

Mateas and Stern discuss methods of blending dramatic storytelling with interactivity, two aspects of games which are inherently in conflict. For “agency” to be achieved in a game, the players must be able to perform actions, but also to understand why they are acting, and what the results will be.

"Interactive drama" attempts to reconcile the two. It's a collaboration between author (deciding the story's structure) and player (deciding its path and outcome). The key is "agency," the empowerment of making meaningful choices in pursuit of a goal. But can we guarantee both freedom and closure?

Mateas and Stern envision games in which players control outcomes without necessarily realizing the choices that preceded. Paramount is a balance between physical constraints and personal decisions, allowing for a realistic progression. They conclude by refuting critiques of their theory and projecting hopes for its attainment.

Mateas and Stern discuss the problems that arise when trying to create an interactive drama. They show that when the developer's story, or narrative, is complemented with the user's interaction, or game play, an overall interactive narrative can be reached.