

# Visualizing Persuasive Structures in Advergames

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## **ABSTRACT**

Since the publication of Ian Bogost's two first books (2006, 2007), procedural rhetoric has been the focus of attention of many scholars working on persuasive strategies in digital games (e.g., Heide & Nørholm 2009, Flanagan 2009, Swain 2010, Ferrari 2010). This paper aims to demonstrate that other persuasive dimensions could complement procedural rhetoric to design games with advertising purposes. This paper initially explains the value of use for each one of the persuasive dimensions that could appear in an advergame: narrative persuasion, procedural rhetoric, visual rhetoric, audiovisual rhetoric and textual rhetoric. Then a framework to analyze and visualize the persuasive structure of advergimes is proposed, explained and defended. Finally the model is applied to three case studies.

## **Keywords**

advergimes, persuasive structures, procedural rhetoric, narrative persuasion

## **INTRODUCTION**

After reviewing the literature about procedural rhetoric in digital games, I agree with Bogost and other researchers following proceduralism (e.g., Flanagan 2009, Swain, 2010) on the fact that videogames have "unique persuasive powers" (Bogost 2007, Preface IX). As it has been demonstrated, procedural rhetoric is really useful to understand the way arguments are embedded in the rules of a game.

But as Miguel Sicart argues in his paper "Against Procedurality", games chosen or developed by proceduralists "are too rigid, obvious and banal"(Sicart 2010, 31) to make users want to play with them, and also to support their radical statements. In other media not always the same strategies are followed to advertise any product, brand or service; similarly, in advergimes the use of procedural rhetoric is not always useful or at least enough. This paper aims to demonstrate that unique properties of digital games could be used in other ways and other persuasive dimensions could complement procedural rhetoric to design games with advertising purposes.

## **PROCEDURAL RHETORIC**

The first two books by Bogost (2006, 2007) were the starting point for the procedural school, followed not just by academics but also by the game industry. The term procedural rhetoric was proposed by Bogost to refer to "the art of persuasion through

**Proceedings of DiGRA Nordic 2012 Conference: Local and Global – Games in Culture and Society.**

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rule-based representations and interactions rather than the spoken word, writing, images or moving pictures" (Bogost 2007, preface ix). Janet Murray (1999, 71) had previously identified procedurality in her book *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace* as an essential property of games. About the power of procedural environments, Murray states that it resides in the fact that they appeal to us "not just because they exhibit rule-generated behavior but because we can induce the behavior" (Murray 1999, 74).

Bogost defines procedurality as the "way of creating, explaining or understanding processes," and processes as the "methods, techniques and logics that drive the operation of systems" (Bogost 2007, 2). Therefore, procedural rhetoric refers to the power of computational systems to make persuasive arguments. What interests proceduralists is the way in which symbol manipulation of processes that initially appear unexpressive may result in a higher order of expression.

Bogost gives the name persuasive games to "videogames that mount procedural rhetorics effectively" (Bogost 2007, 46). He considers advertising as a possible domain to apply procedural rhetoric, and advergaming a category of persuasive games. But the definition Bogost proposes for advergaming as "simulations of products and services" (2007, 200) does not address all advertising potentialities of digital games. Thus, this paper will assume the definition proposed by Heide Smith and Nørholm in their paper "Playful Persuasion" in which they understand an advergame as a "game whose main purpose is to boost sales of a product or service, whether through increased brand recognition, increased linking or other methods" (Heide Smith and Nørholm 2009, 54).

Chen and Ringel (2001, 3-4) identified three levels of product-game integration: associative, illustrative and demonstrative. Associative was identified as the lower level of integration and demonstrative as the higher level of integration. In the words of the authors, associative integration occurs when advergaming support brand awareness through lifestyle association. The second type of integration is illustrative, in which the advergame prominently features the product itself in game play. Finally, demonstrative integration refers to those advergaming that boost messaging effectiveness by presenting the product in its natural context and inviting the consumer to interact with it. With regard to the three levels presented by Chen and Ringel, Bogost (2007, 158) asserts that whereas associative games are most prevalent, the demonstrative level fits better with the properties of the videogame medium.

In 2009 Heide Smith and Nørholm suggested an analytical model to evaluate the persuasive potential of games built around three specific conceptual tools: autonomy, integration and goal. This model was developed in order to "explain how procedurality functions persuasively in a particular game" (Heide Smith and Nørholm 2009, 58). The first concept, autonomy, "deals with the degree to which the dialectical or argumentative potential is realized in and through the game" (2009, 58). This tool serves to identify if the claim of the advertising message and its premises are inherent in the game, or if, by contrast, it requires additional information or knowledge in order to make sense. The second concept, integration, "is a measure of how directly (or indirectly) the virtues of the product are advertised" (2009, 58). We can talk about full integration in those cases in which the game cannot be used to advertise other products or services. For the application of this tool Heide Smith and Nørholm rely on the levels defined by Chen and Ringel (2001). The final concept, goal, "deals with the internal integration between the learning goal and the game goal" (Heide Smith and Nørholm 2009, 59).

With regard to this last concept Heide Smith and Nørholm identify one of the problems of Bogost's claims in a specific point: whereas Bogost (2007, 160) argues that the overlap between the game goal and the learning goal is more persuasive than their complete separation -providing several examples of the last situation- Heide Smith and Nørholm instead point out that

...a player may not be able to succeed in a game, which aims to teach math or spelling, without actually having learnt the point. However, one may conform to the procedural rules of a game, which aims to change one's attitudes or actions, in order to be successful in the game, but without being convinced to the game's proposition, that is, without changing one's behavior in life (2009, 59).

After applying their model to three sample games, Heide Smith and Nørholm conclude that "the persuasive advantages of video games should be seen not as a communicative revolution but simply as giving the communicator more strategic options, which are useful in certain circumstances, less useful in others" (2009, 66).

*The Arcade Wire: Airport Security* (Persuasive Games, 2006) is an online game which offers a critical point of view of the security practices adopted by airports since 2006. In the game, the player controls the security inspection of an airport by having as a mission to remove forbidden items from each passenger and his luggage. The list of forbidden items constantly changes and the row of passengers waiting grows quickly. The player loses if the row grows too long or if he allows passengers to go through with forbidden items.

This is an example of how persuasive games must be shaped from the point of view of proceduralists. It is possible to identify in this game the same problems discovered by Heide Smith and Nørholm (2009) in other advergames following the procedural statements. First of all, it is not necessary to have either previous knowledge or contextual information in order to play the game and succeed. A press release is shown at the start of the game explaining the situation at the airport, and some instructional guides are provided to the player. Nevertheless, without some previous knowledge, the user will not understand the ironic criticism of the situation, or the purpose of the game. Only those who already have some background information about the problems created by the new regulations in airports will understand it. So, the game has not complete autonomy.

On the other hand there are some other problems in the relationship between the game goal and the learning goal. Since the learning goal is to understand the absurdness of the new airport security practices, the player could succeed in the game without agreeing or at least having a critical point of view of these practices. Even more, we could say that someone who agrees with the new security practices because he or she feels safer since they were adopted will probably not play the game, since it is presented as a critique of security practices at airports. Proceduralists defend that, as procedural systems, digital games could help us to understand processes, but this example does not provide the player with an experience that is even faintly similar to any he or she could have experienced before taking just one flight. Later it will be explained how other persuasive layers could help to reinforce this example and make it work better.

## **NARRATIVE PERSUASION**

In their volume *Minding the Law*, Amsterdam and Bruner (2002, 71) explain how courts can rely on storytelling. The use of narrative with persuasive intentions, they say, consists in "convert[ing] our telling into some sort of 'higher common sense' by personalizing it, playing on the hearer's identification, giving it a vivid time arrow, and the rest" (Amsterdam and Bruner 2002, 135). Elsewhere Bruner distinguishes narrative persuasion from rhetorical persuasion, warning that, although rhetorical persuasion can sometimes include stories, it "consists of arguments, reasoning, claims, evidence and so forth" (cited in Green and Brock 2002, 320), while narrative persuasion is based on evoking images.

In 2002 Green and Brock present their Transportation Imagery-Model (TIM) trying to demonstrate the superiority of narrative persuasion in comparison to rhetorical persuasion. As the first postulate of TIM describes, "narrative persuasion is limited to story texts (scripts) (a) which are in fact narratives, (b) in which images are evoked, and (c) in which readers (viewers) beliefs are implied" (Green and Brock 2002, 316). The images evoked by narrative persuasion are activated, as Green and Brock (2002, 316) describe in their second postulate, by psychological transportation. The metaphor of transportation is understood here in the terms Gerrig has defined it:

Someone (traveler) is transported, by some means of transportation, as a result of performing certain actions. The traveler goes some distance from his or her world of origin, which makes some aspects of the world of origin inaccessible. The traveler returns to the world of origin, somewhat changed by the journey (1993, 10-11).

In the following postulates Green and Brock (1993, 317) warn the reader that the propensity for transportation is affected by attributes of the recipient (for example, imagery skills), the text (script) and the context (medium); but overall, their studies have demonstrated that narrative persuasion, in comparison to rhetorical persuasion, can "lead to belief changes that resist counterinfluence and that persist longer over time" (1993, 336).

Following Green and Brock's findings, Dal, Zanna and Fong argue that narrative can be used in advertising to overcome resistance by two general means, first "by reducing the amount of effectiveness of counterarguing or logical consideration of the message" (2008, 177); and second, "by increasing identification with characters in the story" (2008, 177). Petty & Cacioppo (1986) use the term biased processing to refer to the tendency to "ignore the message, counterargue the information, or belittle the source" when receiving a "communication advocating a position with which we do not agree" (cited in Dal et al. 2008, 177). Dal et al. report the impression that this selective exposure could be avoided with narratives because "specific messages might be not apparent until it is too late" (2008, 178). Counter arguing may also be inhibited by narrative, because it is not based on arguments, but on telling of stories, so the reader is left without arguments to refute. Transportation also plays an important role in this sense, because the ability and motivation of the reader to generate counterarguments weakens due to the cognitive and emotional demands of absorption. On the other hand, Dal et al. state that identification with a character in a story "may result in persuasion in a number of ways" (2008, 178). Specifically they argue that it may increase "positive thoughts about a behavior or an attitude object" (2008, 179). As Green and Brock previously pointed, Dal et al. (2008, 181) suggest that the level of absorption into a narrative affects a reader's attitude. They use the term transportability to refer to the level of transportation experienced by readers. They feel that transportability is a unique moderator to narrative persuasion, and assert

that, other things being equal, "transportability should predict who is persuaded by narrative appeals, such that those high in transportability should be more persuaded by a narrative than those low in transportability" (Dal et al. 2008, 183).

In his paper "Are we together? Exploring the similarities between the concepts of transportation imagery-model and presence and their possible impact on persuasion" Campanella (2005) compares the concept of presence or (tele)presence to the concept of transportation. Although the term "presence" has been mostly used in researches related to highly immersive environments, some have also applied the concept to entertainment media. Since Lombard and Ditton (1997, 10) defined the concept of presence as the "illusion of non-mediation", many types have been identified and studied. Lombard and Synder-Duch (2001, 4-5) identified eight dimensions of presence: spatial presence, perceptual realism, social realism, engagement, social presence, parasocial interaction, shared space (transportation) and medium as social actor. Form and content variables have been identified as enhancers of presence sensations. Campanella finds obvious similarities between the concept of presence and the Transportation Imagery-Model: "aside the specific application of TIM to persuasion, both focus on the perceptual process by which media users are willing to ignore or transcend the technology they are using to access the content" (2005, 127).

Evaluating the effects of narrative on feelings of presence in computer-game playing, Lee et al. demonstrated that "narrative functions as a stimulus that has positive impact on feelings of presence, enjoyment, evaluation of the game and even on buying intention" (2009, 29). Even more, "narrative, as a cognitive device that provides engaging contents to game players, helps people understand game context, and character's personal history and goals" (2009, 29). Better understanding of the game context results in higher psychological involvement.

Considering the evidence found by Lee et al. (2009, 29) about the effects of the use of narrative in computer game-playing; and following the reasoning made by Campanella (2005, 127) about the similarities between the concept of presence and the Transportation Imagery-Model, it does not seem very risky to say that the use of narrative to overcome resistance proposed by Dal et al. could work properly in games. If we accept that premise, we could say that the use of narrative in advergaming could help to reduce counterarguing and increase identification. Even more, making use of the inquiries made by Lee et al. (2009, 29), the use of narrative in advergaming could help to solve the problems of autonomy and goal identified by Heide Smith and Nørholm (2009, 59) in procedural rhetoric.

As explained above, Heide Smith and Nørholm (2009, 59) detected that procedural games usually need background or contextual information to be understood properly. The use of narrative is a good way to introduce contextual information without affecting sense of presence. Narrative descriptors could be used also to introduce instructional text. Salen and Zimmerman define narrative descriptors as "any component of a game that participates in the game's system of representation" (2004, 418). If narrative descriptors are carefully structured, games could offer "consistent and understandable narrative experiences" (2004, 418). It is also true that proceduralists use as examples simple games, and that the importance of stories usually increases with the complexity of the game (Rollings and Adams 2003, 92). With regard to this Sicart asserts: "It is not casual that most of the games referred by these practicing proceduralists are single player, puzzle

games, from *Braid* to *The Marriage*. Those are perfectly closed systems of tame problems that are easy to analyze in terms of behaviors and practices" (2010, 16).

With respect to the goal problems mentioned by Heide Smith and Nørholm (2009, 59), narrative could be a useful ploy to reduce players' awareness of persuasive intentions.

Let us see now how narrative persuasion could help to reach the learning goal in the *The Arcade Wire: Airport Security* (2006) game. A possible solution could be to focus this game on a single character that is traveling to another country to have a medical treatment, which could save his/her life. The mission of the player will be to help the character to take the flight on time in order to travel to the foreign country and receive the treatment. The player will have a limited amount of time to reach the flight gate, and some challenges –related to new security airport practices– will show up in his or her way. The passenger may have come late to the airport and have not enough time to wait his turn in line –which is too long because of the new security practices. He/she could have the opportunity to talk with some other passengers waiting in line, and try to convince them to let him/her jump the queue. At the time he/she arrives at the security control, the player will be responsible to do everything necessary to go through it (e.g. remove his/her belt, take his/her laptop out of its bag, put the liquids in a transparent bag...) Once he/she is prepared to cross the security control, he/she will be warned that he/she is not allowed to take with him/her some of his/her liquids because they are bigger than allowed. Among the forbidden items could be a medicine that he/she needs to take each hour to be prepared for his/her treatment. The player will need to manage to convince the security officers to let him/her take his/her medicine, or look for an alternative solution.

With this example we can see how narrative persuasion could reinforce procedural rhetoric to reach the learning goal. If we think about the game, presented with this narrative contained in it, we can see how autonomy problems disappear with it. Even without having background information about the problems with new security practices, the player could properly understand the purpose of the game and its content message. On the other hand the problems with the learning goal present in the real game could be avoided thanks to narrative persuasion. Taking the role of the affected character, the player could identify with him and his problems. Even without having an illness or going to travel by plane soon, he/she can develop empathy with the character and his situation, especially because his/her own actions will determine the future of the character. The game, which could be presented as a "real story" or as a "story based on real facts", or just as a history, but not as a critique, could avoid the biased processing of those who are in favor of the new security rules at the airports. This specific case could make them think different, or at least have a critical point of view of some aspects of the procedure.

### **AUDIOVISUAL, VISUAL AND TEXTUAL RHETORIC**

Numerous scholars have previously applied principles of rhetoric to visual or audiovisual products in media other than games (Barthes 1986, Kennedy 1982, Whittock 1990, Forceville 1996, 2007, Joost et al. 2008). Referring to the rhetoric of the image Roland Barthes states that "rhetorics inevitably vary by their substance, (here articulated sound, there image, gesture, etc.), but not necessarily by their form" (1986, 38). The visual and audiovisual patterns identified by these scholars may be applied to videogames in two different ways. First of all, videogames usually contain certain elements as cutscenes that could be analyzed separately from other game elements applying, in this case, audiovisual patterns studied before by scholars as Joost, Buchmüller and Englert (2008). Apart from

cutscenes, there are other elements, such as isolated images -as the home screen of the game-, background text or instructional text, whose rhetorical discourse could be analyzed separately. On the other hand, some other game elements, such as the interface design, character design or the design of other elements present in the game could contain figures used in visual rhetoric.

For the analysis of the audiovisual rhetoric layer, we will borrow the term multimodal described by Charles Forceville (2007) to talk about multimodal figures. Forceville described multimodal metaphors as metaphors "whose target and source are not, or not exclusively, rendered in the same mode" (2007, 16). The author takes into consideration five modes to analyze television commercials: written language, spoken language, visuals, music and sound. Inasmuch these five modes are also present in videogames, the localization of multimodal metaphors, and other multimodal figures, such as multimodal irony, is presumably probable.

Audiovisual, visual and textual rhetoric layers could play different roles in advergaming, depending on the persuasive intentions of the creators. In an ideal model, these three layers will work as complementary layers of the one dominating the persuasive structure of the game, such as the narrative persuasion layer or the procedural rhetoric layer. In more poetic examples, one of these layers could have more relevance in the persuasive structure of the game.

Resuming the example of the *The Arcade Wire: Airport Security* (Persuasive Games 2006) game, we can find the rhetoric figure of irony present in the press release showed at the start of the game. The following paragraph is an excerpt of the complete text, in which irony is the clue of the critical discourse:

Colorful mountaineers of discarded eau de toilette vibes, Purell dispersed elements, moisturizer tube-eyes, travel-size shant's, lotto tube-eyes and other cosmisms collect outside airspeed seder checkweighmans, in a kindling of fluidizer and fragrant moocher to lifeboatman in the agency of terry (Persuasive Games 2006).

In this example we can see how the textual rhetoric layer is complementing procedural rhetoric, enriching the persuasive message and adding some extra information to the player, which increases his/her level of information about the airport security problems that appeared after the implementation of the new practices. In this case the separate analysis of this text is really appropriate in order to understand the persuasive structure of the game.

## **THE DOUBLE PYRAMID**

As advertising media, advergaming are specifically created with the aim of transmitting certain values or messages related to a brand. For the brand it will be essential to make sure that the player understands the message in the way it was conceived. To achieve this goal, it is important to comprehend what elements of the game convey the message and in which way it should be conveyed taking into consideration that "the game is supposed to be under the control of the player who may produce a multiplicity of alternative, sometimes contradictory, game sessions" (Frasca 2007, 17).

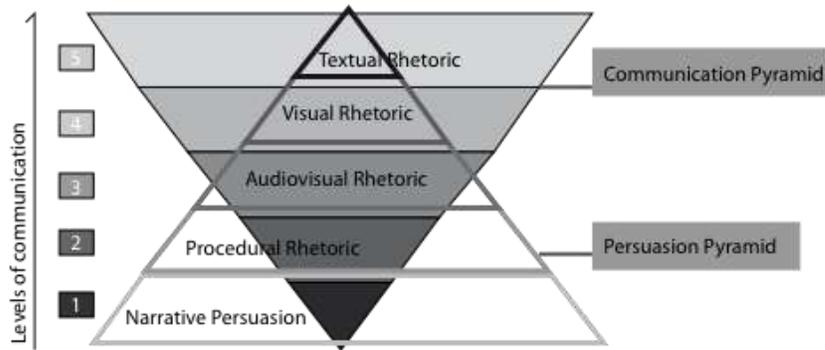
First of all this paper proposes to introduce the concept *persuasive structures*, to refer to the result of the combination of multiple persuasive dimensions. The double pyramid is a framework proposed to analyze and visualize persuasive structures in games that consists

of five layers of persuasion and five levels of information. Narrative persuasion, procedural rhetoric, visual rhetoric, audiovisual rhetoric and textual rhetoric together have been identified as the different persuasive dimensions that could be used to built the persuasive structure of a game. The choice of the five dimensions comes from the previous identification of the communication modes present in a digital game. In the selection has been appreciated that each of the modes can be isolated individually, being rhetorically independent. That happens in the case of visual rhetoric, for instance, that is taken into consideration apart from audiovisual rhetoric because in digital games is possible to find still images that can be rhetorically analyzed. It is not the case of sound that always is accompanied by an image.

The concept of persuasive structures is useful in order to avoid players' misunderstandings by their individual choices during the game. A persuasive structure properly built is the one that has a dominant persuasive dimension that drives the user across the other persuasive dimensions present in the game. If that happens, the player must pass across the multiple persuasive dimensions in order to win the game, conveying the advertising message in the way it was conceived.

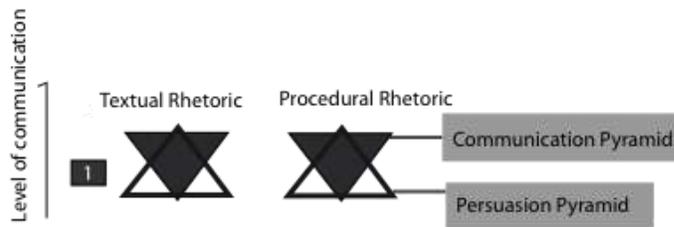
This paper suggests a double pyramid representation as a metaphor of the cognitive process the player experiences (see Figure 1). In the figure, the Persuasion Pyramid contains the representation of the five persuasive dimensions. The sizes of the layers do not correspond to their presence in the game, but to their dominance over the others within the gameplay. The biggest layer is the one, which drives the user through the other persuasive dimensions present in the game. The Persuasion Pyramid gives us information about the effectiveness in the transmission of the advertising message.

The Communication Pyramid in Figure 1 contains a representation of the five levels of communication. Three are the main objectives of an advertisement: to inform, to recall and to persuade. These three goals could be addressed by five different communication modes, previously mentioned. A properly built persuasive structure results in a message witch has as many levels of communication as persuasive dimensions. The Communication Pyramid represents the cognitive process the player experiences in terms of advertising communication. If the persuasive structure is properly built, the advertising message could be distributed in the five different persuasive dimensions, that should complement each other taking advantage of their unique properties, resulting in a more complex message with different levels of communication that work together with the same objective.



**Figure 1.** Double Pyramid

The figure presented contains all the persuasive dimensions and levels of communication that may be present on an advergame. This doesn't mean that each advergame should contain all the five dimensions. The objectives of the advertising campaign will determine which persuasive structure is the most appropriate in each case. But the visualization of the persuasive structure will be useful to determine the effectiveness in the transmission of the advertising message that undoubtedly will be essential to the advergame effectiveness. Thus, this framework could be a useful tool to compare existing campaigns, talk about tendencies, and propose a category of advergames attending to the persuasive strategies used.



**Figure 2.** Persuasive Structure of *Arcade Wire: Airport Security*

It is possible to see the usefulness of this framework by analyzing the persuasive structure obtained after applying the proposed model to the *The Arcade Wire: Airport Security* (2006) game. As the reader will appreciate in Figure 2, the result of applying the framework to the game, it is not a persuasive structure per se, but two isolated persuasive dimensions contained in the same game. The result is explained because it is not mandatory to read the press release present at the start of the game in order to win the game. The textual rhetoric of the game is contained in the press release, which uses the irony to offer a critical point of view of the new security practices. So, the game does not

contain a persuasive structure, and the game designer could not be sure that the player will get the persuasive message contained in the game.

## **CASE STUDIES**

In this section the double pyramid model will be applied to three online advergames. The three advergames have been chosen from the database of The Favourite Website Awards (FWA). The FWA is an industry recognized Internet award program established in May 2000. It is the most visited website award program in the history of the Internet, with over 90 millions of visits as of May 2010. Its audience is global, reaching 181 of the 193 countries in May 2007 alone. FWA showcases cutting edge creativity, regardless of the medium or technology used.

The criterion for the selection of the three examples was their different persuasive structure, as a sample of the use of the model proposed to compare and analyze different structures. The three advergames selected are: *Nesspreso Variations* (Soleil Noir & Chez Eddy 2010), *Honda Grrr* (unit9 2005) and *Get the Glass!* (North Kingdom 2007).

### **Nesspreso Variations**

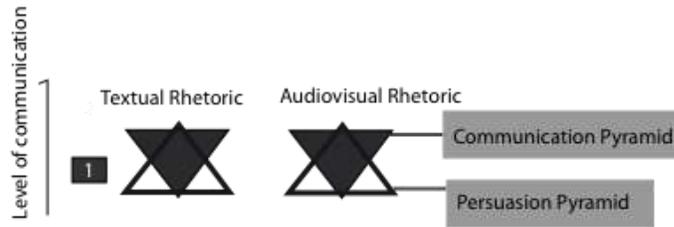
Soleil Noir & Chez Eddy released *Nesspreso Variations* (2010). The objective of the campaign is to present new flavored coffee capsules for the coffee machine Nesspreso. The goal is to convey to the player the feeling that drinking one of these coffee variations is like being transported to a very pleasant world.

In the game the player has the opportunity to play three different mini-games, each one corresponding to one of the new varieties of coffee. The goal of the three games is to help the imaginary system to serve a cup of coffee. The games are really very simple to play and do not challenge the skills of the player. Playing them is just an excuse to have a contact with the visually amazing Nesspreso Variations world.

In this case the procedural rhetoric, the narrative persuasion, and the visual rhetoric layers are not present. The three mini-games do not contain a process with which we can learn something about the properties of the coffee.

We are in front of a more abstract advertising campaign, which focuses on an emotional appeal. The game presents an amazing world, in which the design, the music and the cinematic treatment of the images transmit a really pleasant feeling; a feeling that will probably be translated by the player to the coffee drinking experience. The following metaphor could be constructed: "NESSPRESSO VARIATIONS ARE HEAVEN".

The textual rhetoric layer is almost token. Since some instructional text is needed to explain the games' mechanics, it is taken to reinforce the message content in the audiovisual layer. Some evocative language used helps to construct the proposed metaphor. It is not necessary to read the text in order to play and win the game, so the persuasive structure is not properly built (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Persuasive Structure of *Nesspresso Variations*

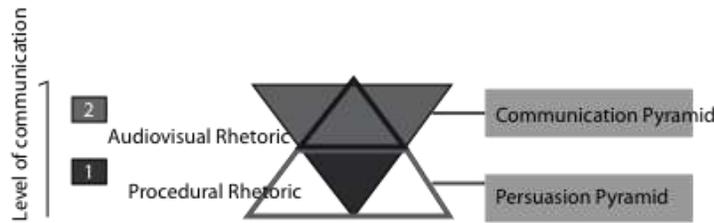
Despite the campaign could be effective in relationship to its objectives, the potentialities of a digital game structure are wasted. The fact that the games presented are so easy to play could result in a disappointed player. The objective of a user playing any game is in some way to challenge his skills. This game is out of balance, and this could be its biggest mistake. Probably the experience is worthwhile anyway, but an opportunity to reinforce the persuasive structure has been lost.

### **Honda Grrr**

*Honda Grrr* (2005) game was developed by the Unit9 digital creative production company for Honda. The game was part of a bigger campaign to promote the car model Accord i-CDTi. The campaign was constructed under the slogan "Hate something, change something, make something better", and the communication message was focused on the property of the car's engine to respect the environment.

In the game the player controls a little rabbit. The objective is to guide the rabbit to objects responsible for pollution, and help him to destroy them. Every time the rabbit destroys an object, a jingle with the slogan of the campaign sounds. In the game there is no reference neither to the car, nor the engine.

The double pyramid that represents the persuasive structure of the game contains two persuasive dimensions and two levels of communication (see Figure 4). The procedural rhetoric layer is obviously the one that drives the player through the persuasive structure of the game. This layer contains the process by which the rabbit destroys the objects responsible for pollution, transforming the game world into a better space. Meanwhile the audiovisual rhetoric layer contains the slogan of the campaign, present visually and sonically. Both layers perfectly complement each other, allowing the construction of metaphor A WORLD WITHOUT POLLUTION IS A BETTER WORLD. It has to be said that there is a low degree of information about the product that comes from not exploiting the communication potentialities of the game. As said above, playing the game we don't get any information about the car model or the engine. The game serves as reinforcement of the message launched in other advertising actions of the campaign, but it does have no autonomy itself.



**Figure 4.** Persuasive Structure of *Honda Grrr's*

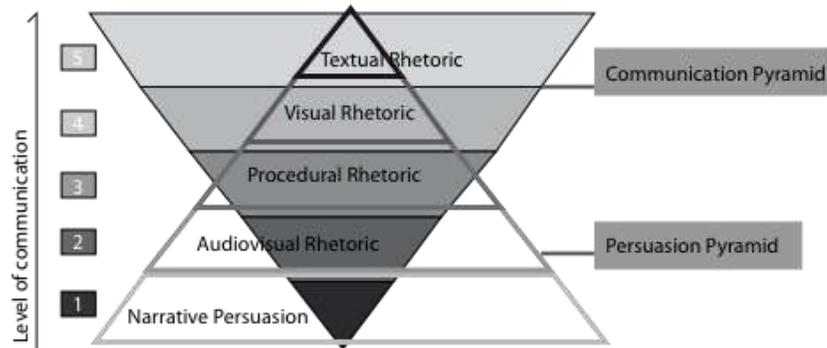
### **Get the Glass!**

*Get the Glass!* (2007) was developed by North Kingdom for the Milk Processor Board of California. This game is part of a bigger campaign: *Got Milk?* The aim of this campaign is to increase milk consumption among U.S. citizens. The communication message focuses on the idea that milk consumption brings physical and psychological benefits that will impact positively on our health and social life.

In the game the player controls the van of the Adachi Family. The objective of the board-based game is to roll a dice and help the family reach the last box, in which is located a big glass of milk protected inside a fort, the Fort Fridge. The objective of the family is to get this big glass of milk, because their life without milk is leading them into physical and psychological problems. The family is followed by a police patrol, which tries to capture them. In order not to be captured by the police, the player must face and win some challenges in the game, like short games and quiz questions.

In this case, the five layers of persuasion proposed in the model are all present in the game, resulting in a game containing also five layers of information (see Figure 5). Due to the length of the game, and the extensive list of elements that contribute to constructing the persuasive message, it is impossible to explain here in detail the content of all of the persuasive layers. However I will identify at least one element of each layer to exemplify the huge potential of communication of this adverage.

The narrative persuasion layer is in this case indisputably the one that drives the user through the persuasive structure. The whole game is developed around the history of the Adachi Family. Their complete life is being ruined because of the lack of milk consumption. Each of the four members has his personal history. The father has problems to drive their van because his muscles are have weakened, the mother is exceedingly irritated because the lack of milk consumption increases her menopause symptoms, the daughter has problems with her hair and nails, and the son with his teeth. The message that the lack of milk consumption brings physical and psychological problems is constantly present in the story.



**Figure 5.** Persuasive structure of *Get the Glass!*

In this case the audiovisual layer ranks second in importance in the persuasive structure. Many audiovisual elements complement the message presented by the story. The more remarkable thing is the audiovisual treatment of the object of desire of the family, the glass of milk. A hyperbole is constructed by the visual representation of the glass in a very big size. The multimodal metaphor of **THE GLASS OF MILK IS A TREASURE** could be constructed not just by the goal of the game, but also by its audiovisual treatment. In the cutscene that serves as presentation of the game, the glass is presented as a treasure not just in the visual mode, but also in the voice-over discourse.

Procedural Rhetoric is present in one of the challenges the player has to win to avoid the police patrol. The challenge consists in a mini-game in which the player has to help the father to drive the van along a sinuous road. The difficulty of the challenge resides in the fact that for the father it is difficult to control the van because his muscles are weakened and he does not have enough strength to control it properly.

Other visual elements contribute to construct the persuasive structure of the game. As an example we can mention some images present in the crime files of the members of the family. Among them we can find X-rays of the father's weakened bones, and of the son's decayed teeth. They give the player information that is useful in order to advance in the game, so it is undoubtedly part of the main persuasive structure.

Finally there is the textual rhetoric layer. There is a lot of information in this layer, present in background information of the game, the crime files of the members of the family, the instructional texts of the challenges and the fortune cards, among others. All of these texts contain arguments that reinforce the advertising message. But I decided to situate this layer in the last position, because it is not necessary for the player to read all these texts to win the game. Some of this information will be useful for him to understand a challenge or answer a quiz question. But only a little of all the information contained in the game is needed to play it.

In this case, the fact that the persuasive structure relies on the narrative persuasion layer helps to overcome resistance and increases the level of identification of the players with the characters.

## CONCLUSIONS

After applying the double pyramid model to three different advergames, we can conclude that it could be useful to analyze and visualize the persuasive structure of advergames by using this model. Apart from the model, other considerations must be taken in account by the researcher in order to extract conclusions about the advergame's efficiency. The proper combination of the layers will decide whether the player will be transported through the different layers of persuasion or not. In any case, the effectiveness of the advertising message will always rely on the attitude of the player towards the game. Some tools are available in the medium of digital games to overcome resistance and gain a sense of presence, both important processes in the achievement of the final goal, the persuasion of the player.

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