

STANISLAVKY'S SYSTEM AS A GAME DESIGN METHOD: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between theatre and games has been repeatedly discussed (Laurel 1993; Murray 1997; Frasca 2004; El-Nasr 2007; Fernández-Vara 2009), but its possibilities have not been explored in enough depth. This paper goes beyond a theoretical proposal, and describes how Stanislavski's acting method (1959) served as the inspiration to design a game based on the Spanish classical theatre play, *La Dama Boba* (*The Foolish Lady*).

The result was a point-and-click adventure game developed with the eAdventure platform, (Torrente, del Blanco, Marchiori, Moreno-Ger, Fernandez-Manjon 2010) a tool to create educational games. The paper provides an overview of the most and least successful aspects of this design method, and how it helped transform a narrative, dramatic in this case, into a digital game.

Keywords

Game design, educational games, theatre, Stanislavski

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between theatre and games has been repeatedly discussed (Laurel 1993; Murray 1997; Frasca 2004; El-Nasr 2007; Fernández-Vara 2009), but its possibilities have not been explored in enough depth. The long tradition of manuals and acting methods to direct and perform in the theatre presents a wealth of guidelines to understand the player as a performer, as well as suggest novel game design methods—Frasca's notable article proposed using Augusto Boal's strategies for the Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal 2003) as an inspiration to create games that tackled political and social issues, for example.

Frasca (Frasca 2004) proposed turning the players into *spectactors* (the sum of spectator and actor) as a starting point to introduce acting theories into a game, and as a method to improve player engagement and pleasure.

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In fact, Tanenbaum (2011) already suggested method acting theory as the basis of a new interactor model for interactive digital storytelling. He argues that an actor performing a role on stage and an interactor playing a character in an interactive narrative or game are engaged in cognitively similar activities. Nevertheless, treating players like actors means imposing extra constraints to the game, in the same way that actors are constrained during performance by the dramatic text, the rules of the game already constrain the performance of the player in the game.

Within the game design discourse, it is assumed that providing the player with more freedom will result in more agency, and thus in more pleasure (Adams, 1999). Brenda Laurel cautions against this:

“A system in which people are encouraged to do whatever they want will probably not produce pleasant experiences. When a person is asked to ‘be creative’ with no direction or constraints whatever, the result is...often a sense of powerlessness or even complete paralysis of the imagination. Limitations—constraints that focus creative efforts—paradoxically increase our imaginative power by reducing the number of possibilities open to us.” (Laurel 1993)

Following Laurel’s warning and due to the nature of our game – a classic theatre adaptation –, we designed it placing ourselves in a situation where we authored against the intentions of the player rather than with them. Players must follow the script of the play, so they are constrained to enact those events as if they were actors. They will find pleasure in becoming the character of a theatre play, performing in sync with the designed possibilities of the game (Tanenbaum 2011).

To better understand the cognitive process of becoming a character, the next section reviews the literature on actor training that focuses on the works of Constantin Stanislavski (1959), whose writing led to the development of the American acting system (usually referred to as The Method).

This acting method served as the inspiration to design a game based on the stage play *La Dama Boba* (*The Foolish Lady*) by Lope de Vega (1613). The result was an educational point-and-click adventure game (*La Dama Boba* 2013). This paper provides an overview of what worked best and what did not quite work in the application of this design method to adapt a dramatic text into a digital game. In the next section, we include a summary of the plot for readers who are unfamiliar with the theatrical work.



Figure 1: Comparative between real scenario and a game stage.

WHAT THE PLAY IS ABOUT

Written in 1613, *La Dama Boba* (*The Foolish lady*) is one of the Lope de Vega's most famous comedies. It explores ideals of feminine conduct and decorum, emphasizing the similarities between its two heroines and the unconventional, professional woman who brought them to life.

The plot of *La Dama Boba* involves two unmarried sisters, Finea, the "foolish lady" of the title, and her intellectual sister, Nise, who has a sizable cohort of admirers to the dismay of their father, Octavio. He is ready, willing, and able to match the two of them with the best bridegrooms money can buy, having allocated 50,000 ducats for his daughters' dowry, while both sisters are famous for their beauty and perfection. Understandably, his house was under siege by suitors, from worthless young poets to relentless soldiers.

There is a trick to the wooing, though –the elder sister, Finea, is notoriously slow (*boba*), while younger sister Nise is unusually literate and clever (*bachiller*). Nise cannot marry until Finea finds a fiancé. Nise, however, has a phalanx of suitors waiting.

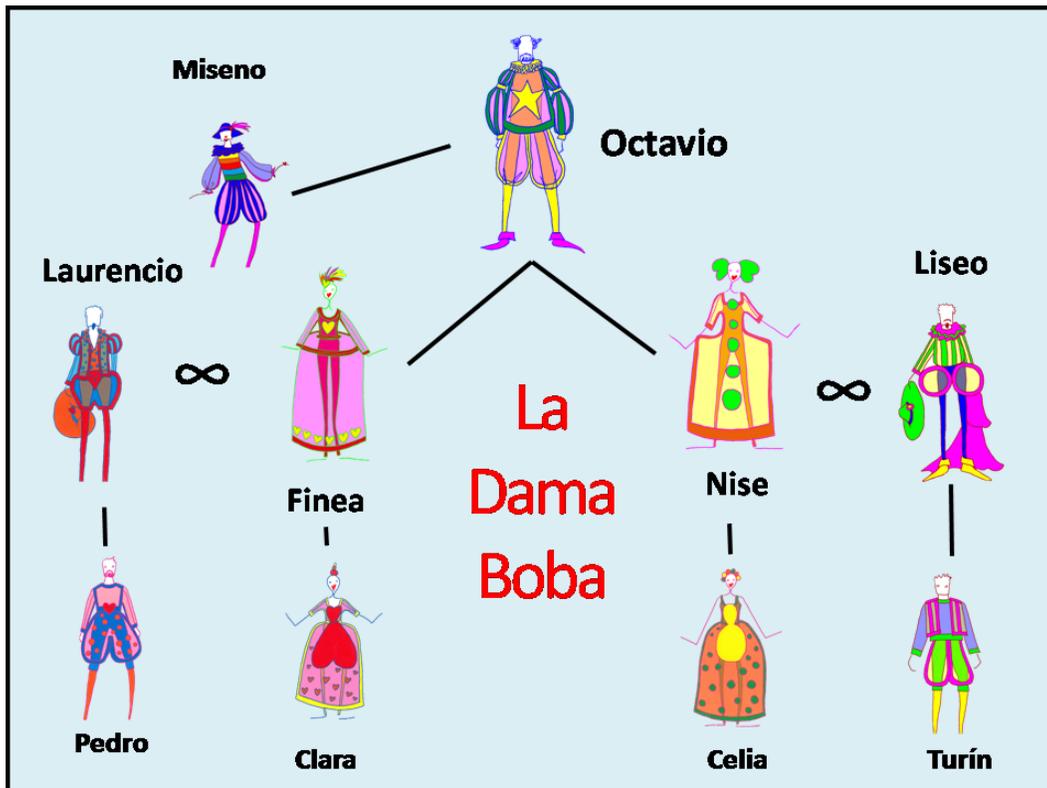


Figure 2: Relationships among characters. **Octavio:** Nise and Finea's father. **Miseno:** Octavio's personal assistant. **Finea:** the foolish lady. **Nise:** the wise lady. **Laurencio:** our protagonist. **Liseo:** Nise's suitor. **Pedro, Clara, Celia and Turín:** lackeys and maids.

All the characters experience a change in attitude in world view. When the play starts, Laurencio is wooing Nise, and she seems to reciprocate. However, Laurencio is poor;

therefore when he learns about Finea's dowry, he decides to woo Finea instead. To succeed, he needs the support of his lackey (and friend) Pedro, because he thinks the best way to get Finea's love is through her maid Clara.

Together, master and servant find Finea and her maid and woo them. Although Finea falls in love with Laurencio in their first meeting, she is already the fiancée of another gentleman, Liseo. Laurencio tries to have his cake and eat it by wooing both sisters at the same time.

This double game leads Liseo to challenge Laurencio to a duel, since he believes Laurencio loves Nise. Finally, Laurencio eludes the challenge by promising to help Liseo to win Nise's hand. As a final twist, as Finea falls in love with Laurencio, it turns out that the the *cuidado* (mental exercise) of love makes her grow noticeably smarter, as demonstrated by the change in her dancing steps.

The final trial to get Finea's had consists in convincing her father in giving him her hand. Although Octavio clearly prefers marrying Finea to Liseo, in the end he gives in and blesses Finea and Laurencio's marriage.

STANISLAVSKI'S METHOD ACTING

Constantin Stanislavski's Method proposes a series of techniques for actors using concepts that have a significant overlap with game design, mainly related to finding motivation and units of action in the dramatic text. The aim of this system is to help actors generate true emotion through action; actions being any human behavior that will be conducive to change, either in oneself or in another subject.

The Method revolves around a single purpose: the emergence of real emotional states in an actor (Stanislavski 1959; 1989). The relationship between the actor and the character is at the heart of The Method, and inessential in understanding how these techniques can lead to a transformative experience.

Stanislavski's main goal was to get trained actors to achieve interesting performances. Thus he spent his entire life developing a toolbox for actors to achieve that. His dissatisfaction with early experiments on what he called *emotional memory* led him to research a new method based on physical actions. This methodology changed the way actors triggered their emotion on the stage.

The method of physical actions (1934-1938) proposed that a series of physical actions performed in a sequential order will provoke different emotions in the actor. He plotted out a conscious physical map of actions that would bring out the unconscious emotions of the actor. Stanislavski maintains that the actor who had the ability to make the audience believe in what he wanted them to believe achieved "scenic truth".

The actor's first tool to draw this map is the objective. *Objective* is what a character wants at a particular time. It should be expressed through an active and transitive verb (such as to kiss her, or to humiliate him). It has to be an action-driven objective, because these are the kind of specific actions that will help the actor to achieve that active objective (Sakowski 2010).

If the objective is what the character wants, *motivation* answers the question: "Why does the character want that?" Thus motivation arises before the objective and causes it.

Stanislavski argued that in order to transform a performance into something “interesting to watch” every objective must have a conflict associated to it. The *conflict* opposes the objective. Usually, conflict arises from two opposite objectives. Characters try to end the conflict to achieve their objectives through actions. Therefore, conflicts generate actions performed to end those conflicts. There are three types of conflicts:

- Intersubjective: a conflict between characters with opposing objectives.
- Environmental: a conflict in which the environment prevents the objective.
- Intimate: a conflict in which the action carries inner consequences.

The clash between the objective and the conflict is what makes a performance into something that gains the audience’s attention.

An actor, according Stanislavski, should analyze the whole script using this method before playing. In this process he must segment the text into units. A *unit* is a portion of a scene that contains a unique objective (and conflict) for one character. So, the actor must decide which are his character’s objective and the opposing conflict in every single unit.

Stanislavski defined an *event* as whatever makes a character change his objective. When an event occurs, the character’s objective shifts as well as its associated conflict, the previous unit ends, and the next one begins. It may be the case that something is actually an event for a character but not for another one.

Stanislavski also developed the concept of *superobjective*, which provides a character with her main goal in the play as a whole. The superobjective is considered the spine of the performance, with the temporary objectives as different vertebrae. None of the specific objectives can go against the superobjective. One character starts the play with a specific superobjective, and he should maintain it during the whole play. For example, the superobjective of one character could be “to win another character’s love.” To achieve it, the character would have successive unit objectives such as wooing her, making her jealous, impressing her, etc. These objectives, when strung together, reveal the superobjective. Stanislavski also called this superobjective “the final goal of every performance” (Moore 1984).

So, an actor’s work consists of dividing the whole text into units separated by events, and figuring out the character’s objectives and conflicts for each unit. This is called *active analysis*.

To sum up, motivation creates an objective; action is the result of conflict, which derives from the clash between opposing objectives – between two characters, between the character and the environment, or within the character itself – and emotion arises from the action. The goal of the action is to resolve the conflict. In analyzing a dramatic text, the actor segments the play to find the different units of conflict, focusing on the main events that change the goals of the character throughout the play. Figure 3 shows Stanislavski schedule to achieve the true emotion.

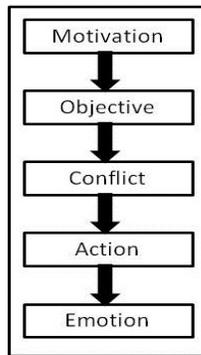


Figure 3: Stanislavski’s method as a schedule.

CREATING LA DAMA BOBA: THE GAME

Stanislavski’s focus on events to drive goals and conflicts seems a good starting point to adapt a dramatic text into a digital game. We chose the classical theatre play *La Dama Boba / The Foolish Lady* by Lope de Vega (1613). Our aim was to create a point-and-click adventure game that would motivate high school students to attend and study theatre and to learn more of about the story, language, and versification of that specific play.

Classical theatre plays usually include different characters. Some of them have more dialogue than the others, but finally is the sum of all the characters what makes up the play. In adventure games, characters define the story (Chatman 1980); there is usually a player character who carries out the actions on behalf of the player.

In order to apply Stanislavski’s method to our adaptation, the first step was to pick up and choose which character of the play will be controlled by the player. In our method, this step means choosing the point of view to tell the story—the same play could be adapted in as many ways as the number of characters it includes. This choice will determine what drives the game; therefore it must be made carefully. Once we have chosen the character, Stanislavski provides the guiding principles to find the events and actions that define the space of possibility for the player character, based on the original text.

We divided the adaptation process into two parts: adapting the stage play into the story of the game, and adapting a theatre character into a game’s player character.

From a classic stage play to an adventure game plot

The first step is to analyze the play looking for the main events, as an actor would do preparing for a stage production. Our script came from a previous adaptation by Daniel Pérez of the original play, which reduced the characters to ten (in the original play there were eighteen).

Before addressing the specifics of game, the designer attended rehearsals of the play at the Teatro Réplika theatre company for two months. At the same time, we had to decide which parts of the play we wanted to include in the game.

Actors have to create the sequence of events (or incidents) of their characters throughout the play. In this game, we chose Laurencio, the male main character, to recreate the game world under his point of view. The whole game is developed using the sequence of events that involves Laurencio. This helped us choose the main scenes of the play according to

Laurencio’s perspective. Each character traverses the events of the play according their own roadmap.

In their published work on *Façade*, Mateas and Stern (2004, 2005) discuss an authoring process that included breaking the story into dramatic beats, in a structure that is heavily informed by Stanislavski’s Method. Our work consisted of transforming that continuous route into separate milestones. Those milestones established the highlights of the play for the character we chose. The sequence of milestones has to tell a meaningful story for both character and audience – or rather, the player –. Milestones are sequenced to make scenes, scenes to make stages, stages to make games.

Our goal was to create a game that could be played in a half-hour session, so it could comfortably be played during a class period. That forced us to compress Laurencio’s story to its essential events. The main problem was that shortening the play resulted in some story gaps that in turn undermined the logic of the plot. A character-driven adaptation helped us avoid those gaps.

Therefore, precise text segmentation consists of finding the milestones to create a meaningful story for the game. Note that one character could have different milestones from another. Thus we had to focus on what the player’s point of view was to avoid getting lost in the adaptation process.

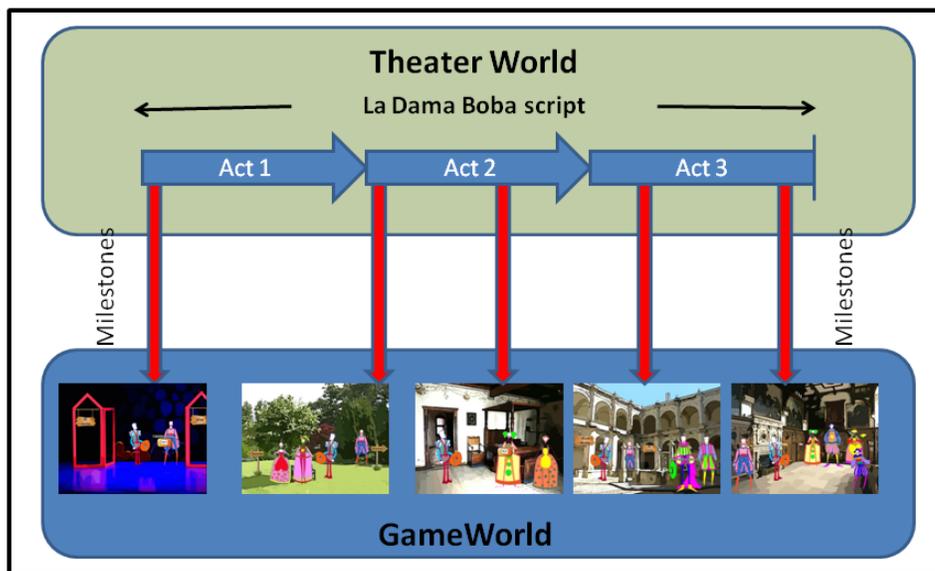


Figure 4: Milestone extracting process. From theatre play scenes to game stages.

We found five essential milestones for Laurencio, which we represented as a different stage in the game. For each milestone, we described the story line we wanted for the player character to follow. The table below (see Table 1) shows how each milestone becomes a game challenge. On the left side, each scene number includes a summary of what happens in the play; on the right side, there is the name of the milestone and the main goals that the player character has to achieve in that stage. Table 1 shows the conversion schedule we used for *La Dama Boba: The Game*.

This table is the core of the game. We realized that we needed at least five different challenges to achieve a meaningful story. Each stage is linked to the next by a quest for the protagonist. Achieving the character objective helps reaching the next stage.

CONVERSION TABLE	
Stage play	Digital game
Act-Scene/ What happens	Milestone/ Main goals
<p style="text-align: center;">Act 1- Scenes VIII and IX</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laurencio confesses to the audience that he is going to woo rich Finea, the foolish lady, instead of the smart lady Nise. • He tries to convince Pedro, his lackey, to approve of his choice. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Lackey conversation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our protagonist hears about Finea’s dowry, so he must convince his lackey to help him to win Finea’s love.
<p style="text-align: center;">Act 1- Scene X</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laurencio bumps into Finea for the first time. • He woos her with charming words, which seem effective despite her foolishness. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Wooing the Foolish Lady</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laurencio must show kindness by choosing his words carefully. • The player must complete a Redondilla (a type of Spanish poetic composition). • Once Finea falls in love with Laurencio, she tells him to find his father and ask him for her hand.
<p style="text-align: center;">Act 2- Scene X</p> <p>The gallant Liseo, the antagonist, challenges Laurencio to a duel, because he believes that the protagonist is wooing his beloved Nise.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The duel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeled after the game <i>The Secret of Monkey Island</i> sword fighting (LucasArts 1990), the game becomes a battle of wits. The player must match the lines based on theme, scansion, and rhyme. • When the player wins the duel, his opponent asks him for Nise’s necklace in exchange for access to the great hall, where Finea’s father is.
<p style="text-align: center;">Act 2- References in Scenes XIV and XVII</p> <p>This scene doesn’t exist in the original text. It is a conversation between Laurencio and Nise, where he confesses her that he is just playing with Finea while Nise is his true love. These events are referenced in both scenes in the play, the one before and after.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Nise’s necklace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our protagonist must seduce Nise by flattering her. • He must demonstrate his intelligence by correcting the spelling in a poem.
<p style="text-align: center;">Act 3- Scenes XV and XXVI (final scene)</p> <p>These are the two encounters between Laurencio and Finea’s father. In the first one, the protagonist’s attempts to impress the father end badly. In the second one, the father finally accepts Laurencio’s proposal to marry his daughter.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The father’s test</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The player has to answer a series of questions about previous events of the game to persuade Finea’s father that he is a worthy husband. • In the final stage, the father makes up his mind and tells the player his decision about who he will marry. • The game ends with the assessment of the player’s performance throughout the game.

Table 1: Conversion table for the play adaptation.

This method allowed us to build a meaningful game structure. The next step was to complete each individual unit to create a believable and playable stage. At this point, we apply Stanislavski's method to turn our player character into a believable entity without narrative holes, which could lead the player to disbelieve the actions of the player character and lose interest in the game.

From actor to player character

One crucial lesson about designing for participatory transformative experiences that emerged from Tanenbaum's analysis is the importance of a well defined player character (Tanenbaum 2011).

To achieve a successful player character design, we used the sketches for the costume designs of Agatha Ruíz de la Prada to bestow life on our characters. The visual representation gives us a lot of information about the character itself. The job of a costume designer is to reach the essence of the characters according to the author's description and combined with her own interpretation. This information is exactly what we wanted to include in the game. Therefore, the player is able to figure out who the player character is, as he is a surrogate of the player in the fictional world.

The problem was that the characters were basically signposts. They gave us information through their appearance, but nothing through their behavior. We had to supply them with spontaneous and lively manners.

According to Stanislavski and Egri's model (Stanislavski 2002; Egri 2007), the conflict arises from the clash between characters. Their objectives are incompatible, and none of them is willing to give up. Steve Meretzky (Meretzky 2001) argues that a player character has to be "interesting to play"; this is similar to how an actor has to play his character to become "interesting to watch." One way to achieve it is to provide the characters with their own *agenda* where keeping track their objectives and related conflicts. Therefore, their actions will arise from those actions (Lankoski 2007).

Thus, we created an agenda for each character following the same technique that Stanislavski proposed to build characters. This technique states that the actor must have a clear objective and a conflict that would prevent achieving it at all times, in order create a character that is "interesting to watch."

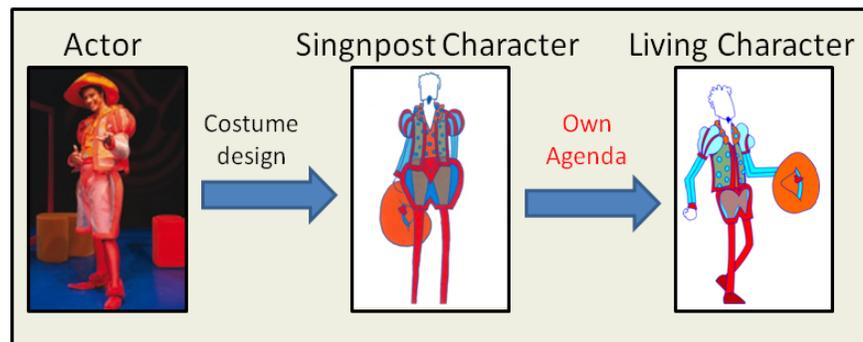


Figure 5: From an actor to a living player character

Players want to buy into the fiction: many players enter a make-believe mode when they interact with the fictional world (Juul 2007). The character's agenda transforms him or

her from a signpost into a living character, understanding that a believable and interesting character to play has come to life.

Developing an Agenda

We began to analyze the stage play using an active analysis just like an actor would. This analysis is based on the point of view of the protagonist, listing every character objective and conflict that arise in every event. This technique facilitated dividing the play into units of action, by which every objective is associated with its own conflict.

The first challenge for an actor approaching a character is to find his superobjective along the play. The superobjective is not unique, since it depends on the actor's choice— there are as many objectives as actors. Thus the game designer must choose what is his main character wants to achieve in the play. In *La Dama Boba* game, we chose Laurencio's superobjective to be "to become rich". This is the key principle that leads all Laurencio's actions during the game. Every objective of that character must align with that superobjective without contradicting it.

The next step is to figure out what the starting event is. From Laurencio's point of view, the play starts when our protagonist realizes the large amounts of money he could acquire if he marries Finea, the foolish lady. That fact triggers the protagonist's superobjective, therefore it makes sense to make it part of the gameplay. The game starts with a notice advertising Finea's dowry, which combined with Laurencio's superobjective results in his first unit objective: "Get Finea's dowry".

Besides his superobjective, the main character has temporary objectives that change with each event, along with his associated conflicts. The game is a series of events where each event changes the player character's objective and conflict. The active analysis requires choosing the player character's objectives and conflicts throughout the game.

Let us see an example of how the objectives/conflicts method works. At the beginning of the game, the player character is at home with his lackey, Pedro. Laurencio's main goal is to convince his lackey to help him to win the hand of Finea. However, Pedro's objective is to help his master be happy. This gives way to an intersubjective conflict: "Pedro doesn't want to lead his master to the foolish lady".

The player character's agenda is a series of objectives and associated conflicts, separated by events. The length of the agenda depends on the weight of the character in the play. Therefore, the player character's agenda includes a group of events that trigger new objectives with conflicts – intersubjective, environmental or intimate – associated to it (see Figure 6).

Although the player character's agenda is the most important and complex, every other non-player character might have their own agenda as well. Supporting characters often have a single superobjective in their agendas, although it may depend on their importance in the game. Thus, the last step is to find the superobjectives for each character in the game as well as their associated conflicts.

Therefore, creating an agenda consists of an analysis of the play from the viewpoint of the protagonist, listing every character objective and conflicts that arise in every event. This also facilitates dividing the play into units of action. Developing the agenda for the

supporting characters facilitates finding the intersubjective conflicts that arise from the clash between different objectives.

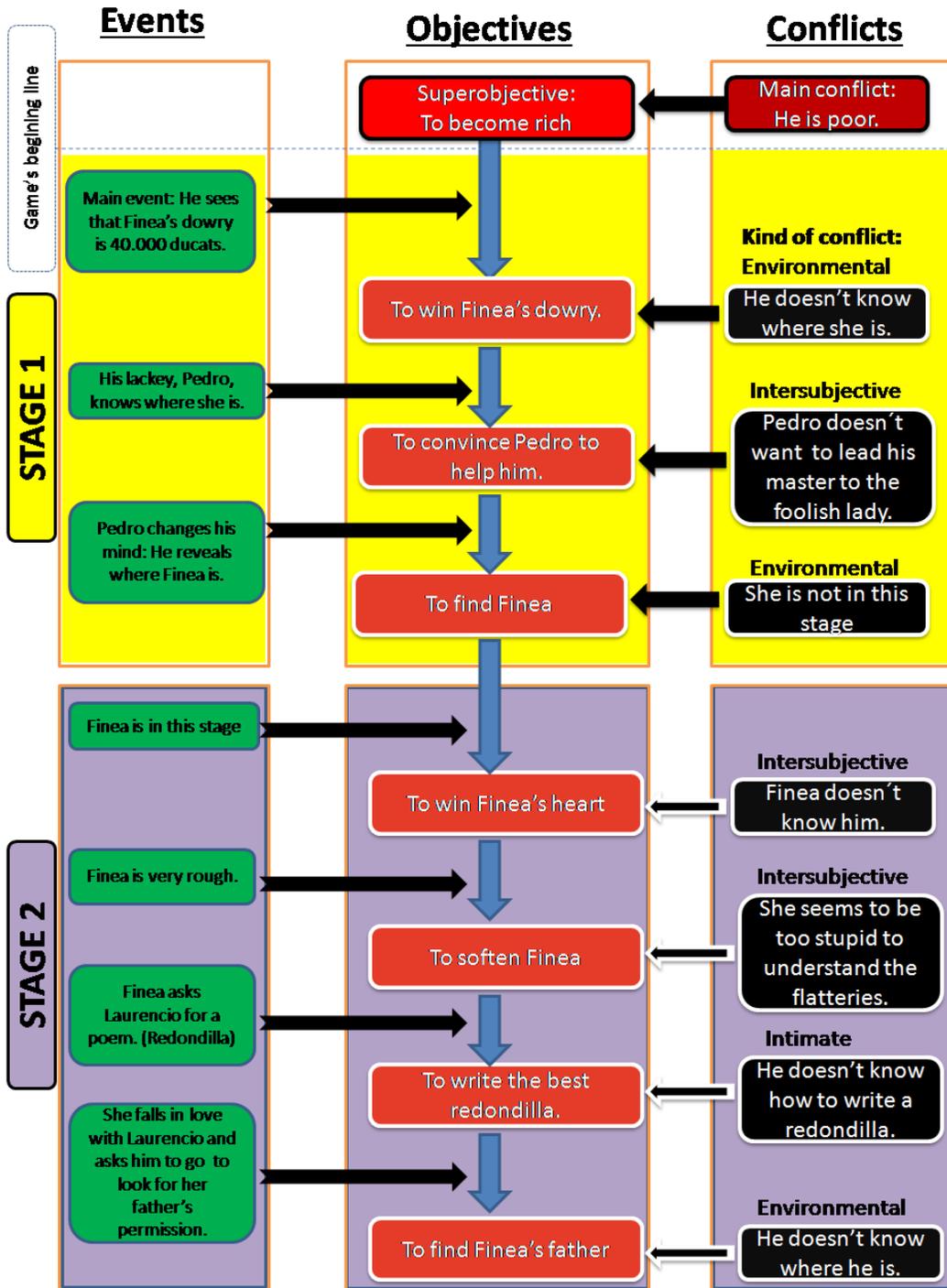


Figure 6: Main character's Agenda.

The result is an agenda for each character, which is then translated into game goals and mechanics to achieve those goals and deal with each conflict. This technique also helped focusing on the aspects of the play that would be relevant to the game, giving a purpose to every character and relating them to specific actions.

The last stage of the game design consisted of enhancing the space of possibility of the game itself. The design of the game was initially linear, forcing the player to follow a specific set of events. During early playtesting, however, it became evident that the player did not have to stick to the specific order of the units. For example, the player can talk to Nise and get her necklace even before talking to Finea, the foolish lady; Liseo is also ready to confront the player character before that. Instead of thinking of this as a bug, we incorporated it as a feature— these three units are interdependent, but they do not have to be completed in a strict order. The writing cues the player into completing each challenge in the order described above, but the design does not prevent subverting the order of events in the play. Opening up the order in which these scenes is completed helps create the space of possibility, truly turning the game world into a performative space where the goals drive the interaction through the plot, rather than restricting the player to a specific sequence of events.

It seems that allowing the player to choose different objectives at the same point of the game maybe a good design decision. However, this must be carried out with care, since every different path that the player could take must be considered. For instance, after dueling with Liseo, looking for Nise's necklace becomes relevant. Otherwise, if Laurencio speaks to Nise before the duel, the system changes the conversation and the protagonist does not ask for the necklace but Nise gives it as a gift of her own accord. This example illustrates how small design decisions can result in larger changes in the implementation stage. Another example is the conversation between Laurencio and Octavio. The father speaks to Laurencio depending of his behavior throughout the game. If he was rude or rough to Finea and Nise, Octavio will treat him in a harsher way than if he was polite. Again, this required a major implementation effort, although it was worth it since it enhanced the sense of reality in the player.

Communicating objectives to the player

During the testing phase, one of the key aspects we encountered was how to communicate the specific superobjective of the character to the player so the player could pursue it.

At the very beginning of the game, we show a comic to provide the player with the character background. In the comic, we tried to transfer the main goal of the player character to the player. By using this approach, the player is treated as an actor preparing for a role: we provide him with the background of the character, and he has to reach to a superobjective similar to the one we have assigned to that character.

In theater, the actor embodies and leads the character; the audience does not play, just watches. Nevertheless, the game might be able to convince the player to assume the planned superobjective his own; otherwise the game designer has to implement every single objective that the player might choose, which is not possible. It is similar when a stage director wants an actor to reach the objective that he has decided for the character—the director has to make the actor believe that he was the discoverer.

We are aware that this method reduces the decision-making power of the player, since he is almost forced to choose a specific superobjective. Moreover, when testing the game in schools, some players resisted pursuing what they thought was a greedy objective (to become rich by any means). These players became frustrated because, if they wanted to win the game, they were forced to carry out actions they did not agree with.

That resistance is similar to what an actor experiences when he has to play a role which he does not agree with. Actors who judge the character they play are not unusual in theatre. This is a real problem, because by judging a character an actor cannot play a believable character (Mamet 2011). Therefore, a player who pursues an objective which does not agree with will decrease his level of satisfaction with the game.

A way to tackle this problem could be to provide the player with different alternatives in the player character's superobjective by creating different stories to go through. In our game, the most appropriate one could be to let the player choose to marry the other sister. This would not be too much work, and would give the player the illusion of choice. On the other hand, we had to strike a balance between playability and the theater play learning; since one of our main goals was helping players understand the events in the plot, we could not have a branching plot.

Beyond the superobjective, the game has to persuade the player to adopt the particular objectives of each scene included in the agenda. This process is addressed through the presentation to the player of different situations, whose aim is to lead him to choose the new objective listed in his agenda. All these situations are taken from the theater play; in a way, we relied on the playwright to guide the player from one objective to the next. In a theater play, there is a constraint for the actors. Although two actors may choose different objectives in a particular scene, those objectives cannot differ a lot from one to another. In a similar way, when a game is recreating a theater play, players might have a little room to maneuver when choosing their objectives. This is particularly important if we take into account the huge effort that implementing a new objective for the player implies.

An example to illustrate how objectives are communicated is in the scene where Laurencio woos Finea. She asks him for a poem, therefore the new objective for Laurencio becomes to write the best possible *redondilla* (a type of poetic composition in Spanish) to get her love. Once this objective is achieved, she tells him that he has to ask for her hand to her father, therefore his new objective becomes to find the father.

CONCLUSION

This paper described the design process of an educational game using Stanislavski's Method acting. This character-centered method helped segmenting the text into units, by identifying the different milestones we want to reenact in the game. The main character's agenda guided us through the creation of the player character. It provided us with character objectives and conflicts at all times, which allowed us to avoid narrative gaps. This seems to be a good method to achieve character coherence and by extension engage the player.

After this experience, we strongly agree with Tanenbaum's on the importance of a well-defined main character. We tried to offer players an experience similar to what an actor feels on stage. To achieve that, players must have enough information about the character they are playing. This implies setting the character's boundaries the same way an actor is

constrained in the performance of a character by the script, the director, the accoutrements of the theatre, and the fellow actors (Laurel 1993).

When we choose the player's objectives in the game, they can bind the player to specific decisions and paths. We argue that designers can strike a balance between the player's freedom in the game world and the bindings that Stanislavski's method introduces. To achieve that balance, we also purpose a multicursal agenda where player choices can address the player character's objectives in different ways.

We conclude that once the superobjective is adopted by the player, it is easier for him to accept the specific objectives presented throughout the game. If the player accepts that Laurencio wants to be rich above all, it will be easier to convince him to deceive Nise to get her necklace; the same necklace that Liseo wants to give him access to Octavio's great hall. Therefore, we have to present this kind of game as a theatre-game, challenging the player to play a specific role for the pleasure of incarnating a different character. This means treating the player as an actor.

We have but scratched the surface of this issue; it seems worthwhile to explore in more depth how to transmit a superobjective to the player without feeling excessively constrained. This will be the goal of future work.

Stanislavski's acting method facilitates the adaptation process from a classical theatre play to a game, and helps creating consistent player characters. More research is still needed to assess the engagement of Stanislavski-designed characters among players. Future work includes adapting another classic theatre play using the process described in this paper. A second case study would allow us to compare with the outcomes presented in this paper.

COMPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

In order to have a better understanding of the game and the design decisions, we include a link to a video of a play session. This video shows a standard play session during our game testing in schools. Video available in: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mqLyjKOn3c&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

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