



Third Person: Authoring and Exploring Vast Narratives

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The ever-expanding capacities of computing offer new narrative possibilities for virtual worlds. Yet vast narratives--featuring an ongoing and intricately developed storyline, many characters, and multiple settings--did not originate with, and are not limited to, Massively Multiplayer Online Games. Thomas Mann's *Joseph and His Brothers*, J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, Marvel's *Spiderman*, and the complex stories of such television shows as *Dr. Who*, *The Sopranos*, and *Lost* all present vast fictional worlds. *Third Person* explores strategies of vast narrative across a variety of media, including video games, television, literature, comic books, tabletop games, and digital art. The contributors--media and television scholars, novelists, comic creators, game designers, and others--investigate such issues as continuity, canonicity, interactivity, fan fiction, technological innovation, and cross-media phenomena. Chapters examine a range of topics, including storytelling in a multiplayer environment; narrative techniques for a 3,000,000-page novel; continuity (or the impossibility of it) in *Doctor Who*; managing multiple intertwined narratives in superhero comics; the spatial experience of the *Final Fantasy* role-playing games; *World of Warcraft* adventure texts created by designers and fans; and the serial storytelling of *The Wire*. Taken together, the multidisciplinary conversations in *Third Person*, along with Harrigan and Wardrip-Fruin's earlier collections *First Person* and *Second Person*, offer essential insights into how fictions are constructed and maintained in very different forms of media at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

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