capabilities is the central theme to the Tuba-Goose story.
Figure 8. The 3 Act structure with Audience Tension Contrasted with Cynicism and Sympathy for the Character. Adapted from Christopher Vogler (Vogler 183)

The search for a more compatible story structure in comparative studies on myth and religion led to Ronald Grimes, and his work criticizing ritual failure. Many of the problems Grimes faced criticizing ritual mirrored issues facing the dialectical difficulties related to the Tuba-Goose story, specifically design challenges relaying a fairytale experience through an interactive medium. In a 1992 article from Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal (Grimes), Grimes discusses the lack of an established analytical foundation when critiquing a traditional native dance/drama performance conveyed through a contemporary theatrical platform/paradigm. He attributed a performative dysfunction to a lack of a “common definition of the situation” between the actors or the critics (Grimes 8). A theory Ronald Grimes adopted to analyze such failures was based on J. L. Austin’s “Speech Act Theory” from his 1955 lecture How to do Things with Words (Grimes 191). The theory describes the communicative power to change the environment through Performative statements, the difference between statements that
change the environment and Constative (inert) statements, the Illocution (intended message), and Perlocution (the change in the environment).

Most of what Grimes adopted from Austin, and probably the primary intended application of Austin’s work, focused on communicative failure, separated into two categories; Misfires (a speech act which is purported but void) and Abuses (a speech act that is professed but hollow), further categorized into a scheme of various infelicities (Misinvocations, Misexecutions, Misapplications, Flaws, Hitches, and Insincerities). As a designer focusing on the construction of a communicative statement, the primary interest with relation to the project was the generative potential of the theory, specifically generative potential in the area lacking transcendent framework, the mechanics of narrative device on an undefined platform. The resulting abstraction is probably not what Austin intended, but showed itself to be enlightening to the project in decoding the mechanism of narrative devices across platforms.

Key Ideas in the Application of the Theory
Abstraction of Austin’s formula began with the translation of the terminology to narrative communicative acts on different platforms. The designer of the narrative is the communicator, anything and everything given to the audience to tell the story is a statement. All statements given to the audience have an effect on the audience’s understanding of the story; it changes their perception of the environment and relationship with the characters (often very subtly and unconsciously). The effect or change in the audience is the perlocution. The subtext is the Illocution. A constative form is the narrative element without implication. It is important to note that the constative
element does not exist as part of the story; it is used as a theoretical/platonic form to isolate the primitive, but a part of the form that is inert with relation to the perlocution could be viewed as constative (i.e. Page numbers in a book or an intermission screen in a movie might be considered constative, but they could affect the experience and therefore be factored as narrative device). A good way to discern the constative form of a narrative statement is to think of it as the way someone who did not understand the implications would describe the narrative statement, somewhat similar to the way someone who wasn’t paying attention would describe the scene. The difference between the element with the perlocution and the element as inert, the characteristic that endows the element with its dramatic punctuation, is the primitive. The way in which the active element (with its perlocution) facilitates the audience’s experience of the narrative is the performative function.

A lot of interesting characteristics begin to emerge through this type of dramatic performative analysis. To better understand and test the function of dramatic performative analysis, I applied the framework to several specific shots from existing films. Below are two shots (see Tables 1 and 2) with the same perlocutions (parallel experience with the characters in the narrative) and performative functions (identification with the characters in the narrative), both have a similar primitive (confusion/disorientation at a moment of similar tension/confusion for the object of identification) and illocution (the identifier is under duress), but the relevant locutionary elements are very different (one involves optical effect and the other a break with convention).
The Performative Function of the Dolly-Zoom in *Vertigo* by Alfred Hitchcock and Irmin Roberts  
(Hitchcock 1958)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locution</th>
<th>This is a first-person perspective down a flight of stairs from the vantage of the protagonist, the camera is backing up, while the zoom is narrowing the field of view.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illocution</td>
<td>This is a moment of extreme fear and tension for the protagonist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perlocution</td>
<td>Parallel experience with the protagonist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive</td>
<td>Disorientation through a breakdown of subjective constancy (perception of an object or quality as constant even though our sensation of the object changes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constative</td>
<td>The protagonist is looking down the stairs, he is afraid of heights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Performative Function</td>
<td>This scene creates an alignment of emotions and identification with the onscreen characters investing the audience in the narrative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Performative Breakdown of the dolly-zoom from Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo*
Crossing the Line of Action from *Paprika* by Satoshi Kon (Kon 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locution</th>
<th>Satoshi Kon crosses the line of action (orients the camera on the opposite side of the axis connecting the characters (Levin 43)) at a moment in a dream sequence when the deuteragonist realizes something is wrong.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illocution</td>
<td>There is something disturbing and wrong with the world in which the protagonist finds himself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perlocution</td>
<td>Parallel experience with the deuteragonist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive</td>
<td>Disorientation through a break with the established convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constative</td>
<td>The deuteragonist is being shot from both sides of the line of action just before it is revealed that the sequence is a dream.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Performative Function</td>
<td>The audience experiences a confusion and uncertainty of whether the events on screen are a dream or reality in parallel with the deuteragonist. This aligns the emotions of the onscreen characters, and involves the audience in the narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implication</td>
<td>This is an example of a break with convention for narrative effect; swapping conventions could have the same application.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Performative Breakdown of Crossing the Line-Of-Action in Satoshi Kon's *Paprika*
Narrative through interactive media (video games) often utilize a parallel experience to align the emotions of the on-screen characters and invest the audience in the narrative. (see Table 3).

| The Performative Function through Interactive Struggle in *Super Mario Brothers* |
|---|---|
| Locution | The user must defeat the antagonist (through control of the protagonist) in order for the story to proceed. |
| Illocution | The antagonist is a difficult enemy, defeating him is a valiant act by the protagonist. |
| Perlocution | The audience a common experience with the protagonist |
| Primitive | Frustration |
| Constative | The protagonist defeats the antagonist and proceeds to the next challenge. |
| Explicit Performative Function | The audience identifies with the protagonist through a common frustration with the ordeal the protagonist faces. This aligns the emotions of the onscreen characters, and invests the audience in the narrative. |
| Implication | Role of the spectator as a participant has the potential to serve a performative function. |

Table 3. Performative Breakdown of Interactive Struggle in Shigeru Miyamoto’s *Super Mario Brothers*
Having isolated the primitive, a designer can begin to look at changes that might make the dramatic punctuation more effective. For example, primitives that rely on confusion should not be predictable; if every shot is a trick shot, the effective return will probably diminish. The soundtrack in Stanley Kubrick’s *A Clockwork Orange* (Kubrick) uses a disagreement between the mediums of audio and video (i.e. the audio is associated with a peaceful environment, but the video is depicting disturbing violence), the perlocution is a sense that the world of the narrative is cold and alien (see Table 4). A place where this is particularly effective is the scene when Alex (played by Malcolm McDowell) beats up his “friends”. In this sequence the video is graphic and violent, but there is no audio from the violence. Instead the audio consists of a calm monolog from Alex and beautiful orchestral music (Rossini’s *La Gazza Ladra*). One of the reasons it is particularly effective is the total divergence between the sound and video implications.
## The Performative Function of conflicting mediums in *A Clockwork Orange* (Kubrick)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locution</th>
<th>The music is beautiful and serene, but the imagery is disturbing and violent.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illocution</td>
<td>The morals of the onscreen characters are very misaligned with that of the audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perlocution</td>
<td>The world of the narrative is cold and alien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive</td>
<td>Paradox between dialects (i.e. peaceful audio with extremely violent actions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constative</td>
<td>Alex DeLarge is beating up the “Droogs”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Performative</td>
<td>The main character is framed as brutish and vile, this is contrasted with the pity felt as the character loses all his power, revealing him as a simple/vulgar animal of his environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Performative Breakdown of Conflicting Mediums in Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*
Chapter 3: Concept

My nieces and I have developed several characters and stories through our dialogue. They would give me suggestions of what we should draw, and I would deliberately steer the material into absurdity by imposing reality on the make-believe. A common theme to all the stories has been animals trying to live in the real human world and failing (often with morbid implications). Tuba-Goose has been the subject of a lot of our conversations, and he has one of the most developed personalities. I do not remember the exact details of why he has a tuba, but I remember it was related to the way cartoon animals dress in people’s clothing to seem more human. He has the personality of a goose, so his choice of accessories was not very practical, and his insistence to continue to carry it around embodies a defiant obstinate that is important to our relationship. It was not a conscious decision, but in reflection, I think I was foreshadowing the bittersweet reality of growing up in a way that they will not understand until it has happened. And that is what I am trying to capture in a bedtime story about failed aspiration that the parents can read with their children.
The Build Up and Break Down of Tuba-Goose

The story arc goes from a trivial amusement to a personal story about the failure and compromise in the past of the adult audience and the future of the children to whom the story is being read. This is done through a series of build-ups and breakdowns. The first chapter is an exposition that introduces the character, his world, and the means with which the user interacts with the interface. By the end of the experience each of these is torn down.

A Prototype of the *Tuba-Goose* digital pop-up book is available for review online at [http://accad.osu.edu/~jwelch/Tuba-Goose](http://accad.osu.edu/~jwelch/Tuba-Goose)

Breaking the Book

Throughout the first chapter, *Probably a Goose*, and into the second, *Of Geese and Men*, there are suggestions through the interaction, animation, and aesthetic allusions that tell the audience that they are reading a book. The introduction is explicitly referencing the physical artifact of a book, the pages are rendered with the texture of artesian handmade paper, and the interaction is guided to build an expectation in line with the interactive paradigm of a book. When the user swipes left, like the swiping motion used to turn the page in a book, the interface animates a turning page, joining the current animation with the next; enforcing the perception that the experience is going to be like a book. Starting with the paratext declaring the beginning of the first chapter and continuing until the main character leaves his natural environment, the relationship between the imagery, text,
and narrative is essentially the same as a book. However, unlike a book, the images and the text are animated. The narrative function of the animations matches the function of a picture in a book; an addendum of supporting imagery with no fundamental change to the furthering of the narrative.

Figure 9. Early Version of the Vine Text from *Tuba-Goose* (Chapter 1. Page 1)

The beginning and end of the book (when the goose is in his natural state) are intended to simulate the artifact of a traditional fairy-tale in a book format (see Figure 9). The aesthetic decisions were made to recreate the performative aspects of indexicality and transparency of production experienced reading the traditional form. Initially the perlocutionary experience should be something the audience understands, something with which they feel familiar, and they should feel comfortable in their control over the
experience. The vine text was chosen to suggest the presence of the artifact while symbolizing the natural state of the goose, and the effect occurs only in the first and last pages, before the “human thing”, and after he returns to his natural state. The text is animated, but it casts a realistic shadow on the page, lending credence to the presence of the book. The accompanying animated illustration is handmade stop-motion, a mechanically transparent technique. This aesthetic was chosen to bring the audience closer to the physicality of the book through demystification.

The form becomes increasingly dissimilar to a book as the goose and the audience enter the unknown. As the first human element (the tuba) is introduced, the text changes to a typographical animation, characterized with straight lines, perfect circles, and a systematic production. As the goose enters the human world, the boundary between the text and the illustrations breaks. The text appears as animated, waddling characters in the illustrations. The images start to look less like they are on a flat page as the perspective from which the illustrations are framed changes, revealing the increasing parallax of a three-dimensional world as the words travel from a natural scene to a more urban environment.
As the first chapter closes, the protagonist enters the human world, and the relationship between the imagery, interaction, and the narrative changes sharply. This causes a disorientation (the primitive), creating a performative parallel experience between the audience and the protagonist. The last page of the first chapter is a pop-up (see Figure 10). The audience sees the environment the goose enters encroaching on the spectator’s space, in a transition that changes the convention from that of a book to a cinematic establishing shot. In the following scene, the swiping motion that is prompted by the marching goose-print icon over the paratext (Chapter Two/Of Geese and Men) (see Table 5), instead of turning the page, as it had done on the previous pages, changes the camera
angle. The motion reveals through parallax that the text, which appeared flat on the screen before the change, is a three-dimensional environment.

A parallel disorientation, aligning the audience and the protagonist, is common in cinematography. The dolly-zoom in Vertigo (Hitchcock 1958) uses a breakdown of perceptual constancy to construct the same narrative device (see Table 1), the audience feels a startled confusion at a moment when the protagonist is experiencing vertigo, aligning the audience with the protagonist through a common experience. This incidence in Tuba-Goose is different and unique to the blended media form, because the confusion the audience experiences arises through the expectation that the interface will act like a book. The swiping motion that usually turns the page, betrays the expectations of the viewer, changing the form to an interactive media narrative, like a video game. The aesthetic lies to the viewer when the flat text announcing the next chapter spins into an unexpected unfamiliar world. The sequence culminates when the viewer and the goose realize that they are looking at a butcher stuffing a bird. The experience is not relayed through the text, animation, or the interaction alone, but the experience of a shift between mediums.

Through an analysis of the performative elements and the mechanism that activates these types of statements, I have made changes to the form that strengthen the speech act. The statement conveyed to the audience as a constative could be simplified and paraphrased as “the goose has naively walked into an environment he does not understand, and now he is in danger”, the performative statement is “the audience identifies with the protagonist”, and the primitive is the disorientation the two share. Identifying the primitive (activating
element), and separating it from the illocution (subtext) and the perlocution (psychological change in the audience) made it easier to understand how these speech acts work. In the beginning of chapter two the primitive hinges on a divergence from the established interaction. The audience expects the page to turn, but the camera moves instead. For this reason, the first page was broken into four and a “Chapter One” paratext page was added, increasing the number of page swipes to eight before the swiping action triggers something other than a page turn.

The Build Up and Break Down of the Character

The goose changes from a fool to a vulnerable character, conscious of his own failure and the unattainability of his dream. Early images and animations of the goose have him facing the audience, geese are naturally wall-eyed, so the when his head faces the audience, their gaze cannot meet, giving the character a vacant expression that is supported with cartoon-like animation in scene 4 (There were probably lots of geese), the Chaplinesque comedy in scene 14 (the reaction shot), the frequent use of anapestic tetrameter, and suggestions of his over confidence. His relationship with the audience changes after encountering the butcher. After he has run away in fear, his demeanor is more pensive, pausing and reflecting as he walks through scene 15, he is framed to avoid the wall-eyed expression, and he looks up at a flock of geese suggesting he is beginning to realize he has made a mistake. The main character has the personality and mannerisms of a goose who does not belong in the human world, his choice of accessories was not very practical, and his insistence to continue to carry it around embodies a defiant obstinace that geese and stubborn youth share. The “Valves and chambers” reference in
scene 15 and 16 are drawing a line between the heart, and the tuba, and dreams are
directly connected with the tuba in the “return with reflection” scenes (see figure 11).

![Figure 11. Return with Reflection](image)

The intended performative function of a switch in the character’s role is an enhancement
of emotional impact through the primitive, regret. The audience begins snickering at the
foolishness of the goose, then realizes he is analogous to their own youthful impetuous
ambition and the inevitable confrontation with personal limitations in the future of the
child audience, breaking the perception of the character and the boundary between the
goose’s world and the audience. Tuba-Goose breaks the 4th wall looking directly at the
audience in a close-up shot as the text describes his personal reflection. The goose then accepts his limitations, abandons the tuba, and the book concludes with an image of a goose with a family, a reflection of the audience. The goose does not achieve his dream, and my nieces will have unrealistic goals that they will compromise as they mature. I don't want to discourage their dreams, but when they inevitably find their limitations, I want them to know that failure is not a flaw; it is a consequence of trying.

The Moral

The subtext is about heroic defeat, which is counter to the “Believe in yourself, and you can do anything” moral behind most contemporary children’s (and many adult) stories, but the subversion has altruistic intentions. The same line of study that introduced me to J. L. Austin also proposed that myth serves a performative function, transferring the society’s morals and values to subsequent generations. Ritual theorist, Jonathan Smith, describes ritual as a lens through which the cultural dichotomy between literal events and the ideal is reconciled. A divergence between actuality of events and one’s concept of moral appropriateness causes a “conscious tension" (Smith 63). In ritual people construct a controlled environment to reenact and rationalize events while "contemplating the incongruence" (63); expressing "a realistic assessment of the fact that the world cannot be compelled" (65).

From the inception, it has been important that this project has something that seemed subversive on the surface, but had an interpretation that the audience could relate to their own life, so they would feel like the story was theirs, and not a typical movie for
everyone. This is a characteristic common to many narrative works that have been influential on the project. In W.B. White’s *Charlotte's Web*, Fern starts to grow up, notice boys, and she stops coming to the barn. The book ended with Charlotte dying and most of her offspring scattering to the wind. It is impossible to read the book without feeling sad, but through the tragedy there is a positive message about the cyclical nature of life and the virtue of carrying on after losing a loved one. A. A. Milne’s *The House on Pooh Corner* ends with Christopher Robin explaining to Pooh that he is growing up, and will not be coming back to the Hundred-Acre Wood any more. Again, the impulse to protect children from the emotional trauma associated with maturing makes the subtext seem subversive, but growing up is a good thing, and depriving children the opportunity to be an adult would not be an act of kindness. These stories are sad, but beautiful, and they challenge the audience to think about the subtext, and the meaning one finds reflecting on the conflicting emotions endows the stories with a sense of personal ownership. Two quotes from P. A. Travers became concisely and eloquently describe the philosophy behind the subtext, "a book that is written solely for children is by definition a bad book" and "you should trust the children; they can stand more than we can”. For these reasons, it was concluded that the proper way to close a children's story for adults leaves questions that encourage the adult audience to explain the trials of their experiences to the children in the audience, who will not understand until they inevitably relate.
Chapter 4: Project Process

Application of Communicative Structure Analysis

Breaking narrative elements into a constative form (i.e. the element as described without the subtext) and a performative form (i.e. the element described with the intended change in the audience) forces an analysis of the nuances and mechanics of the intended psychological change in the audience’s relation to the story. The performative function, illocution, and primitives are unattached to a particular narrative experience or form, and often exist in other media (i.e. a narrative device with the same function might exist in another form, and a narrative element with the same subtext can exist in a different story, told through a different medium). For example, a cinematographer might use a disorienting shot (like a dolly zoom) at a time in the story when the protagonist is under stress to give the audience a parallel experience with the protagonist. A playwright might break the 4th wall, having the villain emerge from the audience with a gun to surprise the audience in parallel with the onstage characters. Poets often break with expectation for dramatic punctuation through deviation in poetic meter (see Table 5) An interactive media designer can establish an area of the game environment as safe, only to break the perception, creating a perlocutionary parallel experience between the characters and the audience. The performative structure of all of these would be the same; a perlocutionary
parallel experience of surprise/confusion (the primitive), functioning to align the mentality of the audience with the characters in the narrative, investing the audience in the experience. The locution cannot always be transferred to a different media. A physical space where the audience goes for sanctuary, cannot exist in a traditional play or movie and the antagonist cannot come out of the audience’s space in a cinema or video game, and a dolly-zoom cannot exist in a live theatre, but the illocution and perlocution can be transferred between forms through the primitive.
When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

"Like to the lark at break of day arising"

The poet analogizes his feelings with a bird flying at dawn in a meter that breaks from the rhythm.

The poet feels like a bird at dawn when he thinks of the subject of the poem.

A sense of elation.

Variation in metric verse "can serve as an extra expressive resource, shaping a lines rhythm so that it will support the conceptual content of that line" (Corn 39). The substitution of a trochee (one long or stressed syllable followed by a short or unstressed) for an iamb (short or stressed followed by a long or unstressed) causes a speeding up (Corn 41). The reader is interpreting visual imagery, which evokes an emotional response through the linking of aesthetics with conceptual conjugates (e.g. linking patterns in the rhythm of the poetic meter (iambic pentameter) and a heartbeat).

The poet’s state is like a bird when he thinks of his love.

The image of a bird taking flight at dawn is evoked through direct reference, rhythm, and intonation, contrasted with the dark imagery and repetitive iambic tetrameter, aligning the reader's experience with that of the poet thinking of the subject.
In a similar way, Tuba-Goose was not intended to be a book with animations, or an animation with words and interactivity. It was important to have an emotional experience that was like a book, but complimented with narrative devices through interactive media and animation that were integral to the conveyance of the narrative. With the illocution, primitive, and performative function isolated from the locution a designer can begin looking for a narrative device unique to the emerging form that also serves the story needs. The resulting narrative device used in this particular project relies on disorientation emerging through a combination of the constituent forms, or more specifically, through confusion generated by swapping from one convention to another. The first parallel experience (perlocution) arising through confusion (the primitive) generated by a swapping of dialects (“swapping dramatic performative” for short) happens when the book turns into an establishing shot through the pop-up transition, and it appears in varying forms the entire time the goose is in the human world. Another “swapping dramatic performative” starts with the paratext announcing the 2nd chapter, which changes to a cinematic morphing shot through an interactive command (see Table 6).
### The Performative Function of Swapping Dialects in the “Chapter 2: Of Geese and Men” Scene

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locution</th>
<th>The text on screen is revealed as the texture in a 3D environment as the viewer swipes the screen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illocution</td>
<td>The goose is entering an environment that he is unprepared for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perlocution</td>
<td>The audience identifies with the protagonist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive</td>
<td>Disorientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constative</td>
<td>This is the beginning of Chapter 2/ The goose is entering the human world. (this performative happens at the junction of 2 constative statements)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Performative Function</td>
<td>The audience and the protagonist share a common emotional experience, investing and inserting the audience in the narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implication</td>
<td>The “Of Geese and Men” scene begins with the declarative statement of announcing next act, and transforms it into an element active in the conveyance of the story. A “mood” primitive (confusion) is used to evoke sympathy for the character through a shared disorientation, watching the character walk into a confusing world as the viewer is watching the scene transform in an unfamiliar way. Unlike most performative functions, this statement exploits the time-based platform to change meanings while the viewer is watching, and involves the viewer in the experience through the swiping interaction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Performative Breakdown of the Book Paratext to 3D Environment
This example of a “swapping dramatic performative” is convoluted because the paratext would be the idealic performative phrase in J. L. Austin’s original lecture. In other words, it would be performative in the sense that it separates one component from the other by the act of utterance, but it is inert as a literary device, a constative utterance in relation to the communication of the story. Like a page that announces the next chapter in any book, this scene begins with the appearance of demarcation of the first chapter from the second in the "book", an act which would perform no action with relation to the conveyance of the narrative. The statement becomes performative as the character enters, revealing the dimensionality of the space, and the performative function is a shift toward identification with the character through a common experience (the perlocution) of disorientation (primitive).
The preceding scenes function through the same mechanism. The text becomes a three-dimensional environment as the swiping motion, which turned the page in previous scenes, reveals the disturbing details about the butcher shop through parallax and optical effect, breaking the anticipated interactive system switching from a page turn, as in a book, to a camera control, as in a video game (see Figure 12). The successive switching of forms functions to keep the audience’s cognitive faculties busy reading meaning in the composition and interpreting their role. As they are reading the meaning from the scene, a new occluding significant event is presented for the spectator to read. While the user is deciphering the environment, interpreting how their interactive motion affects the form, and decoding the implications of the text and imagery, they are presented with the disturbing image of a butcher stuffing a bird. A similar swapping of modes, interpretation, and interruption with an occluding dramatic event is key to an effect described by Professor Nick Browne which he calls “fading” (Browne 135). In this
incidence, the audience is interpreting the scenario, an act which distacts from the mechanism of the narrative device. The distraction is a perlocutionary parallel experience with the protagonist through a common disorientation, functioning to facilitate an emotional investment in the narrative experience and aligning the audience toward an ultimate identification with the protagonist.

In addition to the interactive paradigm (see Table 6), the cyclical form of the character’s journey is mirrored in the aesthetic (see Table 8). The animated typography switches from a vine to a mechanical construction font when the goose finds the tuba (“a human thing”) (see Table 7) to subtly imply a link between the rigid mathematical qualities of the human object and contrast it with the organic typography of the goose’s natural environment. It is not meant to be explicit, but rather a subtle counterpoint to the animation and shape of the curving plumbing of the tuba on the adjacent page. The visual aesthetic is supported in the audio track through the sounds of nature when the goose in in his environment, contrasted with the sounds of an urban environment increasing as the goose enters the human world.
### The Performative of Breakdown of the Construction Font Animated Typography:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locution</th>
<th>The aesthetic of the typography changes; the text is being animated in a form that makes the rigid geometric nature of the typographic construction apparent.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illocution</td>
<td>This suggests to the audience that the thing that the goose has found is not natural, it is not something that a goose can use, it is a sharp contrast to his world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perlocution</td>
<td>A sense of unease with the imagery, slight disharmony with the subtle impression that the character is doing something that is not natural. Nothing startling, nothing that acts like a jump shot, only a slight break in the harmony of the other pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive</td>
<td>Conceptual link/contrast/counterpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constative</td>
<td>The font has changed, the goose has found a tuba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Performative Function</td>
<td>Conceptual link/ contrasting aesthetic - Foreshadow that adopting the tuba is not a good idea for the goose/ Counterpoint - sense of order in the form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Performative of Breakdown of the Construction Font Animated Typography
The Performative of Breakdown of the Cyclical Form and Story Arc

The Beginning

The Return

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locution</th>
<th>The aesthetics begin and end with qualities that are like a book, and the goose’s journey ends back in the world of geese.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illocution</td>
<td>Often what one is looking for was right under their nose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perlocution</td>
<td>A sense of closure and symmetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive</td>
<td>Cognitive association of symmetry with propriety, proverbial nature of the subtext (i.e. “often what you are looking for is right under your nose”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constative</td>
<td>The goose returned to the place he started, and the form has returned to a book-like aesthetic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Performative Function</td>
<td>Increase receptivity of the moral of the story; “Failure is not a flaw; finding your limits is an important part of knowing who you are.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Performative of Breakdown of the Cyclical Form and Story Arc
The illocutionary suggestion is that the “human thing” the goose has found (the tuba) is not natural, it is in sharp contrast to his world, and it is not something that a goose can use. This is designed to evoke a perlocutionary sense of unease through the disharmony of the imagery (the primitive), with the subtle impression that the character is doing something that is not natural. The act is not supposed to be explicitly noticed, only a slight break in the harmony of the other pages. The performative function is to foreshadow upcoming events, generating a sense of order to the arc of the story and character.

The story ends with the character back with the other geese, but participating in their world, gazing at the audience, he is no longer wall eyed, but endowed with an understanding and acceptance of himself (see Table 9).
### Performative Breakdown of the Character in Exposition vs. “Homecoming”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locution</th>
<th>The goose alone and walleyed in the beginning contrasted with the goose with another goose in a nest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illocution</td>
<td>The goose has returned from his journey with the reward of a better understanding of himself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perlocution Primitive</td>
<td>The character no longer seems stupid and one-dimensional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He is no longer walleyed, and he is participating in the world of the geese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constative Explicit</td>
<td>The goose is back with the other geese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performative Function</td>
<td>The character has changed, he is wiser and more enlightened</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Performative Breakdown of the Character in Exposition vs. “Homecoming”
Chapter 5: Reflection and Next Steps

Tuba-Goose was a test bed, exploring the potential of a linguistic form as a design tool. Breaking literary devices into their constative and performative forms to isolate the primitives has yielded a means to transfer the performative function and generate literary devices unique to the new platform. Moreover, an awareness of the performative function helped guide design for proper placement of perlocutionary effects for constructive performative function. The result has been three potential applications, as a translatory tool, an analytical tool, and as a generative tool. The performative formula becomes a translatory tool by separating the literary device from the locution and synthesizing it in another form, in this case the “pop-up scene” (see Table 10). Using the performative formula as an analytical tool led to a restructuring of the exposition to support the primitive (i.e. disorientation/confusion through a break with expectation). The performative formula has been generative in the creation of a performative structure that is not possible in the constituent dialects in the scenes when the goose is in the human world (i.e. the primitives arise from switching between the book, game, and cinematic paradigms).
The Performative Breakdown of the “Pop-Up” Transition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locution</th>
<th>The form had an aesthetic and an interactive means that was similar to a book.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illocution</td>
<td>The character is going into a world that is not what he expects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perlocution</td>
<td>Parallel experience with the protagonist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive</td>
<td>Disorientation through a break with expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constative</td>
<td>The form transitions from a book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Performative Function</td>
<td>This scene creates an alignment of emotions and identification with the onscreen characters investing the audience in the narrative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. Performative Breakdown of the “Pop-Up” Transition

With further development, additional forms can be synthesized in new mediums and performative acts could be transferred between existing conventions through performative analysis.

Most of the Tuba-Goose applied study has focused in the generation of performative structures in narrative which utilized a disorientation primitive to create a parallel experience between the audience and the characters. This experience has revealed that
disorientation needs to be broken into more specific categories. In a sense, all narrative devices use disorientation by removing the audience from their physical position and into the world of the narrative. The dolly-zoom shot, special effects shots, jump scares, and breaking with convention all have a surprise primitive, and could be grouped together. A cognitive association primitive like the ones often employed by poets (see table 5), and used to guide the meter in parts of the Tuba-Goose project (see Table 11), have a more subtle/subconscious effect.
The Performative Breakdown of Metric Variation in Tuba-Goose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locution</th>
<th>The syllables deviate to punctuate some of the words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illocution</td>
<td>Suggest the ridiculousness of the premise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perlocution</td>
<td>Enhanced perception of the awkwardness of grouping a goose, people, and a tuba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive</td>
<td>Linking of aesthetics with conceptual conjugates (i.e. the words geese, goose, people, and tuba do not fit in with the meter).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constative</td>
<td>The goose is leaving the world of geese to go to the world of humans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Performative Function</td>
<td>Suggesting that the goose does not belong in the human world, and the tuba is not a good fit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. Performative Breakdown of Metric Variation in Tuba-Goose

The analysis of narrative devices and their performative structure across platforms that was done to make the project has made it apparent that primitives have a disposition, lending them to certain types of performative functions. The confusion/disorientation primitive used to generate a parallel experience between the audience and the protagonist in the “Pop-Up” scene would not usually be used to create a serene perlocution, but it seems to appear in moments of tension and in comedic performative acts. For example, disorientation through optical effect like Alfred Hitchcock’s dolly-zoom and the Wachowskis’ “bullet time” shot serves to generate a perlocutionary parallel experience with the characters in the narrative. The same visual effects have been used in comedy,
generating the same primitive, with different performative functions. The final action shots in Stephen Chow’s Shaolin Soccer (Chow) contain the “bullet time” effect from The Matrix (Wachowski), and Edgar Wright’s Scott Pilgrim vs. the World (Wright) frequently uses a dolly-zoom. The locutionary elements are the same (the camera is trucking in as it is zooming out in Vertigo and Scott Pilgrim vs. the World, and the camera is flying around the subject in a frozen moment in time in The Matrix and Shaolin Soccer), and the primitive is a form of surprise/disorientation, but the perlocutions and performative functions are very different. The Matrix and Vertigo place the mentality of the audience in the action through parallel experience, while Scott Pilgrim vs. the World and Shaolin Soccer frames the mentality of the audience as the observer of a lampoon. Through performative analysis certain patterns begin to emerge and exceptions stand out. Through most of the experience a variation of surprise/confusion/disorientation primitives are used in scenes that were intended to evoke an unsettling perlocution, but there is one scene where a variation of the surprise/confusion/disorientation is used for a comedic effect like the ones in Scott Pilgrim vs. the World and Shaolin Soccer. The “Probably lots of Geese” scene (see Table 12) near the beginning uses a subtle surprise for comedic effect setting the character up as a lampoon.
Performative Breakdown of the “Probably Lots of Geese” Shot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locution</th>
<th>Identical geese pop in from 3 sides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illocution</td>
<td>The character is a lampoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perlocution</td>
<td>Perception of the goose as silly and humorous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive</td>
<td>Surprise/silly imagery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constative</td>
<td>The scene is interrupted by other geese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>This sets up the character and tone of the story as a simple amusement, in order to break the perceptions in the 3rd act.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12. Performative Breakdown of the “Probably Lots of Geese” Shot

Tony Zhou criticizes Michael Bays use of shots with multilayered dynamic movement in scenes lacking dramatic action (Zhou describes it as “Bayham”) (Zhou). It can be inferred that interrupting the reading process to draw attention to the medium is not appropriate for performative acts that function to evoke a tone of serenity (i.e. a director would not want to break the trance of the audience with a distracting narrative device). An exception to this is Ang Lee’s use of impossible/unbelievable stunts throughout
*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (Lee). The film’s implausible stunts and effects stand out, but the action scenes are placid, with a perlocution similar to a poetic speech act. Disorientation has been easier to identify and break down, most likely due to the researcher’s personal long-standing fascination with the spectacle of technology. Dolly-zooms, special effects shots, and performative acts that use confusion to create a parallel experience between the audience and the protagonist draw attention to themselves and the form, and it has been easier to identify and correlate them. The cognitive association in poetic performative acts (see Table 11), and the distraction/fading primitive described by Professor Nick Browne have performative structures that are completely different from the dolly-zoom and special effect shots I have analyzed (i.e. they are often unconscious, and do not always generate a parallel experience). The nuances of the primitives, perlocution, and performative function could most likely be more defined through further linguistic study.

**Story and Device Reflections**

As a model of virtuous defeat, reading a story like Tuba-Goose to a child would be a means of examining inevitable disenchantment and reconciling the past. A poignant ritual offers cathartic release and aesthetic beauty. This is precisely what the project is designed to create. Growing up in the self-esteem generation, one of the most challenging realizations I have had to face is that one can be right, deserve to succeed, and still fail. Models of virtuous defeat impart behavioral ideals that help identification within a society when facing personal limitation.
The tuba is impractical, it is shiny, unusual, and being human is something the goose thinks he wants and believes he can do. But in the end, it just winds up holding him down. A few people who have reviewed preliminary versions of the project have asked if the subtext is intended to encourage children to give up on their dreams. That is definitely not the goal. Everyone has had things they wanted, tried to achieve with the extent of their abilities, but found that they were unable to attain. There is an abundance of children’s movies and books that tell the audience that if they believe in themselves, they will succeed, that the virtuous will always prevail, and that they should never give up. There are not very many contemporary children’s stories, or even adult material, that show examples of virtue in defeat. When faced with a challenge that cannot be overcome, to whom does one look to for identification? Without role models for virtue in failure, success is equated with virtue, and the only thing that matters becomes winning. Parents can tell their children “It doesn’t matter if you win or lose, but how well you played the game” over and over, but if all their role models are telling them that the virtuous will always triumph, the only conclusion that can be drawn from losing is that they are not good people. Failure is not a flaw; meeting your limitations is a consequence of challenging yourself and a part of finding out who you are.

Further Improvements to the Project

There are a few areas of the project that I can, in reflection, suggest for improvement. Most of these are small technical details along with one suggested major change to the story structure.
The implication of indexicality, which is important to the exposition and the end, would be better supported through a cloth simulation used in the page turns. The parameters of cloth simulation can be adjusted to emulate the appearance of paper (i.e. the weight, stretch, bend, resistance, friction, and air density). The simulated aesthetic implies more strongly that the book is in the user’s hand, and the swiping motion is controlling a physical object.

The tablet’s rear facing camera could be used to project the image from the viewer’s space behind the book, supporting the presence of the artifact and dissolving the presence of the tablet.

The drawings would probably be more suggestive of a book if they were illustrated with cross-hatching (a form of shading that was commonly used in older intaglio print making).

A major change to the original design that has not yet been included is the 2nd challenge from Campbell’s model. Initially the butcher was a “threshold guardian” (described by Vogler 170) to the “supreme ordeal” (Vogler 181), and the central crisis was going to be a more interactive experience. Unlike other digital pop-up books, the interactive experience relays an important piece of the subtext to the audience. The initial design was similar to a musical/dance challenge video game (e.g. Guitar Hero (RedOctane and Harmonix) or Dance Dance Revolution (Konami)), but a counter intuitive game where the triggers are out of step with the music, and ultimately, the user could not win. The performative function would have been a common experience with the protagonist, and the illocution carried would have been that the goose is trying to be something that he
simply is not. It was an important component because it shares that he did not just try once, run into a problem, and give up; he tried over and over, and a Tuba-Goose is just not what he is. Ultimately, the interactive ordeal was cut because it was not practical to create the game in the available time, and the story can function with a central crisis (Vogler 183) around the butcher, rather than a delayed crisis around an interactive challenge.

Potential Use of Performative Theory in Other Media
In a recent talk at Sundance actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt brought up many of the differences between VR and other mediums and some of the problems trying to use existing paradigms to tell stories in virtual reality (Gordon-Levitt). Among the differences he discussed was the role of the audience, interactive media’s ability to change the spectator to a participant, and the narrative potential implied in changing the audience’s role.

Perlocutionary Experiences that Diverge from the Character’s
An interesting performative structure that might be used in VR is demonstrated in Lewis Carroll’s use of the layout of the text in “the mouse’s tail” from Alice in Wonderland (see Figure 13). The text used to describe the mouse’s plight is organized into the shape of a mouse’s tail. Though Alice is also seeing the shape of the tail, and hearing the story, the perlocutionary experience for the audience is one of amusement and charm, something separate from the characters in the story. In this incidence, Carroll is giving the audience an experience through the form that is separate from the characters’ to set a tone of absurdity that the characters do not share. The logical form of this performative act is
categorically different from narrative devices that generate a perlocutionary common experience. Rather than trying to absorb the audience in the story and minimizing the audience’s awareness of the form, Carroll is bringing the audience’s attention to the form to give the audience an experience that is separate from the characters in the story. It is backwards and runs counter to the other narrative devices, but in being backwards, it supports the absurdity and the tone Carroll wanted to capture. There are incidences in other mediums when the designer gives the audience an experience that is counter to the onscreen characters, usually for comedic effect, but it is an interesting challenge to imagine the perlocution in an immersive environment where the audience is playing the role of one of the characters.
Transferring Narrative Devices through Performative Theory

Performative analysis can be used to transfer and combine narrative properties from interactive media, theatre, cinematography, and literature into the developing platforms of virtual reality narrative. Separating the constative from the performative and isolating the primitive reveals the mechanics of a dramatic statement. When locutionary incompatibilities arise, VR storytellers can look for ways of synthesizing the primitive to achieve the perlocutionary objective; transferring a dramatic statement to the new form.
Additionally, a “switching dramatic performative” can be used in new ways in VR, swapping the audience’s role from spectator to participant for narrative effect. As a linguistic theory, it would follow that further taxonomy of narrative primitives and their relationship to the perlocution would lead to additional narrative statements with unique properties.

An example of a locutionary incompatibility between cinematic convention and VR arises when trying to use one of the key cinematic devices, montage. Cinema relies heavily on montage, but rapid successive changes in the viewer’s vantage in VR leads to discomfort (Fuchs 22). Unless the desired perlocutionary outcome is an identification with the characters in the narrative through a common sense of nausea, which is rarely the case in cinema, a VR storyteller would want a synthesis with the same performative function.

As virtual reality storytelling develops, many cinematic devices that rely on controlling the spectator’s gaze fail to translate into virtual reality. Designers in VR run into problems trying to use cinematic fast cutting techniques because switching camera perspectives from close-ups to wide shots and moving the camera changes the audience’s perception of scale and placement. With a few exceptions (the dolly zoom being one), fast cutting, camera movement, and even limited zoom can be spliced together in traditional cinema without being perceived by the spectator as motion. But in an immersive VR experience, moving the camera causes discomfort and even nausea. If a director tries to cut from a mid-shot to an extreme close-up, the perception of continuity must contend with the audience’s perception that they are jumping around the room and
the perceived change in scale of the subject or object (i.e. either the face of the character in front of them has become huge or the audience has shrunk).

The performative formula could be used to break down the narrative function of fast cut editing and translate the perlocution to VR without the form. A possible approach is through the work of Professor Nick Browne’s theory on the specular text. The key points of his theory can be reduced to a philosophy wherein a cinematic spectator “reads” the sequences of shots like the text of an implied narrator; climactic moments are interrupted, and the spectator's attention is redirected to another dramatic distraction to keep the viewer in a state where the action constantly “occludes a previous significance and replaces it with another”. The process of constantly swapping modes, interrupting the interpretive process with an occluding dramatic event, and forgetting, Browne’s term “fading” (Browne 135), is instrumental to the anticipation and absorption of the audience in the action. In Professor Browne’s theory, the performative function of montage is a suspension of awareness of one’s place in the audience. This is activated through the primitive, the act of interpretation and the distraction of an occluding event. Though the locution (montage) might not have the desired perlocution in VR, if the designer could instigate a visual solution in VR that engaged the spectator in a similar interpretive task and interrupt the “reading” process with another dramatic element, the performative function of montage could be transferred to the VR experience.

The “swapping dramatic performative” used in the “Chapter 2: Of Geese and Men” scene (see Table 6) utilizes the lack of an established dialogue between the audience and the medium. The primitive occurs by simply swapping between literary convention to
cinematic and interactive media, utilizing the confusion as a parallel experience between the audience and protagonist. Translated into VR, this structure could be used with the role of the audience (i.e. switching from spectator to participant at a moment when the designer wanted the audience to experience a disorientation in parallel with the protagonist). If the VR experience began like a movie, establishing the audience’s role as that of a passive spectator, and in a moment of tension for the protagonist, the audience suddenly became a participant, the confusion could generate a useful literary device. For example, if the audience was watching a VR action/adventure movie, and at a time when the protagonists were ambushed, the spectator realizes that they are being attacked as well, the interpretation of the changing role could be used as a parallel experience with the protagonist, aiding in engagement in the story through the medium’s limbo state. As with all narrative devices that rely on the surprise from a new technique for dramatic effect, it is something that can only be done once in the medium before it loses effectiveness. But unlike the “bullet time” shot from The Matrix (Wachowski), the “switching dramatic performative” can be used in different emerging mediums, so though it can only be done once in the interactive book, it could be used again in VR, and again in another emerging medium that does not yet have a single established convention.
References


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