

Notes

1 Introduction: Video Games and Storytelling

1. It must be noted that the term 'Narratological' is a rather loose application by the Ludologists and the implications of this are pointed out later in this chapter.
2. Roland Barthes states that the '*infinity* of the signifier refers not to some idea of the ineffable (the unnameable signified) but to that of a *playing* [...] the Text is plural'. Source: Barthes, R., 1977. Image, Music, Text, in: Heath, S. (Tran.), *Fontana Communications Series*. Fontana, London. pp. 158–159.
3. In *Gaming Globally: Production, Play, and Place* (Huntemann and Aslinger, 2012), the editors acknowledge that 'while gaming may be global, gaming cultures and practices vary widely depending on the power and voice of various stakeholders' (p. 27). The paucity of games studies scholarship coming from some of the largest consumers of video games, such as South Korea, China and India, to name a few, is markedly noticeable. The lack of representation of non-Western conceptions of play culture and storytelling traditions is similarly problematic.
4. Chapter 8 will engage with this issue in more detail.
5. '(W)reading' is preferred over the more commonly used neologism 'wreading' to emphasise the supplementarity of the reading and writing processes and also to differentiate it from earlier usage that might claim that the two processes are the *same thing*.

3 (W)Reading the Machinic Game-Narrative

6. For which he is criticised by Hayles (see Chapter 2).
7. Landow responds to this by rightly stating that Aarseth misreads his original comment where he claims that 'the reader who chooses among links or takes advantage of Storyspace's hypertext capabilities shares *some* of the power of the author' (Landow, p. 327, original emphasis). While his is a valid position, Landow does not expound on what the '*some* of the power' can be. Moreover, he persists with the *lexia*-based model, which as this thesis shows, emerges as especially problematic when applied to nonlinear texts like video games.
8. This kind of Ludology versus 'Narratology' argument, given the originary supplementarity between the ludic and the narrative entities, is incomplete and a following chapter will illustrate its shortcomings in more detail.
9. Called *Sands of Time* here onwards.
10. Called *RTCW* from here onwards.
11. If one does not consider the backstory as the whole story, such a conclusion would, of course, be incomplete.

12. WAD is the acronym for 'Where's All the Data?' as mentioned in the initial *Doom* design document.

4 Reading Games and Playing Books: Game, Play and Storytelling

13. See previous chapter for a more detailed commentary.
14. As Johan Huizinga, observes, 'in this intensity, this absorption, this power of maddening, lies the very essence, the primordial quality of play [...] this last named element, the *fun* of playing, resists all analysis' (Huizinga, 1970, p. 2). See also Raph Koster's book *Theory of Fun for Game Design* (Koster, 2013) for a detailed illustration.
15. This derives from Huizinga's pioneering effort, although it must be noted that Salen and Zimmerman do not subscribe to the idea of total immersion, as discussed in detail in Chapter 8.
16. Huizinga's conception of poetic creativity is not very clear. He seems content to identify the poet with the child and the savage in what seems a kind of pristine pre-culture state and involved in sacred play. As he comments, 'In this sphere of sacred play the child and the poet are at home with the savage' (Huizinga, p. 26). Interestingly, however, he goes on to identify a progressively ludic sensibility in modern man: 'His aesthetic sensibility has brought the modern man closer to this sphere than the "enlightened" man of the eighteenth century' (p. 26).
17. Fox News reports that 'In summer 2006, an Iranian political group called the Union of Islamic Student Societies revealed that it was planning on entering the video-game business.' <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2006/09/11/islamogaming-looking-for-video-games-in-muslim-world> [accessed 10 February 2015].
18. In Huizinga's sense of being a source and being 'formerly serious' activities (see Ehrmann).
19. At least that is how it seems from his use of a word loaded with deep theological import.
20. 'Noncentric' is an adaptation from Derrida's concept of the 'noncentre' – it points at the similarity to and the difference from the 'concentric'. It aims to mark the fact that gameplay is a 'single gesture but doubled'.
21. As in the ARGs described earlier.
22. Called *Rome* in subsequent references.
23. The HeavenGames' Rome: Total War forum and its sections on Roman History, gameplay and chatrooms carry the game beyond itself. The forum can be accessed at <http://rtw.heavengames.com/cgi-bin/forums/Ultimate.cgi> [accessed 10 February 2015].
24. I am indebted to Dr Will Slocombe for suggesting this point.
25. A large number of gameplay affordances need to be discovered or experienced rather than learned from manuals. Indeed, many gamers never even look at manuals when they play; they bring to their gameplay the combinations of rules, approaches, styles and tactics that Craig Lindley calls the 'gameplay gestalt' (Lindley, 2002).

6 Ab(Sense) of an Ending: Telos and Time in Video Game Narratives

26. Hence the name, *Sands of Time*, signifying the sands on the coast of the 'Sea of Time'.
27. The later sections of this chapter will illustrate in detail why 'virtual' has been used in this context.
28. Although they were released after *Sands of Time*, in keeping with the complex temporality of the story it is difficult to establish any chronological order and hence to call them sequels would not be accurate.
29. James Newman makes this point in *Videogames* (Newman, 2004, p. 103).

7 Playing in the Zone of Becoming I: Agency and Becoming in Video Games

30. cf. Marks's description of becoming.

8 Playing in the Zone of Becoming II: 'Becoming' as Identity-Formation in Video Games

31. This is shown in the episode 'Elementary, Dear Data'.
32. Some games allow the player to change the pace of the game and to exercise some basic controls on the AI but this obviously comes nowhere near controlling the opponent. Similarly, the game algorithm can control the player sometimes: for example, in *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.*, the psycho-kinetic monster momentarily disables the player from acting. This control, again, is not in any way total.
33. I am grateful to Dr Mark Butler for bringing this to my attention.

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