

$$\frac{c+a}{c} = \frac{c}{a} \equiv \varphi$$



God created man because he loved stories

African saying

For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow

Ecclesiastes 1:18 King James Bible

Al Mualin, *ASSASSIN'S CREED*

What I have shown you is reality. What you remember, that is the illusion.

Sephiroth *FINAL FANTASY VII*

Wyrd bið ful aræd! (Fate is inexorable).

The Wanderer, l. 5b

Uther, *The Saxon Tales*

Preface

Originally, this dissertation intended to explore the components that make up the diegetic world of the adventure game in relation to books and films. At the time, around 2004-2005, the debate between the narratologists and the ludologists was at its pinnacle and for me, as a graduate of English language and literature who had been in love with adventure games for a very long time, it was inconceivable that they were not games. Therefore, I was very much taken by the ideas of the narratologists. However, as the dissertation would be based on a series of articles, it turned out that it was difficult to find the right (blind) peer-reviewed journals and books at the right time for the research I had in mind. Consequently, I had to adapt my original idea. As I still wanted to write about games that tell stories (i.e. narrative games, story-structured games), I opted for articles that would explore how they achieve this without losing their essence as games. I would still keep the comparative aspect and where possible I would counter the arguments of the ludologists. As a result, the interrelation between the individual articles is not as cohesive as it could have been, especially as the articles were published over the span of several years in books and journals that were very diverse (see appendix C). Because of this, it would always be difficult to put them together in a more or less consistent way. Furthermore, because I did not want to change the original articles too much, I only added important information that was not available at the time of their first publication, as well as text needed to make the whole more coherent. There are only two major exceptions. The first is Chapter II, the chapter on genre, which originally only consisted of four pages in what later became Chapter V. I expanded this chapter, because I felt I needed more text to explain the importance of gameplay and gameplay skills. In addition, it was also important to clarify more explicitly why genre in games is and has to be different from genre in other media. The second exception concerns Chapter V, which I expanded by reintroducing information I had to leave out of the published version, as the original text was too long for book publication. In most chapters, I added images and, when needed, extra examples to clarify matters more completely. I would also like to take this opportunity to apologize for misusing the introduction and the final discussion to get information across that was not in the articles, but which I felt necessary for a more complete and accurate discussion of my ideas.

Over the course of the research, my findings showed me that both the narratologists as well as the ludologists had convincing arguments, but that the main problem was that they wanted to develop a theory that would cover all games. And there I think they are

wrong. Some games, the rule-based games (games of emergence), often do not have a story at all, while other games (games of progression) certainly have rules, but their course of events is determined by their narrative, i.e. they are story-structured. Thus, only the latter should be analysed as narratives. However, what the findings of this dissertation will show is that it is not the type of narratives we know from books or films, but rather narratives that are interwoven with and dependent on gameplay.

Despite having more room in the dissertation, time constraints have prevented me from including a number of chapters, which may have embellished the final product. For instance, a chapter on character might have discussed the difference between the avatar and the protagonist and why such a distinction would benefit the analysis of story-structured games. Such a chapter could also look into the use of the hero-king myth in games of progression, as there is some indication that gamers prefer a hero who 'grows' and becomes more rounded, as is the case in hero-king myths (Guijt, 2009). A chapter on time would have been interesting because I still do not agree with Jesper Juul's idea that games cannot have flash-forwards in gameplay. When discussing Natalie Vijlbrief's BA thesis on the use of time in the book, film and game versions of *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2009), we found several ways in which the games, which now do not have flash-forwards, not even where they are critical in the book, could be made more exciting by using this narrative device. We also felt that their use would make the gamer feel more involved with Harry's plight (which does happen in the book). A chapter on sound, finally, would be interesting because sound in games is used more actively (Appelman, 2009), not only as a means to set a mood and enhance atmosphere, but also to directly aide gameplay (just as the visual grammar games use, which I discuss in this dissertation). However, these exclusions can easily be rectified in new articles.

Overall, I have to apologize to game researchers from the Netherlands, France, Germany, and Austria for limiting myself almost exclusively to game research done by American, British, and Scandinavian scholars. The simple explanation is that they momentarily dominate the discussion within the Digital Games Research Association. I am well aware of the fact that other countries, most notably France, have long traditions not only in the field of game design, production, and development, but also in the field of game research. I can only promise to correct this in future research.

Oudkarspel, January 2011

Connie Veugen