

Hacks and Hiccups in making a VR-larp

A guide to
Dramaturgy for Participatory Practises

a phd project at the 30% mark
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Introduction

This essay is an attempt to collect all the thoughts I have about participatory practices and how they apply to or can be applied to a virtual reality context, at this point in time. It is not the work, merely a trail of breadcrumbs that lets someone follow my path through the work.

My Phd-position is the result of a joint venture between my employer Region Gävleborg (Gävleborg County Council) and Stockholm University of the Arts and the terms and conditions that apply means I'm doing my Phd at half speed, 50%. The other 50% is my work as a crossmedia developer at the Cultural Department, Region Gävleborg.

Phd studies at Stockholm Academy of the Arts are structured around seminar milestones at 30%, 50%, 80% and final seminar. This essay is written at the 30% mark. The purpose of this seminar as stated in the guidelines is:

Perspectives on future development with an emphasis on research question and planning. The seminar should frame a discussion to develop the questions asked by the project in relation to the artistic practice. The discussion should focus on methods chosen and the production of future work. The purpose of this discussion is to support the project. (authors own transl.)¹

Background

When applying for my phd position I presented my research question something like this;

Dramaturgy for Participatory Practises (the title of my Phd project) investigates some possible synthesis of the apparently opposite polarities linear storytelling and participant driven interaction.

I want to conduct a work that encompasses practical production in the shape of several iterations of the same story in versions both analogue as larp/interactive theatre and as immersive Virtual Reality.

1

<https://stdh.sharepoint.com/sites/Forskning/Delade%20dokument/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2F%2Fforskning%2Fdelade%20dokument%2FRiktlinjer%5Fdelseminarier%5Fskh%5F191111%2Fpdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FForskning%2Fdelade%20dokument&p=true&originalPath=aHR0cHM6Ly9zdGRoLnNoYXJlLmVudC9pbmQuY29tLzpiOi9zL0ZvcnNrbmluZy9FWDNsSWMtVXN6Wkp2b2d2dV3d3o3QUJaQXV4TnpsLVIhU2hWRWd6eIFMUXJBP3J0aW1IPTFiWUM3UUJwMkVn>

The practise is critically reflected upon in essays about the dramaturgical structure, the artistic process in the-making-of and the collaboration with the audience.

Linear storytelling and game design, how can they play together? The project aims to create a tool box for storytelling with a participating audience.

I want to explore a practice that first and foremost addresses the participant. Where the participant doesn't necessarily produce anything but their own experience.

- What does the dramaturgic structure of such a story look like?
- How can it be described in regards to terminology borrowed from game mechanics and taking the unpredictability of the participants' choices into account?
- How can such an experience/story be critiqued? What quality markers can be applied to a "it is what you make it" kind of experience?

The project aims to articulate professional praxis and terminology for reflection and production. *Dramaturgy for Participatory Practises* shall give light upon perspectives on participation dramaturgy, mainly for reflection and critical analysis within artistic research and to spread terminology for a wider use.

In the 2.5 years that have passed since this was written some things have changed. Two Knutepunkt books have been published (LARP Design 2019 & What do we do when we play? 2020) This covers some of the questions on dramaturgy very well and uses a terminology that can be applied to participatory experiences also outside the Nordic Larp context.

You say Participation, I say Participation

The view on what participation can be and what it can be used for in this text is very much shaped by my own experiences with larp. When I first set out on this journey of looking into the dramaturgy of participatory experience I did so looking at the disjoint between how we often talk about participatory arts and how it feels to take part in a story and own player agency. This definition of participation has similarities with some adjoining fields but also some important differences. Let us have a look at the variations in some current discourses; contemporary art and media studies.

Participatory art

In a contemporary art context, participatory art draws its genealogical lines from the futurists, dadaist and situationist movements in the early 1900s and happenings in the 60s. It has a variety of expressions in community art, performance and new media. Relational aesthetics

(Bourriaud, 1996) is a big umbrella that covers art that deals with relations and/or social interactions.

Claire Bishop's book *Artificial Hells* gives many examples of participatory art and points to problems balancing artistic quality and societal good, she also draws our attention to the complexity in the relationship between spectator and participant.

Bishop's theories on participatory art are often about delegated authenticity, by using participants in their art work artists can create authenticity that they themselves do not embody (regarding issues about class, race, gender etc). Bishop and the works she studies make a clear division between participants and spectators/audience. The audience are spectators whether or not they are aware that they are watching a work of art. Also in the community-art examples she uses, there is an audience looking at the exhibitions or listening to the seminars that the participatory process has produced.

The kind of participation I'm interested in doesn't include a passive audience. Having an audience shifts something in the participatory dynamic, when everyone "is all in it together" this works as an equaliser. Having an audience makes most people more self-aware and it will often act as a dampener on interactions due to self-censoring and wanting to do what's right, cool or expected rather than testing boundaries or acting on a whim.

Immersive Theatre

Immersive Theatre (Machon 2013) also works with participatory practices. Here differences can be found in expression and form. Immersive Theatre is partly defined by production design and how it is communicated, in Machon's examples often with lots of mystification and blurred lines between reality and fiction. This idea of 'suspend disbelief' was widely spread also among transmedia storytellers and ARG²-designers last decade but is more useful in a close knit community that share a set of references and unspoken tropes than in a discussion that wants to be accessible and invite input from various fields of expression. Again the player/spectator position is more similar to that of a person following a pre-programmed path in a videogame. The participant's agency and ability to affect the story or to find support from a player alibi is limited.

Transmedia

Media scholar Henry Jenkins' (2008) term transmedia includes participation as one of the defining elements. The participation he talks about is at first discernable as an audience's response to i. e. a TV-show only to then grow and evolve, first into fan-art and then reach a point where it produces a result that feeds back into the production, thus co-creating content for the original IP (Intellectual Property). What started as a superficial dialogue then becomes a symbiotic production process in Jenkins' example. The participatory aspects of transmedia projects often develop ways to broaden participation, notably via games or social media

² Alternate reality games

campaigns. The potential for viral spread makes these strategies central to any successful transmedia IPs.

Another part of Jenkins transmedia-term is that it consists of fragments spread over multiple platforms converging to a whole story or story world.

A transmedial storytelling in Jenkins' definition demands that it's creator can switch back and forth between perspectives of linear story and creating an architecture for interactivity/participation, and so it is similar to the perspectives of a larp-designer or larp-dramaturg. Jenkins regards the participation as an important ingredient both because it offers a deeper experience to fans and because this deep engagement by fans can create additional value and content to the production/story.

However, Jenkins' terminology doesn't make a perfect fit for studying participation in a single, unfragmented story. Nor is it the right lense for looking at a larp or a VR-experience, neither of which has to be portioned out over various platforms in the way transmedia stories are. This text and the all of Dramaturgy for Participatory Practises at this 30% mark is more concerned with an idea of participation that creates authenticity within the participants' own self and in collaboration with narrative fiction, by reflecting on their own experience.

Back Channels

The conversation between participants can be organised in a back-channel. In a transmedia project this means the conversation generated by the IP happens between users and doesn't necessarily feed back to the producers. (In LARP this means most of what happens during runtime.) This back-channel communication generates a sense of community, especially notable in fandom culture. Some producers are able to design spaces for back-channel activities and they become added value to the original IP if not an integral part of the story. Sometimes the fandom is an even bigger value generator than the IP that caused it.

One such backchannel can be found with some audiences of K-drama (South Korean soaps/tv-drama). K-drama can be found online and with many media service providers but the added backchannel value shows when you view it on an app that allows commenting. The comments can appear in a list, below the window that screens the drama, like youtube comments. Or they can be displayed like subtitles, only at the top of the screen. These comments usually start with the obvious *Kilroy was here*-kind of statement. E.g;

"Hello, I'm watching this for the first time in June 2020."

"Anyone else watching from Turkey?"

"Qualche italiano che sta guardando il dicembre 2017?"

People also like to comment on the appearance of actors and to recommend other things they've seen. The plot is the cause of much analysis, spoilers are generally yelled at and commentators comment on each others' input also to cheer each other on, laughing at jokes etc. Shouting 'BTS' in capital letters is appropriate at any point in time, a proper response to this is a row of purple hearts or 'Where's my Army at?' After some time watching you start to

develop a sense that the non-binaries, boys and girls in the BTS Army do have more fun than the rest of us muggles.³

The back-channel of commenting a K-drama allows a discussion between people who may be far apart in time and geography but who still hang out together as fans. By participating in this conversation of comments they (/we) do not affect the story on the screen to any obvious extent but they are definitely having an impact on each others' experience of it.

LARP

Larp stands for live action role play and exists in a number of traditions and varieties across the world. When I larp I usually do so within the context of Nordic LARP, a tradition that values high levels of co-creation and collaboration and a rule system that is unobtrusive. Nordic LARP also has a strong emphasis on self-reflection with conferences on LARP design taking place every year and a number of more or less scholarly articles published.

I was that child that ran around every tree in the forest looking for portals to Narnia. Children play with immersion into story universes all the time (why do we stop?) Migrating to LARP in the early 90s was a very intuitive move and offered more of that quality of immersion I was looking for than the amateur theatre performances me and my friends used to put up.

I was also the young woman who discovered one could walk through the city at night without any fear simply by channeling some roleplaying characters' super human abilities. It was quite a discovery to find that fake memories could be as useful and embodied as real ones. I believe this character description is recognised by many larpers.

Immersion is tied to agency, if your character does something and the story world does not respond to it -immersion quickly stops. This is where collaboration comes in, through other players confirmation of my characters behavior the fiction holds. Agency and impact are what interests me in larp, as in any form of participation.

It took me a long time to learn to "play to lose" but once I did, LARPs became fun again. The collaboration between players can trigger a state of flow very efficiently in the right circumstances. I'm always on the lookout for magic and in the context of collaborative LARPS I occasionally find it.

With player agency the palette of affect or emotions experienced can change a little as one's involvement in the unfolding narrative is more direct as in cause and effect and not only a sympathetic one⁴. Guilt, pride, the agony of fail or embarrassment as well as the joy of a fiero-moment.⁵

When LARP works, it can offer the sort of player agency and immersion that frames the kind of participation I'm always looking for. This is why the impact from such an experience is equal to embodied memory and why it, with critical self reflection, can be used in interesting ways.

³ So I joined of course

⁴ Phillips, Andrea, Acreators' Guide to Transmedia Storytelling

⁵ <https://www.whatgamesare.com/fiero.html>



Timed Comments



Cette situation m'énerve elle l'a largué comme une Merde et maintenant elle revient ! 🤔



saroia said at 00:00

I just LOVE how all of them dress! Well, except for DR, lol



saroia said at 00:00

Guys, are you all forgetting that DS had Taek borrow some comic books in ep. 2?



saroia said at 00:00

Guys.Are you all forgetting that DS had Taek borrow some comic books in ep.2?



moella rose said at 00:00

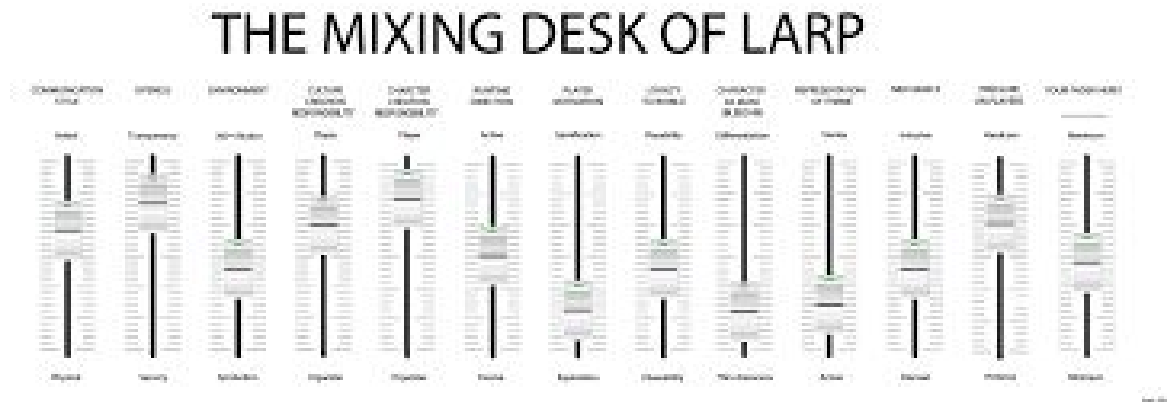
Some LARP tools;

mixing desk of larp, alibis and safety mechanisms

Taking part in a nordic larp can feel very immersive and like stepping into a story, with agency to tell your character's own part in it. It requires improvisation from a starting point of prepared character facts (social status, relationships, personality, motivation etc) and there is no passive audience, only active players. To nurture good larping that supports players and doesn't compromise their safety, LARP designers have developed a number of tools.

The mixing desk of LARP

One very practical way to look at levels of participation is via the idea of 'the mixing desk of larp'. Mixing desk of larp is a design tool but it is also useful when analyzing participatory experiences. You can add or detract as many themed sliders as you like but lets focus on the one marked "participation" for now; having the slider at the top of the scale means co-creativity and low means interactivity i.e. pressing buttons.



Alibi (for interaction)

An alibi is basically an excuse for playing, something that legitimises whatever weirdness the participant is choosing to enact. Some of the strongest alibis I've experienced is having a gamemaster (GM) hissing in my ear goading me on. Since the GM is seen by other players but not their characters I know I'll be forgiven for my characters' outburst. A weak alibi can be a character name on a name tag or a perfunctory costume.

Safety mechanics

The idea of using safety mechanics has been around since the very early days of larp, players were informed that if spotting a potentially dangerous situation to shout 'cut!' 'off game!' and convey any information necessary. This has grown into multifaceted techniques of code words and hand gestures to fit any style of larping. Whatever technique is decided on is usually workshopped/practised before runtime so that participants feel comfortable using it. Otherwise the implicit social pressure not to cause a fuss or ruin the mood may be too strong for players to consider their own or others' well being.⁶

Impact, The Ikea effect, wyrding and attitude-shifts

The IKEA effect is a [cognitive bias](#) in which [consumers](#) place a disproportionately high value on products they partially created. The name refers to [Swedish](#) manufacturer and furniture retailer [IKEA](#), which sells many [items of furniture that require assembly](#).

A 2011 study found that subjects were willing to pay 63% more for furniture they had assembled themselves, than for equivalent pre-assembled items⁷.

Participatory experiences can have a strong impact on the people experiencing it. The embodied memories and sense of ownership help make it so. This means these experiences can be used consciously to shift attitudes or work to deconstruct norms. This is true on a larger scale as with transmedia projects designed by Starlight Runner for instance, to help disenfranchised communities lower crime rates ie. I worry that Cambridge Analytica would think it a great idea.

It is also possible on a personal level to get access to memories, social status and relationships you as yourself wouldn't otherwise have access too. The residue of these relationships and emotions connected with them is usually referred to as *bleed*. Bleed means something leaks into your everyday life.

Bleed can be planned and handled consciously, Jonaya D Kemper calls this process *wyrding* in her thesis, "Playing to Create Ourselves: Exploring Larp and Visual Autoethnographic Practice as a Tool of Self Liberation for Marginalized Identities"

Virtual Reality

Working as a crossmedia developer for Region Gävleborg has allowed me to try some new tools for storytelling, among these Virtual Reality. I was first attracted to it because I'm a useless gamer. I have tried to dive into MMORGs and a number of triple A gaming titles but since I don't

⁶ For more on safety mechanics: Koljonen, Johanna. 2020. "Larp Safety Design Fundamentals." *Japanese Journal of Analog Role-Playing Game Studies* <https://jarps.net/journal/article/view/16/23?fbclid=IwAR2vd3JYphJ2T9WWBROgQqDKI84po0XstbOWmxT aQXdVrxxjZNWbwBHjIQ>

⁷ Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IKEA_effect

have the reflexes to handle a game console with confidence (my children tell me I should be looking at the screen not the buttons) it was never a smooth experience. In VR, if I want to search a room I simply walk around and look, I can even touch objects with my hands, I rarely have to double click anything or find button X while pressing trigger B. Much of the more generally distributed VR-content has been about roller coaster rides, viral videos of people falling over or 360 tours of exotic locations. It has been revolutionary in the real estate business, architecture and training situations in many sectors. Still many of us associate it mainly with the gaming industry.

I've been part of making some 360* music videos and re-creating a the kitchen in a world heritage house in painstaking detail and making it into a gamified experience for the regional museum. VR is an umbrella term that includes many different expressions and modalities, but it is the multiplayer possibilities in fully immersive VR that interests me the most. It seems like a most obvious opportunity for larp-like participatory experiences.

Social VR

There are a number of platforms for Social VR, I've so far tried AltspaceVR, VRChat and Oculus Venues. There are others, and some VR-games also offer areas for off-game socializing in their in-game worlds.

Most Social VR uses cartoon-like avatars, upper bodies, hands/arms and heads. These can be randomised or designed to look a little like the real you, some even let you upload avatars created from scratch for you to use or to add to the public library. Despite the cartoon aesthetic you do get a sense of immersion as you walk around, looking at the landscape, the activities on offer and of course other people/avatars.

I entered the scene of social VR hoping and half expecting to find flow and easy interaction with other people. Instead I experienced awkwardness, felt technically dyslexic and generally slow and clumsy, a feeling very reminiscent of what I remember from my limited experience with 2nd Life.

VR is still very much in development. I was testing one of the larger brands' new social platform, there was me (JosephineR) CraigH32, M4rcin and SXYbld. Four people, represented by individual avatars, wobbling about trying to get our bearings. Not a huge crowd...yet. Later in the evening it was a little more crowded, North America had apparently woken up.

I went to a Steve Aoki concert⁸ as I entered I noticed the sign above the venue entrance indicated 83 people present. People were doing some of the things people normally do at concerts, taking selfies and waving their arms in the air. But lots of things were not usual for a concert context; not many people seemed to be into the artist or other people much. Tossing hands in the air was mainly because that triggers a confetti effect, not because you want to move to the music. Selfies can be taken of the avatar but if you turn to have the artist in the background, that just comes out black. Not sure if this is because of limitations in tech or

⁸ Now would be a good time to shout BTS! in the back channel.

copyright. The only way to share the selfies is via the social medium that owns this venue, very proprietary.

So many things are in place for social VR to really hit the mainstream. This is 2020, the year of Covid-related restrictions and though most of us manage to carry on some sort of work practice we are all getting tired of the flat-screen interaction. Flat screen meetings are distorting our sense of time and our ability to improvise together. Bringing more of your physical self into the room should make a difference. It means one can make some use of body language, space and dimensions. Where we position ourselves in relation to each other means something, especially if all people present see the same thing. We've all experienced confusion in flat screen meetings due to the fact that we have different forms of presentations, participants appear in a different order on my computer than on yours. Not so in social-VR.

In immersive Virtual Reality you can have an avatar (representing you) moving around in the virtual world. The feeling is different from moving your character around a flat screen as in a videogame. When you nod your head the avatar mimics your movement, like motion capture. We tend to believe what we see and in VR and it is easy to interact with the environment that we see rather than the one that is actually there. This is potentially dangerous and one of the very practical reasons why VR might be difficult to distribute. I trip over my pets a lot. Another difficulty is trying to explain the value of immersive VR in words rather than empirical tests.

Even my colleague who has been working with VR doesn't always share my perspective of what it could be for, what we can experience with/in it. We have this ongoing Socratic conversation about things, i.e:

H: Why bother with meeting in VR?

Me: We could do a conference in like Altspace VR or VRchat and have a mingle-session.

H: But why? We already have conferences in Zoom and Teams. What would be different?

Me: Well...you can bring more of your body into it, jump around and wave at each other...

H: We wave in zoom all the time.

Me: It's not the same...in VR you can walk around and eavesdrop...

H: Yes! That makes a difference.





Chrystal Tech

Chrystal Tech (originally AISceance) is the title of a short free form larp scenario I created to adapt from analogue larp to a VR version. The original analogue version was written for and premiered at Stockholm Scenario Festival 2019 and the VR-version was premiered at Folkteatern Gävleborg 2020.

This work is about testing participatory storytelling and the adaptation from analogue to VR is to make the dramaturgical seams come visible by putting together a prototype piece. A prototype that, like a turnable coat will look one way to begin with and another way with it's lining turned out.

The prototype is a short free form LARP scenario. Basically it is a mini-larp, one you don't have to prepare for in advance by making up a character with props and relationships, you just turn up and improvise within a given framework and with the guidance of a GM.

For my scenario the framework is a fiction based around ChrystalTech, a company that specialises in metaphysical self help. It is a channeling sceance session for 4 participants set in a universe where a very helpful tech company provides a service to sort out your spiritual well being by helping you understand the invisible forces that surround you. ChrystalTech is a company that will help you find your very own spiritual support team in the shape of spirit guides and animals, chakra-colours and tarotcards. This is achieved through a group sceance that lets the participants take turns in being each other's mediums. In the analogue version the participants have to work hard with coming up with content for each other's spiritual guidance. A game master is present and will interrupt the play at intervals to check in on the players and prompt them for what comes next. The gm takes on the part of a ChrystalTech employee who tells the 4 participants what to expect and how to behave if they experience technical difficulties, while generally assuring them that nothing will go wrong. The story arc is very basic; 4 participants meet each other and the GM. The GM gives them cards to fill in the information they will 'recieve' in a particular order. Starting with simple colours and building up to spirit-guides.

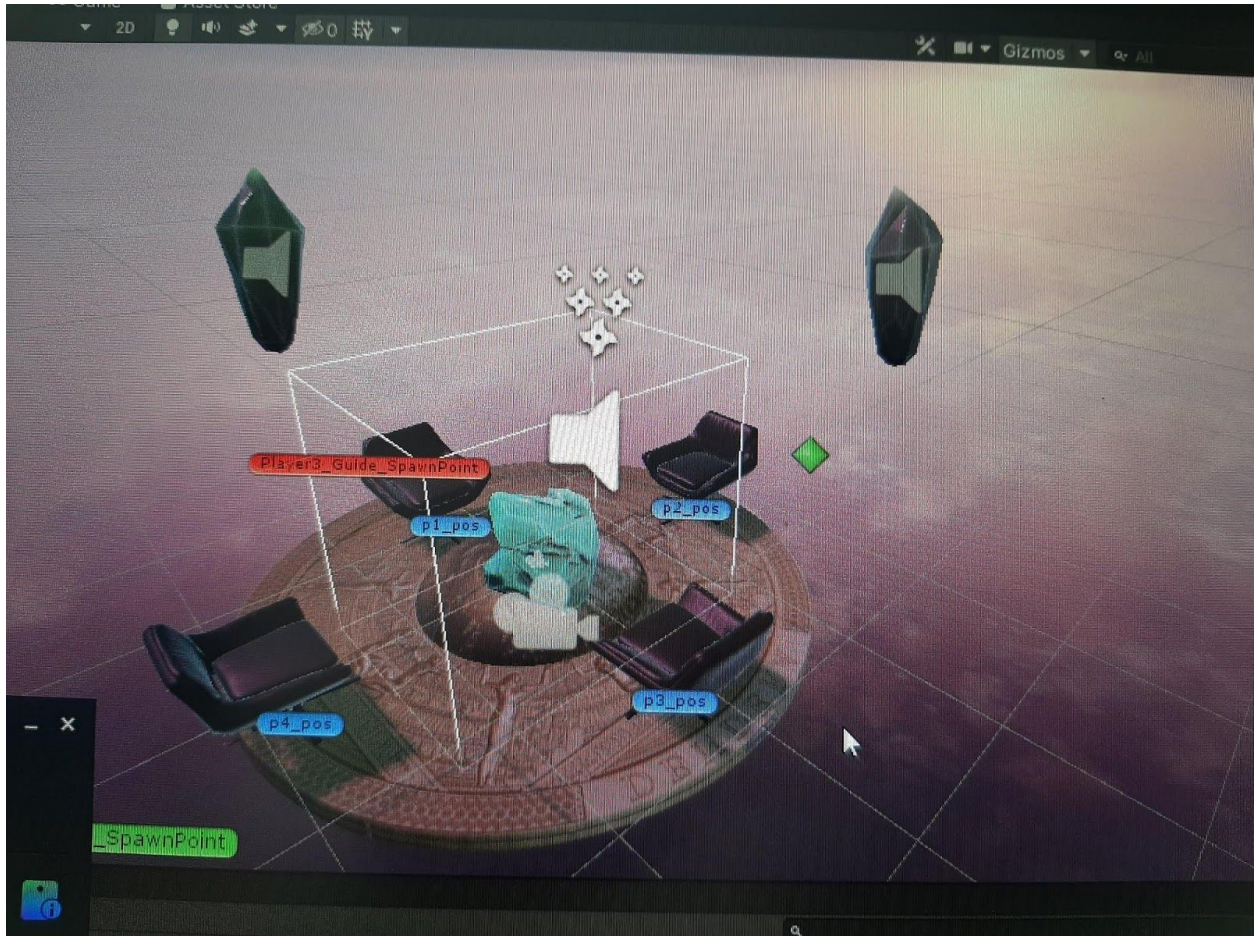
The interaction is built around them all recieving messages *for* each other, interpreting these messages (tarot cards, sounds and guides) and conveying it to the person in the circle the message is for. In the analogue version it was easy to design the order so that all 4 participants interacted with each other.

"The first message you will get after focusing on the person opposite you, then the person to the left."..etc.

To keep the interaction light hearted I added a grinning/smiling technique to use whenever they needed time to think or 'recalibrate the sensors'. Making a smiley face is supposed to help you feel cheerful, a sort of neurological self-hack.

After a playtest of the analogue version I also added the slight alibi of a shallow character and let players come up with a name from a given initial. This was written on a piece of paper drawn from a hat, the paper also stated an age and a reason for being there. (A gift from the children, to boost one's CV when applying for a new job etc).

With the VR-version it was difficult to have players see each other outside the virtual so name tags were useless. Holding cards was also not a useful idea since participants' hands were busy with the controls. Many things changed when moving from analogue to virtual. As mentioned the design changed but also the pace and the interaction. The changes affect all the different positions involved: designer, GM and participant.





Henrik Harrysson testing functions in ChrystalTech using an old HTC Vive headset.

Adapters, Buttons, Computers aka the ABC of despair

From my notebook:

- Found a great female shaman but it wasn't rigged so we couldn't use it. (software issue)
- Would like to use our shiny new HTC Pro headsets but Kjell & Co didn't have an adapter from display port to hdmi so we go back to old HTC Vives. (hardware issue)
- SourceTree works like a charm and I get overconfident about my computer skills. Next day Leo has to spend 5hs acting as IT support. Nothing works. (software issue & me)
- Sorting out tangled wires and carrying suitcases full of computer back and forth is as much part of the practise as thinking about alibis or story arc. (more hardware issues than ideal)
- For some reason we can not see player 3 in the virtual room. Turns out it was connected to a Russian server. Set all 4 computers to EU-server as default in Unity. (software issue)
- Buttons get in the way. Because I have a lot of buttons on my GM screen I want to press them all, quickly. I have to concentrate on the participants and try to remember that their perspective of time is not the same as mine. (human-machine issue)
- We decide to use a white space instead of the generic virtual office we started out with. A white space would be easier to adapt for other stories. In my phd context we talk about how a white space is not neutral and that there is a lot of critique against it for being western/white normative. Leo shows me the new version; it is not white after all, it is a pink and purple new age heaven. I am pleased. (human issue)

Don't press this button!





Your PC ran into a problem and needs to restart. We're just collecting some error info, and then we'll restart for you.

30% complete



For more information about this issue and possible fixes, visit <https://www.windows.com/stopcode>

If you call a support person, give them this info:

Stop code: SYSTEM_THREAD_EXCEPTION_NOT_HANDLED

What failed: nvlddmkm.sys

Notes on process

To save time and money in the programming we use a lot of what is already there. We use designs someone else has made, we buy functions and designs even characters. A lot of design decisions are made because there are chunks of programming there to choose from, effects and designs can be bought off the shelf. I try to be picky in choosing spirit guides but it is obvious that the design of avatars and venues can become manifestations of pre-existing biases, mine and/or the original programmer's.

This is a short paragraph but a big part of the learning outcome.

The break between scenes that were part of the transparency in the analogue version disappears in VR. For some reason I can not bring myself to interrupt the VR, ask people to take their headsets off in the middle of it. My GMing is rushed and I'm pressing all the effect-buttons too fast. Because I can't see the participants' facial expressions I find it difficult to gauge their mood, so I can't use that to guide me in my role as a GM. I do sense however there is a lot going on for the participants, they are busy taking it all in. This is normal for people not used to VR.

The creative process in making a VR-larp can easily become a railroad track without any of the fluidity and surprise that makes LARP dynamic. How do we keep the nuances in a VR-environment?

The adaptation to VR starts at the writing of the analogue scenario. CrystalTech is to be a seated experience for safety reasons. Having 4 people stumbling around not able to see their immediate surroundings can lead to all sorts of trouble. This is one of the practical reasons why I think a seance is a good choice, I can design for everyone to stay in their seats. Safe-ish. If LARP has come up with ways to adapt and calibrate safety techniques from shouting "Off game!" to the plurality and sophisticated tools they offer today, I feel confident that Larping in VR too can be molded by good design to a better fit.

VR over a distance. One of the great possibilities with VR is of course that we can be many people in the same virtual room though physically far apart.

Audio is tricky in VR over a distance, as long as all participants are seated in the same room they can hear each other fine but how do you direct the conversation to someone specific when the sound isn't directional?

Critique

From an artistic research perspective it is insufficiently explored how participatory stories are experienced by the participants themselves. The critique often confuses it with spectatorship-art, meant to be seen and observed from the outside. (Dagens Nyheter 2016-06-09). Bishop points to problems balancing artistic quality and societal good. A wording result can be extremely useful even if built on a complete cliché. It is still somewhat unclear how

to tell a good story for a participating audience, and by what criteria for quality they can be judged or even analysed, or how to construct a useful framework for critique of such works.

Shall we...?

The way forward is not necessarily more channeling sessions with ChrystalTech. Though I'd love to have more awareness about it in the communities of LARP designers and artistic researchers. Not so much because the world needs a virtual automated tarot reading but because experiencing ChrystalTech can be a way in to understand what VR does and doesn't do. It would be a great opportunity to really invite some co-creative processes.

What can other designers do with an interactive piece for 4 avatars?

Can we talk about the things LARP is usually not so good at? Issues of colour for instance?

White fragility? Ableism? Ageism?

Can we loosen up the avatar-interaction so it runs less like a video game and more like a larp?

Can we design a VR-larp to facilitate wyrding?

Can we make it daring and safe?

By facilitating workshops I can invite others into the process of understanding how to create better interaction and a smoother flow for participants, GMs and designers. I hereby cordially invite all who might find some value in the process to join me in workshoping in 2021 for the next step in VR-LARP.

