

Questions on Golzalo Frasca, “Simulation vs. Narrative”

1. Why isn't a theory of narrative satisfactory for understanding games?
2. What is his definition of simulation?
3. Be sure you can explain the point of the examples: film vs. flight simulator and strike simulator.
4. What is the difference between paidia and ludus and what does it matter for games?
5. What are the 4 levels at which games are ideological?

Questions on McKenzie Wark, “The Sims”

Note: to understand Wark's argument, you need to understand his use of the term “gamespace.” As Steven Shaviro explains “For Wark, all of social reality today is a vast “gamespace,” dominated by the algorithmic codifications and unequal power relations that are displayed within computer games in their purest and clearest form. Social reality today is governed by the same “military-entertainment complex” that actually manufactures and distributes computer games. Wark uses actual computer games as lenses or prisms to examine the “gamespace” of our media-saturated, simulacral world, and to discover the structures of feeling, or forms of subjectivity, that we find ourselves exhibiting as inhabitants of that world.”

1. What is the relationship between “the Sims” and consumerism?
2. What are Wark's definitions of allegory, algorithm and allegorithm?
3. Why is he so interested in boredom and cruelty to characters?
4. Why is failure so important to games?
5. What is the difference between cheating and trifling and why does it matter?
6. What point is Wark making in his discussions of EA Spouse and coltan?