

The End Dramaturgy Packet

Compiled by Sam Wend

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Part I: Games

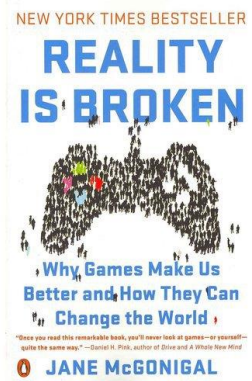
General

Hunicke, Robin, Marc LeBlanc, and Robert Zubek. "[MDA: A Formal Approach to Game Design and Game Research](#)."

Abstract: "MDA [Mechanics, Dynamics, Aesthetics] is a formal approach to understanding games -- one which attempts to bridge the gap between game design and development, game criticism, and technical game research. We believe this methodology will clarify and strengthen the iterative processes of developers, scholars and researchers alike, making it easier for all parties to decompose, study and design a broad class of game designs and game artifacts."

- "Mechanics describes the particular components of the game, at the level of data representation and algorithms.
- "Dynamics describes the run-time behavior of the mechanics acting on player inputs and each others' outputs over time.
- "Aesthetics describes the desirable emotional responses evoked in the player, when she interacts with the game system"

McGonigal, Jane. *Reality Is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World*. New York: Penguin, 2011. Print.



[Available to borrow in print from Swim Pony]

Leading game designer/researcher Jane McGonigal explains the psychology and practical research on how games (or at least game mechanics) can be used to inspire greater innovation, productivity, and happiness. As she explains, because games definitionally involve voluntary work to overcome unnecessary obstacles, turning a real goal into the objective of a game that people *choose* to play makes that goal much more fulfilling to work towards, because the challenges in reaching the goal become part of the gameplay. See Appendix for more quotes/explanations.

Trinetti, Matthew. "[3 Pages Every Morning: Why I Started a Daily Ritual and How I Stuck With It](#)." *The Mission*. Web. 6 Aug 2015.

A blog post from a writer who was eight months deep in the daily ritual of three longhand pages written each morning as required by the book *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron. The author writes about why this daily ritual is effective, and authors three key ways to make a daily habit stick: "1. It starts with a craving," "2. It continues by piggybacking it onto a current routine," and "3. It sustains with a reward."

Role Play

Extra Credits. "What Makes Us Roleplay? – Why Game Worlds Feel Real."

A video about the mechanics of role playing games and player styles used to make players fully invest and play as their character really would if they were doing something in the real world. Key points:



- Demonstration of consequences – the game world responds the way the real world would if you do something bad, even if it's game-full / fun
- Permanence and immutable effect of actions on the game world make role played actions more meaningful than if you revert to an earlier saved game or just replay the same scene repeatedly

Koljonen, Johanna. "Introduction to Nordic Larp." *Nordic Larp Talks*. Nordic Larp Talks, 21 Apr. 2010. Web Video. 2 May 2015.

A Nordic larp talk video introduction to the Nordic tradition of live action role play, which tends to be more widely varied, series, and innovative than the LARPs of the United States, which typically involve dressing as fantasy characters and role playing conflict-driven scenarios.

- When tabletop role playing games (RPGs) first came into being in the 1990s, gamers just kept pushing outside the box. Everywhere tabletop RPGs were played, live role plays developed as well.
- Larpmakers (AKA the producers/authors) provide: world, back story, themes, character group outlines, overall story arc, concept art, game mechanics and simulation systems, scenography, special effects, non-player characters (actors), simulations of the world where necessary
- Players typically control: character design, costume, individual props, and all action once the game has begun
- Players have complete freedom of action as long as they respect the physical limitations of the imagined world of the role play (time and probably space) and the parameters of the fiction – world logic, character goals, genre, playing style
- 360 degree aesthetic:
 - Total sensorimotor “what you see is what you get” experience; set pieces, props, and character situations are authentic (exceptions for safety: combat, special effects, sexual interactions)
 - Plausible social environment and subjective experience that could actually be happening to a real person
- Not quite games because there's no competition; not quite theater because the audience is inside the body of the characters and the text is in a different place; not quite art, closer to collective traditions – but is somewhat all of these things, which makes it a beautiful, powerful thing for audiences to do
- “Fictional experiences, when experienced on our bodies, are also real.”

Schønnemann Andreasen, Peter. "Fabricating Madness - Peter Schønnemann Andreasen." *Nordic Larp Talks*. N.p., 01 Mar. 2011. Web. 10 Sept. 2016.



Video of a Nordic larp talk about a game called “Delirium” and how lighting, soundscapes, disrupting of linearity of time, nonsensical repetitions of scenes, and inability to revolt against oppressors were used to create a feelings of insanity and to raise embodied awareness of what it’s like to be in an oppressive system where your reality is constantly being ignored or denied.

Alternate Reality Games (ARG)

Extra Credits. ARGs Part I – “What Are Alternate Reality Games?”

A quick video primer on what Alternate Reality Games are.

- Games that weave the real world into the fabric of play – deny any difference between the real world and the game world and are built on the concept that “there’s more going on than most people realize”
- “By being part of our everyday, by not admitting that they’re games or just for fun, they let us see our worlds through a new and unique filter.”
- Can get away with amazingly complex puzzles and challenges because they’re not admitting they’re games (or that they’re “supposed” to be “winnable”) – and because massive communities participate, the collective player base can solve even insanely complex mysteries

“The Institute.” Dir. Spencer McCall. Pen & Banjo Films, 2013.



A documentary film about an extremely successful California-based Alternate Reality Game (available on Netflix, Amazon, and iTunes). Provides a useful foundation in how ARGs bring people in and how they blur the lines between fiction and reality.

“The Tension Experience.” 2016.



A “fear-based paranoia, immersive production that will require you to make a series of decisions that will dictate the evening’s outcome.” Essentially, an ARG experience that featured transmedia pre-production events (which essentially means that the preliminary information/narrative was conveyed through a variety of forms, including online, tangible installations in real space, phone calls, etc.) and is now presenting the primary event, individualized in-person experiences. Some useful articles to read more about the experience and how it works:

- [“The Wild, Frightening Events Beyond the Tension Experience”](#) by Rebekah McKendry
- “My Tension Experience” [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#), by Megan Reilly for *HowlRound*
- [“Getting to Know the Tension Experience Before It Gets to Know You.”](#) by Mustafa Said, 1 Jul 2016

Branching Narrative

Favaro, Peter J., Ph.D. “[Alter Ego.](#)” Game.

An interactive text-based fiction that uses developmental psychology to let you play through the stages of life. In each, your opportunities and resources are dependent on the choices you made previously. Offers a strong awareness of the finiteness of time; it’s impossible to go through every question or challenge offered in any one life stage, so if you don’t spend your time/questions wisely, you can easily end up without a degree, relationship, or job.

Quinn, Zoe, Patrick Linsey, and Isaac Schankler. “[Depression Quest.](#)” Game.

An interactive text-based branching narrative game that guides you through a narrative of living with depression. Though it’s “choose your own adventure” in the sense that you can choose from a list of options in most places where you forward the story, it emphasizes the illness by sometimes listing an overly motivated theoretical action but striking it out, because it wouldn’t be manageable for someone with depression. A great digital example of an embodied narrative that grants the player agency but still guides them to imagine life through a particular lens.

Non-Digital Games

“The Mysterious Package Company.”



Participants sign up themselves (or typically unknowing family members or friends) to receive 2-3 mysterious packages that contain no/obscured return address and contain strange artifacts like letters, pictures, statues, etc. telling a larger story. These things allow for online research and usually end in a solvable story. “The Curator” is the character that sends emails to the list of buyers within a specific character persona. You apply for Membership to the project for free, and only with membership can you see all the pricing/package options for different Experiences and Curiosities you can send others. This is more similar to *The*

End than true ARGs in that it is an individual rather than collective experience, but it is not varied per participant (as far as I can tell, not having comparisons across recipients).

“My Gift of Grace.” Designed and created by Common Practice. Game.



A card game to facilitate conversations around dying and living well, created primarily from a healthcare perspective. *The End*’s core artistic team has played this game multiple times as well as hosted community events to play it as a potential audience recruitment tactic. We have also talked with designers **Nick Jehlen** and **Jethro Heiko**. Related resources:

- List of questions beta-tested in developing the game (see appended document)
- **“Can Playing an End-of-Life Conversation Game Motivate People to Engage in Advance Care Planning?”** - A research article providing support for My Gift of Grace and the value of conversation to improve people’s readiness for death

Romero, Brenda. “Train.” Game. 2009.

A board game where the player is trying to get a train to its ultimate destination, and doesn’t realize until well into the game that it’s a Holocaust game and the train is carting people to a concentration camp. They must then decide whether to follow the rules of the “game” to “win” or if they’ll defy the game’s authority and call it quits. This game is not available for public purchase, but you can learn more about it and about Romero’s approach to creating games about social issues in these presentations:

- Romero, Brenda. [“Train \(or How I Dumped Electricity and Learned to Love Design\).”](#) Game Developers Conference. *GDC Vault - Train (or How I Dumped Electricity and Learned to Love Design)*. Web. 14 Aug. 2014.
- Romero, Brenda. **“Gaming for Understanding.”** TEDx.

Tarot Cards.



After introducing the card aspect of *The End*, the core team experimented with tarot card readings as part of an exploration of how much detail/symbolism to include in our cards and what kind of spreads might be useful. Tarot cards themselves do not tell fortunes; instead, each one has symbolic meaning, and the “fortune” comes in the interpretation of them formed by the reader. You can do either

a question reading, seeking an answer to a particular inquiry, or an open reading, in which your card(s) will give you a general foretelling about a particular aspect of life (relationship, career, family, etc.).

Roubira, Jean-Louis. “Dixit.” Game. 2010.



An image-based card game in which one “storyteller” makes up a clue for a card, and the other players select one of their cards that could match the clue. Then, out of the cards selected, each player must guess which card belonged to the storyteller and initially inspired the clue. The most points are won if at least one, but not all, players guess

the storyteller’s card, encouraging the storyteller to come up with a clue that is abstract enough to not be obvious, but specific enough that some relationship is evident. For example, in the above picture, the second card was the storyteller’s, with the clue “Something is missing.” The numbered squares on the right are the other players guesses’ for which card was the storyteller’s. Only the green player guessed the correct card (with the number 2), so the green player and the storyteller both get the maximum number of points for the round (3).

The core team of *The End* played a round of this game to compare the image/symbolism style to that of tarot cards, and even tried giving each other tarot card readings using Dixit cards. We found that there is a huge difference when there are not predefined explanations for what symbols mean (like in tarot): Dixit cards feel more open-ended and intentionally abstract than tarot cards, which are designed to have specific meanings/provide answers. Put another way, Dixit cards allow players to find their own meaning in the metaphoric images, while tarot cards are explained by externally derived meaning.

“Learning to Love You More.” Assignments by Miranda July and Harrell Fletcher.

A website and series of nondigital presentations that put out assignments with simple but specific instructions for completion and reporting that anyone who wanted to could participate in (examples: 45] Reread your favorite book from fifth grade; 58] Record the sound that is keeping you away; and 70] Say good-bye). “Like a recipe, meditation practice, or familiar song, the prescriptive nature of these assignments was intended to guide people towards their own experience.” There were 70 assignments and the project ran with the website open to assignment submissions for seven years, before closing to public submissions in 2009.

Serious Digital Games

Barlow, Sam. [Her Story](#). Video Game. Vers. OSX. Sam Barlow, 24 June 2015.



A computer game in which you are accessing a database of old interview videos with a murder suspect, but the catalog's all been jumbled and you can't find any videos except by searching for words, which turn up any videos containing the search term. This game is an excellent example of non-linear narrative that requires the player to collage together their own understanding of the narrative landscape. Available on Steam.

Barlow, Sam. [Aisle](#). Video Game. Vers. Z-machine. Sam Barlow, 1999. Web.

An interactive fiction in which you play a man grocery shopping at the store. The game only allows one move each time you play, highlighting how different/meaningful the choice of a single moment can be.

“The Art of Dying.” Dream Logic. Game/Art Installation. 2016.

An interactive art experience using virtual and augmented reality to reimagine what it means to be mortal. Read more at:

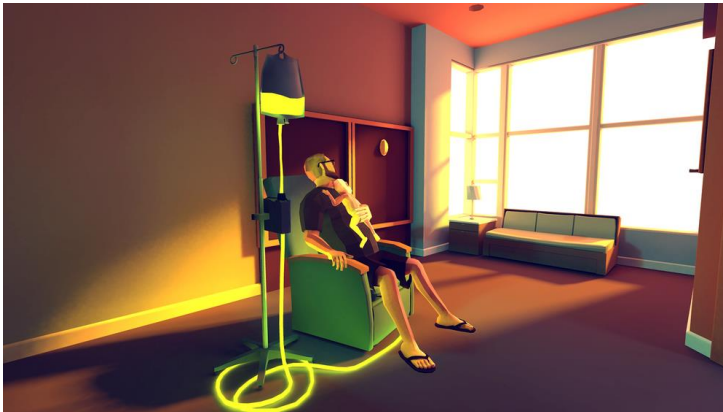
- [“Can Virtual Reality Help Us Better Understand Dying?”](#) by Kelsey Lannin, 14 Nov 2016

Pope, Lucas. "Papers, Please." STEAM. Haxe/OpenFL, 8 Aug. 2013. Video Game.



A digital game in which you act as an immigration officer inspecting prospective immigrant's papers to decide if you will allow them into the country or not with increasingly strict requirements and in the face of their pleas and personal stories. This is a good example of direct simulation experience of emotion and decision-making and includes a strong interwoven narrative. Available on Steam.

Green, Ryan. (2016). "That Dragon, Cancer." United States: Numinous Games. Video Game.



A short, animated video game that abstractly leads you through a parents' journey dealing with his young son's death of cancer. A very worthwhile but emotionally intense game. Available on Steam and the AppStore. To hear more about it and its development, especially to get a sense of whether you want to play or not, check out the follow podcast:

- **"The Cathedral"** – RadioLab, 28 Dec 2015

"Vesper.5." Computer Game.



A downloadable game that only allows you to make one move per day. The player must spend at least 100 days playing in order to beat it. Part of the inspiration for the daily ritual of a prompt-a-day gameplay style of *The End*. Read more:

- Helps, Rachel. "[New Game Allows You to Make Only One Move Each Day. Genius or Annoying?](#)" *Kill Screen*. Kill Screen Media, Inc, 16 Aug. 2012. Web. 1 Nov. 2015.
- Streams, Kimber. "[Play This: 'VESPER.5' Is a Maddening Exercise in Patience.](#)" *The Verge*. Vox Media, 14 Aug. 2012. Web. 1 Nov. 2015.

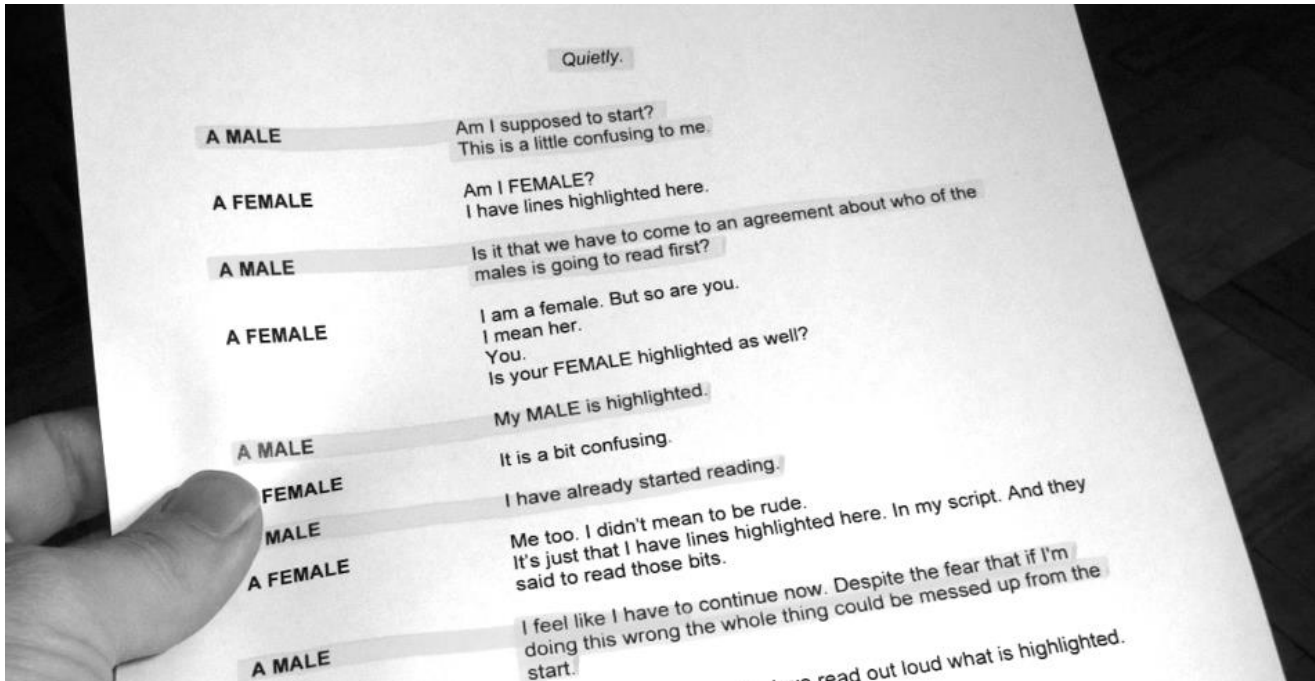
Part II: Interactive Theater

Coney. "[Small Town Anywhere.](#)"

In *A Small Town Anywhere*, thirty audience members are given identities in a community. Over two hours, they play out a narrative, guided by the influence of letters delivered to their mailboxes. The audience-turned-characters chart the course of the story as they make decisions individually and collectively about what gossip to start or spread, who to believe, and whether to throw someone out of the town in an attempt to save the others (Gardner). The designers have control over the delivery of the community's mail and thus can plant information to forward narrative, but the playing audience makes all the decisions about what happens. This is a particularly effective example of immersive theater that genuinely offers participants agency. More on the play-through experience:

- Gardner, Lyn. "[Join in the Murder Game at Battersea Arts Centre.](#)" *The Guardian (US Edition)*. N.p., 18 Oct. 2009. Web.

Hampton, Ant. "[Ok Ok.](#)" [Anthampton.com](#). Ant Hampton.



A play performed by four audience members reading aloud the highlighted lines of a script they're given. Carefully dramaturged to anticipate the readers' thoughts so that their actual responses are in line with the needs of the script, meaning they "act" the desired intentions/objectives without pressure to put on a performative mindset. A great example at guiding audience to embody narrative without the awkwardness typical of audience participation.

Mackey, Adrienne, Ken Kalfus, and Cindy Stockton Moore. “Just Up Ahead.” Swim Pony’s Cross Pollination Residency Program. 2014.

“Just Up Ahead” (created as part of a Cross Pollination residency) uses an audio tour, visual installations, and live performance to tell a friendship-turned-love story. This clip begins with an intro explaining how the pre-recorded audio works in conjunction with a route map, and flows into a later story segment that couples the narrative with background sounds recorded from the route, which then merged with sounds experienced live in the actual locations. Like *The End*, this project uses multiple mediums to convey a narrative responsive to audience’s literal position.

Rotozaza. “Etiquette.” 2007.



A half hour performance experience for two people in a public space. Both “audience members” wear headphones which gave them narrative gleanings and tell them what to say. The two recordings – completely different for each participant – come together to form a full scene. Because each participant only focuses on following their own instructions, they are not subjective to performative awkwardness and anxiety. This piece is a heavy inspiration for our “Doctor scene.”

- [New York Times Review video](#) with excerpts from the piece

Blast Theory. “Uncle Roy All Around You.” Premiered London, 2003.

A performance/game where players at an online command center and players out on the street in real time collaborate with different amounts of information/communication to find Uncle Roy from a series of clues before being invited to make a commitment to a stranger. A particularly compelling take on integrating the fictional / digital / reality.

Benford, S., Crabtree, A., Reeves, S., Flintham, M., Drozd, A., Sheridan, J., Dix, A. “The Frame of the Game: Blurring the Boundary between Fiction and Reality in Mobile Experiences.” *Proceedings of ACM CHI 2006 Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, Vol. 1, 427-436. 2006

Using *Uncle Roy All Around You* as a case study, this article assesses mobile experiences that take place in public settings and their advantages/disadvantages. Provides an excellent theoretical framework for understanding the “magic circle” blurring game and reality.

Part III: Mortality

[“After Life.” Radio Lab, Podcast.](#)

Eleven meditations on the afterlife and how/when/if we die and move beyond.

Bright, Joshua. "A Good Death / One Man's Passing." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 29 Mar. 2013. Web.



[Article / Photo Essay](#)

A photo essay and corresponding article showing the end of life as a “good death” for a man named John Hawkins.

Byock, Ira. *The Four Things That Matter Most*. Print, 2004.

[Available to borrow in print from Swim Pony.]

“Four simple phrases – ‘Please forgive me,’ ‘I forgive you,’ ‘Thank you,’ and ‘I love you’ – carry enormous power to mend and nurture our relationships and inner lives. These four phrases and the sentiments they convey can help us resolve interpersonal difficulties with integrity and grace.”

Conn, Marie. Interview conducted by Adrienne Mackey and Sam Wend, & “Bereavement and Complicated Grief Notes.” 21 Nov 2016. Notes. [See Appendix]

Marie is a certified thanatologist and Professor of Religious Studies at Chestnut Hill College. She’s a bioethnician and former Latin teacher who never married and has no children. Classes taught include The Meaning of Death and Dying and Biomedical Moral Issues. She also sent us a document of notes on the Bereavement and Complicated Grief units of her class. This document and interview notes are available in the Dropbox. Some big takeaways:

- Grief is internal, mourning is external (and both fall under the umbrella term of bereavement)
- People will (and should) be upset during *The End* – “If you want the real experience, it’s gotta hurt. It’s gotta scare.”
- Marie’s main mantra: “Language is important. Words do count.”
- Companioning vs. Treating: treat = “to drag” the patient who is a “passive long-term sufferer”; Companion = “to walk beside” the patient who is a “fellow human being” (Our guides are companions, not treating)

Dear, Jennie. [“What It Feels Like to Die.”](#) *The Atlantic*. 9 Sept 2016.

An article on palliative care and the science of what it feels like to die, including the physical sensations (“People tend to lose their sense and desires in a certain order. ‘First hunger and then thirst are lost. Speech is lost next, followed by vision. The last senses to go are usually hearing and touch.’”) and some statistically most common end-of-life thoughts/dreams. For example, in a study of dying people’s dreams, 88% had had at least one dream or vision. 72% of the patients dreamed about reuniting with people who had already died, 59% about getting ready to travel somewhere, and 28% dreamed about meaningful experiences in the past. The primary source for our “Meditation on Letting Go” prompt.

Dick, Kirby. [“The End.”](#) Documentary Film. 2004.



A documentary chronicling the end-of-life journeys of five different hospice patients. This film offers a good way to see how people’s experience of dying can differ. For example, one patient with liver cancer is very aggressive towards his caring family as he rapidly declines. A 19-year-old has a much more positive attitude and acceptance of her death than her parents. Another woman is in terrible pain but has a shady history with painkillers and can’t be cared for with the typical methods. As summarized by Swim Pony intern Sarah Gardner in her summary of the film available in the dramaturgy Appendix, dying doesn’t change people’s personalities– people just handle dying based on who they already are. Available on HBO GO.

Giles, Chrissie. [“How do you tell someone they’re dying?”](#) *Mosaic*. Web. 13 Jan. 2015.

An article about the ways doctors are trained to deliver terminal diagnoses to patients, some of the particularly difficult/unpredictable subtopics, and how different ways of communicating the news affects patients and their families.

Krantz, Rachel. [“I Simulated My Own Death and Here’s What I Learned.”](#) 29 June 2016.

An article on the lessons learned by simulating one’s own death through meditating on losing feeling in limbs, having trouble breathing, and feeling the heart slow. Features seven questions to meditate on and the author’s personal experience exploring them, which could be useful ones to explore with our players:

- What dreams or goals would be lost if I died today?
- Who have I not forgiven?
- If my life ends in one hour, what am I most sad to be missing?
- How did I block love from coming into my life?
- What do I want to be remembered for?
- What is undone in my life?
- Who do I want with me as I’m dying?

McGonigal, Jane. *Reality Is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World*. New York: Penguin, 2011. Print. [See Appendix]

McGonigal's book, referenced above in the Games section, discusses the psychology of happiness and how thinking about death regularly makes people happier overall, information she used to create "Tombstone Hold 'Em," a physical game only playable in a cemetery. Quotes from her mortality research available in the dramaturgy Appendix.

Meek, Mikki. "One Last Thing Before I Go." This American Life, Podcast. 23 Sept 2016.



The first half of this podcast is about a phone booth in Japan where people who lost friends and family in the 2011 tsunami and earthquake go to "talk" to their dead loved ones. There's no one on the other end of the line (and it's not even a full phone booth but a disconnected rotary phone in the frame of a full booth), but the structure somehow make conversation easier; for some, it's the first time they've spoken to or about who they lost, while others visit the booth every week to offer updates.

Neumann, Ann. *The Good Death: An Exploration of Dying in America*. Print. 2016. [See Appendix]

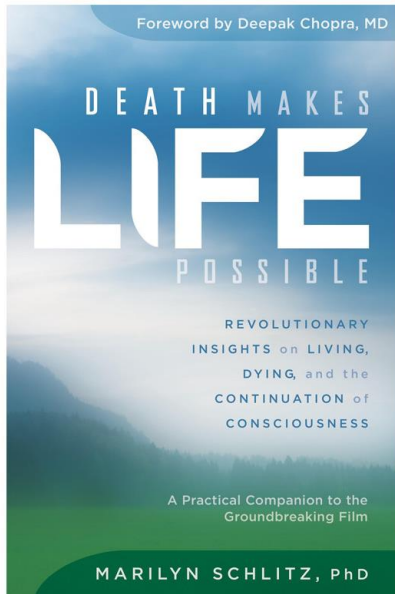
[Available to borrow in print from Swim Pony.]

A book on the search for what it means to experience a "good death," which most people think of as dying at home, surrounded by loved ones, and without pain – but each of those, especially the first, can be very difficult to achieve. Heavy focus on death with dignity/right to die acts. See the dramaturgy Appendix for a *The End*-specific summary and quotes.

Sautter, Jessica. Interview conducted by Adrienne Mackey and Sam Wend. 13 Dec 2016. [See Appendix]

Jessica is an Assistant Professor of Medical Sociology at the University of the Sciences. Her research interests include disability and chronic illness, patient-caregiver well-being near the end of life, and community-and home-based care. She also teaches a class on Death and Dying. She explained that it's rare to know when one switches from just having a terminal illness to actively "dying" – even with an illness, there's often a lengthy period where people don't do any end-of-life preparation, and then often the actual decline comes on too fast to achieve everything they'd want to. Relatedly, we talked about how dying is a series of "little losses," both of possibilities and of physical capabilities, and how the symptoms that come with almost all terminal diseases (fatigue, pain, etc.) could be useful narrative constructs to incorporate into *The End*. See Appendix for other interview notes and big takeaways.

Schlitz, Marilyn. *Death Makes Life Possible*. Book and Film. [See Appendix]



[Available to borrow in print from Swim Pony]

Book (and documentary by the same name) that take a noetic sciences (a branch of metaphysics concerned with intellect and the mind) / worldview transformation approach to death and dying. A particularly resonant section of the book covers terror management theory (TMT) and the proven tendency of people to be more protective of their own groups and aggressive towards those who are different IF they are not primed to consider something that produces terror/anxiety (i.e. death) in a supported, caring manner. These pages have been scanned and are available to read in the Appendix folder. Another document in the Appendix features a chapter-by-chapter breakdown and some key quotes. This document also includes a series of practices towards transforming your worldview about death that could be useful to revise or integrate into prompts.

Shendge, Manisha. Interview conducted by Adrienne Mackey and Sam Wend. 17 Nov 2016. [See Appendix]

Dr. Shendge worked for over 20 years as a hospice bereavement counselor; is a licensed Fellow in Thanatology (the top certification in studies of death and dying); specializes in past life trauma, grief counseling, and life transitions in her private practice as a family and marriage counselor; teaches classes about death and dying at Chestnut Hill College; and is an ordained Presbyterian minister. She explained the biological need to provide space for people to “cool down” and reactivate their rational/logical thinking after an anxiety-inducing experience (which activates the fight or flight instinct and puts rational thinking offline). She also talked about using general images of death of all kinds to ease people into the topic before getting personal in her classes, which might be a good week 1 approach for us. Additionally, she provided us with a guided meditation on personal death awareness that she uses on her students. This document and interview notes/takeaways are available in the dramaturgy Appendix. (In the meditation, the things the reader is asked to cross off are little losses, from a list they’ve ideally written in advance of what they cherish/value most in their lives, from objects to places to abilities to people.)

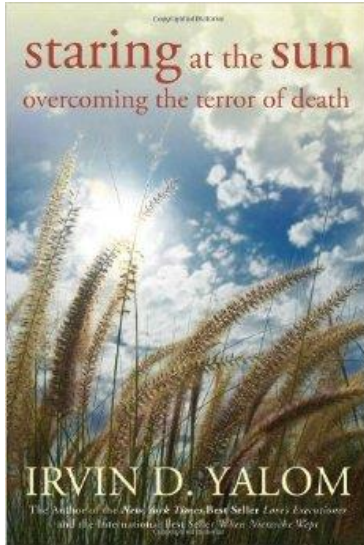
“Shoulda Been Dead.” This American Life, Episode 20 Act 1. Podcast. 17 Jan 1997.

The original inspiration for *The End*, this interview with *Wired* founder Kevin Kelly tells about his life-changing journey resultant from living as if he was going to die at the end of six months.

Watts, Alan. "Congratulations You Gonna Die! (by Alan Watts)." YouTube. Web.

An excerpt from a lecture by British philosopher Alan Watts about death and why we should celebrate it as a natural part of life the same way we do birth.

Yalom, Irving D. *Staring at the Sun: Overcoming the Terror of Death*. PDF and Print, 2008. [See Appendix]



A book written by an existential psychiatrist who specializes in helping patients overcome death anxiety. He uses thought experiments drawn from the work of philosophers such as Epicurus and Nietzsche, and uses concrete examples from clients to show how death anxiety manifests in all areas of life. For example, Nietzsche offers the thought experiment of imagining living the past year again and again for all of eternity. When one client was feeling trapped in her current life because of uncontrollable variables, Yalom posed her Nietzsche's prompt, and she realized that even if she only had control of 10% of her life, she wanted to at least consider a change because she'd hate to relive her past year forever.

This book is filled with other such examples, as well as a whole chapter for therapists wanting to incorporate responses to death anxiety into their work. While *The End* is not therapy, there are some useful tools and tactics available for guides in this chapter, such as always keeping conversation focused on the here-and-now rather than the patient's historical past or even the patient's current outside life of the therapy situation. Finally, the notes in the dramaturgy Appendix close with a write-up of Yalom's Reader's Guide of questions to ask oneself inspired by the rest of the book.

Part IV: Interaction / Modes of Operating

DARN CAT

Therapists respond to **change talk** rather than maintenance talk:

- Preparatory Change Talk
 - **D**esire (I want to change)
 - **A**bility (I can change)
 - **R**eason (It's important to change)
 - **N**eed (I should change)
- Implementing change talk
 - **C**ommitment (I will make changes)
 - **A**ctivation (I am ready, prepared, willing to change)
 - **T**aking Steps (I am taking specific actions to change)

Mansbridge, Christopher. "Breaking Bad News: SPIKES Protocol." OSCE, 2013.

A six step protocol for doctors delivering bad news, from a source of free OSCE exam notes for medical students.

- **S**etting (privacy/others present/time available etc. for information-sharing)
- **P**erception of condition / seriousness
- **I**nvitation from the patient to give information
- **K**nowledge: giving medical facts
- **E**motions and Empathy (prepare to give an empathic response to the patient's emotions)
- **S**trategy and Summary (close out, check for final questions, plan next conversation)

Mental Health First Aid Training. Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disability Services.

Course in recognizing the signs and symptoms of anxiety, depression, psychosis, and substance use disorders. Team members of *The End* participated in this course to receive three-year certifications as first responders to mental health first aid crises. Action plan:

- **A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm
- **L**isten nonjudgmentally
- **G**ive reassurance and information
- **E**ncourage appropriate professional help
- **E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies

OARS – The Basic Skills of Motivational Interviewing

- **Open-ended questions** – encourage a dialogue
 - ex: “What makes you think it might be time for a change?” instead of “Have you tried to make any changes this week?”
- **Affirmations** – support the patient by giving an accurate description of his or her strengths
 - ex: “I think what you are doing is really difficult. I’m proud to be working with you on this.”
- **Reflective statements** – help the patient listen to themselves
 - ex: Patient: I know I should exercise, it’s just that I can’t seem to start. // Your response: You are aware of all the reasons you should be exercising, but it sounds like it has been hard to find the motivation to start.
- **Summary** – looking at the bigger picture – let the patient see his or her whole story
 - ex: “If we add up the puzzle pieces and put them together...” or “The picture that I see is...”

Wolf, Gary. “The Data-Driven Life.” *The New York Times Magazine*, Web. 28 Apr 2010.

Article about ways to use data-tracking and qualitative information to assess how we live, and whether the psychological and practical advantages/disadvantages of this tendency. Relevant in thinking about what kind of information we gather about play-throughs and what we ask players to think about for themselves.

Part V: *The End* Development

November 2015 Development Intensive [See Appendix]

Adrienne, Maria, and Sam played *My Gift of Grace*, did preliminary mortality research, and experimented with prompts such as creating IDs and anonymous texting (see the link above for specifics). The week culminated in a day-long beta test of several of our prompts. One of the four beta testers' experiences is documented in a walk-through PDF available in the dramaturgy Appendix.

Theater Game Jam. Swim Pony and Engagement Lab. Boston, June 2016.

The core team for *The End* traveled to Boston to co-host a Theater Game Jam in partnership with Emerson's Engagement Lab, a game design studio for social change. At this event, participants from both theater and gaming backgrounds teamed up to develop scene/event ideas based on the constraints of *The End*.

Social Media Experiment. Summer 2016. [See Appendix]

Swim Pony summer intern Sarah Gardner conducted a social media experiment by asking a series of questions about mortality from the Swim Pony Facebook page to see what kind of/how many responses we would get. Results are in the dramaturgy Appendix.

Mackey, Adrienne and Samantha Wend. "A Study of *The End*: Using Game Mechanics to Create Customized Trans-Media Narrative." *ASTR Conference – Video Games and Gaming: Towards a Transmedial Analysis Working Group*. November 2016. [See Appendix]

Sam and Adrienne co-wrote a paper for the American Society of Theatre Research as part of a Gaming working group. The paper uses *The End* as a case study for the mechanics and dynamics that Swim Pony is interested in using gaming and theater's intersectionality to reap the greatest benefits from. The second half of the paper is a little outdated, as it was written before some key show developments (such as the deck of cards as the method of play), but the first half is a useful read in terms of both our references (many of which are included in this packet) and goals for *The End*. Available in the dramaturgy Appendix.

November 2016 Developmental Intensive [See Appendix]

The November 2016 intensive brought us many steps forward in development of the piece, including guides/training, card design/use, prompts, audience recruitment, and more. A synthesis of the week's notes is available in the dramaturgy Appendix, along with a series of documents of the beta tests conducted one of the days of the session.