Koster says games are not stories. I think what he is talking about is the mistake many game developers make. Taking a game that already exists and wrapping it in a new story. He says playing games is about finding the patterns and this teaches players that they can ignore the variations or the story. Which may be the only original thing about the game. The context might hold a new player for a short while but stimulating and innovative mechanics are what make great games.

He brings up some ethical points on games that have become famous for their context like: Deathrace and Grand Theft Auto. I think there is a certain amount of respect mixed in with his disdain for these games. I guess I feel the same way. GTA was fun to play. I ran people over, shot, punched and even learned a cheat code for unlimited weapons so that I could do more damage. For me there was a visceral appeal. It wore off pretty quickly. I played because I wanted to test the game’s limits. “If I could do this, what else can I do”. It’s success, I think, lies at the game being able to do so much within the large virtual world. Shame about the context.

I also took to heart the discussion of flow. “Beauty is found in the tension between our expectation and the reality” I think flow is all about getting people into that balance of being on the verge of winning and losing. Getting people into an altered state while playing a game is the holy grail.