

<http://www.eludamos.org>

**The Eternal Recurrence of All Bits: How Historicizing Video Game Series
Transform Factual History into Affective Historicity**

Tobias Winnerling

Eludamos. Journal for Computer Game Culture. 2014; 8 (1), pp. 151-170

The Eternal Recurrence of All Bits: How Historicizing Video Game Series Transform Factual History into Affective Historicity

TOBIAS WINNERLING

History and Historicity

Video games featuring historical content—what I term ‘historicizing’ video games (cf. Kerschbaumer and Winnerling 2014a, p. 14) —often come in series. *Civilization* (I – V),¹ *Age of Empires* (I – IV), *Anno* (5 parts), *Monkey Island* (5 parts),² *Total War* (8 parts),³ *Assassin’s Creed* (I – IV), to name but a few, are heavily serialized in that they all, save for their respective first incarnations, point continuously to the other titles in their series, be it on a structural level or with regard to content. They do so for many reasons, most of which are almost totally unrelated to everything these games signify on a representational level—economic reasons above all, but also the need to meet genre- and audience-imposed expectations, as well as technical limitations. Setting these factors aside for the moment, given that players who like one game in a series are likely to play other installments as well, the mere existence of a series carries important implications for the games’ contents—for a common ‘look’ they share, a story running through them, or recurring settings, items, or icons. When these serialized contents purport to represent aspects of the real world of history, they open themselves to a different sort of scrutiny than we otherwise bring to bear on games and game series. This article explores some of the implications of the serialization of historicizing representations, such as those employed in the aforementioned game series.

First, though, it may seem odd to classify these otherwise very different game series together on the basis solely of their historicized iconographies; in accordance with the formalist bias of much game studies scholarship, it is much more common to disregard representational surfaces and focus instead on abstract rules and procedural logics as the basis of game taxonomies (cf. Clearwater 2011, p. 32). But these surfaces might not be so easily dismissed as superficial; they not only structure players’ expectations and interpretations of a given game but are entangled with the mechanics of the game in various ways. “The aesthetic material is best described as the ‘art’ or ‘decoration’ but is fundamental to the video game. Without art, the video game is reduced to code and is probably unplayable; certainly, it lacks the sensual character of art. The aesthetics include visual assets, music, and sound, as well as larger structures such as narrative paths that structure the player experience” (Ruch 2012, 333). The difference between *Call of Duty* (2003) (itself predecessor of yet another series of historicizing video games)⁴ and *Counter-Strike* (2000) eludes formalist typologies such as that developed by Elverdam and Aarseth (cf. 2007, pp. 17-18), who “find that [the two games] are identical in each dimension of the typology” (pp. 17-18). The difference, however, consists in the fact that one is a historicizing game and the other is not. The incorporation of historical circumstances into *Call of Duty*, made necessary by its historicized appearance, is exactly what

made the game a “more slow-paced and gritty ‘World War II’ shooter” compared to “the fast-paced Counterstrike” (p. 17)⁵—a difference that appears secondary and subordinate in the context of Elverdam and Aarseth’s comparison. Trying to convey an appropriate atmosphere, a World War II flair, through the historicized surface as well as the associated mechanics—in this case, through slowing the pace of gameplay—makes *Call of Duty* a fine example of what I deal with in this essay: the in-game transition of factual history (as signified by the game’s surface) into affective historicity.

My argument in this paper revolves centrally around this difference between ‘factual history’ and ‘affective historicity’—terms that I will try to define briefly. But as there are substantial philosophical and epistemological issues involved, what I offer here must be regarded as an attempt to provide working definitions, heuristically flexible tools rather than statements to be cast in stone. First, history is clearly not identical with the past (cf. Schut 2007, p. 218). Rather, it is the enterprise of putting together a meaningful picture based on the remnants of the past that are still available for our present use and needs. History can at best be an approximation of the ‘real’ past events which are lost to us forever (Kerschbaumer/Winnerling 2014b, p. xix). Thus, history is necessarily of an interpretative nature, but this does not mean that these interpretations are arbitrary; they follow a clearly established demonstrative procedure that distinguishes the undertaking of history as a clearly ‘factual’ one. Doing history in this sense means bringing forth well-grounded, methodologically sound, inter-subjectively agreeable arguments for the validity of representations of the past (cf. Heinen 2011, p. 7).

Second, and in contradistinction to factual history, I define affective historicity as the attempt to create representations that convey the *feeling* of (representations of) the past. Affective historicity, therefore, is also clearly not identical with the past. It is at best an approximation of the ‘past as it was,’ and it is also necessarily interpretative. The key difference between the two approaches in this conceptual framing is that affective historicity is more flexible in its manner of interpreting because it follows mainly aesthetic and imaginative procedures to arrive at its results, which in the eyes of the factual historian may seem (and in some cases most certainly are) arbitrary. History works towards the rational, utilizing reasons, while affective historicity tends towards the emotional, utilizing feelings. Both approaches, though different in aim and method, are therefore still sufficiently related to draw easily upon each other in building their respective narrations. Factual history may turn to affective historicity for illustration, calling it reconstruction; affective historicity may use factual history as a resource, calling it verification (cf. Heinen 2011, p. 34).

It must be kept in mind, nevertheless, that since the two approaches are not mutually exclusive but complementary to one another, the difference between them is mostly one of perspective.

Now contents are not ‘signifieds’ dependent upon a signifier in any way, nor are they ‘objects’ in any kind of relation of causality with the subject. They have their own formalization and have no relation of symbolic correspondence or linear causality with the form of expression: the two forms are in reciprocal presupposition, and they can be abstracted from each other only in a very relative way because they are two sides of a single assemblage. (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, p. 163)

The same basic resources—the extant remnants of the past—are just used in different ways, and for different aims. The difference, in this case, is not in the eye of the beholder but in the purpose of the maker, and it is often difficult to spot and may easily elude the casual observer. If a game engine is used to make a 3D virtual model of an archaeological reconstruction of a Roman *domus* with the claim of “Living the past” (Rua and Alvito 2011, cf. title and 3304-3306)—and the environment is filled with AI-controlled NPCs such as “the guard avatar who defends the *villa* in case of attack” (ibid, 3304), is this factual history or affective historicity?

Games, then Seriality

Another, more serious complication arises in connection with larger series of games: how are the time(s) represented in these games related to concepts of historical time? Factual history employs time as its main structural principle: something may be considered ‘historical’ only if it is past. And the time that confers historicity in passing is considered as linear, one-directed, non-reversible, and uniform. The order of its flow determines historical lineage and order by the principle of cause and effect: causes are always temporally prior, effects are subsequent. Occasionally, historical time may be considered as proceeding in spirals, for instance in the circular movement of seasons. After winter comes spring, and in time winter again; but the spring after this winter is not the same spring as the one before it. Historical time may never be circular; it cannot return to any point it has once passed.

Turning now to a series of games such as *Age of Empires I* (set in antiquity), *Age of Empires II* (covering the Middle Ages), and *Age of Empires III* (covering Early Modernity), it would seem at a first glance that the historical principle is respected, as the various epochs are traversed in their proper textbook order. The progression from the High Middle Ages in *Assassin’s Creed* to the Renaissance in *Assassin’s Creed II* and the 18th century in *Assassin’s Creed III* and *IV* also seems fine in this respect. There is a very different sort of progression, however, in the sequence that leads from Ubisoft’s *Anno 1602* to *Anno 1503* to *Anno 1701* to *Anno 1404* to *Anno 2070* or, on a smaller scale, from the 19th century in *Imperialism* (1997) to the 17th century in *Imperialism II* (1999). The seriality of these games, the particular identification of individual titles as belonging to the series of a greater trademark whole, is not established by content-level chronology but by the feats and traits of gameplay and game mechanics peculiar to the respective series. The place of each element within the series is thus defined not by progress in chronological time but by progress in gameplay, and by the refinement and (attempted) improvement of the games’ features in comparison to their predecessors. This also holds for *Age of Empires* and *Assassin’s Creed*, whose later installments boast tighter controls, enhanced AI, greater freedom of movement for the player, and so on, and in this way define their relationships to the earlier titles of the series: the serial progression is defined more at the level of the games’ interfaces than in terms of their settings’ chronological order. In fact, since each title in these series is itself a stand-alone game, there is effectively no chronological progress at all within the series, as it is impossible to carry over high scores or avatars from one title into another. Players always start at zero, at the beginning of both game and play time. Chronological progress thus happens in a way that is seemingly detached from the game, outside its narrative,

only to enter into each title at its beginning again. One of the rare exceptions to this is Paradox Entertainment's *Victoria* (2003),⁶ whose savegames may be converted (with the help of the Doomsday Converter included in the *Revolutions* (2006) expansion) into files fit for *Hearts of Iron II: Doomsday* (2005),⁷ so that cross-game chronological progress actually becomes possible—but at the expense of in-series 'mechanical' progress, as the mechanics of *Hearts of Iron* are quite different from those of *Victoria*.

What we see, then, is a conflict between games' representational and mechanical levels. But just like the example of *Call of Duty*, in all of these games the historicized surface/appearance influences the mechanisms of the game. For example, *Anno 1404* relies crucially on the representational level to provide similar yet 'improved' game mechanics in comparison to *Anno 1701* and to use these mechanics to get a better grip on a historical situation set 300 years earlier—making the Late Middle Ages look rather advanced compared to the early 18th century. To players of the games, this fact does not present any great problem. But how are we, as critics, to make sense of this conceptually? I suggest that each such set of game titles may aptly be described, semiotically, in Deleuzo-Guattarian terms as an instance of the paranoid-despotic regime of signs (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 2013, pp. 130-132), where signs signify nothing but other signs, bound up in an endless virtual cycle where denotation becomes (in some instances completely) part of connotation. "When denotation (here, designation and signification taken together) is assumed to be part of connotation, one is wholly within this signifying regime of the sign" (ibid., p. 130). The representations of factual historical events and circumstances that these games employ are not effective denotations: either it is impossible to correlate them with any verifiable events/processes, or they are just so thoroughly informed by the games' own needs and presuppositions that they cannot be considered factually adequate. Their functions are to evoke a *feeling* of historicity and to exploit the reminiscences they may trigger in players—reminiscences based not only on factual knowledge or the emotions associated with historicized objects, but also memories of earlier and similar games within the same field: "The sign refers not only to other signs in the same circle but also to signs in other circles or spirals as well" (ibid.).

Philosophically, this cyclical form of reference may be taken, in turn, as a prime instance of the Nietzschean 'eternal recurrence of all things' (Nietzsche 1973, p. 250,⁸ and 2000, pp. 220–221). Deleuze and Guattari themselves recognize the association:

Whether it passes into other signs or is kept in reserve for a time, the sign survives both its state of things and its signified; it leaps [...] to regain its place in the chain and invest a new state, a new signified, from which it will in turn extricate itself. A hint of the eternal return. (2013, p. 131)

The concept that Nietzsche seems to have envisaged in the fragmentary statements that cluster around the topic of this incessant return of every state of being, hypothesized as occurring again and again in due time, fits video games almost obscenely well—at least in the reading provided by Abel (cf. Abel 1998, pp. 208–210), according to whom the required setting for a smooth, self-consistent running of the process of eternal recurrence includes: a finite but unbounded world; a finite number of "dynamic will-to-power-quanta" (p. 130) working within this world beneath its surface of appearances/things; agents bound to competitively try to achieve self-

conquest to attain a higher position and to overcome all others; and consciousness that all facts in this world are just matters of interpretation, representing no inherent ‘reality’ per se (p. 175). Replace “will-to-power-quanta” with “algorithms,” and there you are. The number of possible combinations of the elements of the system is limited, and therefore, given that time is eternal, each combination of algorithmic states is bound to appear time and again, even if clothed in different apparitional garb (p. 198). This reiteration of certain states of the system should be a familiar feature to anyone who has played a game more than once and adjusted their gameplay to the patterns they recognized. ‘Do you really want to exit without saving?’ No, you don’t. You want to re-start, and you want to reiterate a past state anew (cf. Gazzard and Peacock 2011, p. 503), this time taking a new turn and thus (hopefully) surpassing your old player-self.

On a more general level, this semiotics of the eternal return also holds for entire societies, if Allison’s interpretation of the surge in World War II games at the beginning of the 21st century is to be believed; according to Allison, this represented an attempt to conserve the “triumph of the West” by enacting it again, and again, and again (Allison 2010, p. 183). This re-enactment and re-creation of states of algorithmic configurations is not only a distinct feature of gaming, it also becomes a habitual—or serialized—praxis of play, a ritualized reading and use of the signs provided by games.

This transmediation [...] draws more on pop cultural representations of ritual than on any direct experience of religious ritual. [...] [T]he representation and the performance of ritual in video games are derived from popular films, comic books, music and music video, anecdotes, jokes and sayings, sports, the vernacular of popular journalism in newspapers and magazines. Therefore, the ritual logic of video games involves the signs of signs of signs of ritual. (Gazzard and Peacock 2011, p. 502)

If the rendering given above of Nietzsche’s thoughts about eternal recurrence is plausible—though it seems futile to seek interpretative self-consistency for his various utterances (cf. Nietzsche 1980, pp. 28–30)—then a video game is the perfect Nietzschean world. Or, in a more dynamic reading, our world should best be viewed as the greatest video game of all times. Well, the largest anyway.

Seriality, then Historicity

Now the question is what this might mean when we are facing a game that presents itself as ‘historical.’ When the semiotics of the game are historicized, when the signs players read are taken from history, does a ‘transmediation’ like that described above by Gazzard and Peacock take place, transforming pop cultural references and representations and transporting into our cultural understandings of history? Although most certainly pop cultural associations will be drawn and recognized both by designers and players in making and interpreting the games, these will be shaped into a particular form by the historicized appearance of the signs that trigger them. At first, the historicized surface seems to point to a deeper connection between the game and factual history. It would seem, then, that this surface is to be read as a promise—namely, that the game embodies in its syntagmatic structure, its underlying

algorithms, an emulation of the real-world processes at work in the historical situation it enacts (cf. Christesen and Machado 2010, pp. 108–109, for video games covering antiquity)—in short, that it not only looks like history, but that it also behaves as such. And, accordingly, that it may ultimately be read as such as well.

Gazzard and Peacock describe players' actions as becoming ritualistic instead of merely repetitive when these actions concentrate on a transformative goal to be reached – finishing the level, gaining the bonus, solving the quest, in short: powering up (2011, p. 506). This is a valuable insight, though seemingly problematic in the context of historicizing games. The problem lies in the connotations of 'ritual': merely following the rules toward goals in a habitualized fashion first of all points to establishing a praxis (cf. Reckwitz 2003, p. 286, pp. 294-295). However, it does not necessarily mean that ritual is enacted, for ritual conveys meaning. A power-up has no meaning in and of itself. The question if there is meaning in this praxis of playing and how this meaning is constructed may be answered by segmenting the praxis along a Deleuzo-Guattarian line into three separate acts: First, information is integrated into the system via a symbolic transformation (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, p. 158). In a strategic management simulation game an enhancement of the player's economic possibilities may be introduced in the shape of a new type of farm, say, a tobacco plantation (as in the game *Anno 1701*, Related Designs/Ubisoft/Koch Media 2006). Second, this symbol is emptied of content in becoming reduced to a power-up for the player as soon as he or she realizes that planting tobacco is a strategic decision to enlarge one's possible options, thereby taking on another form of referentiality: "The question is not yet what a given sign signifies but to which other signs it refers, or which signs add themselves to it to form a network without beginning or end that projects its shadow onto an amorphous atmospheric continuum" (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 130). A tobacco plantation thus points to a sugarcane plantation (thus *Anno 1701* points to *Anno 1602*, Max Design/Sunflowers 1998), which points to a spice field (*Anno 1503*, Max Design/Sunflowers 2002), which points to a hemp plantation (*Anno 1404*, Related Designs/Blue Byte/Ubisoft 2009), which even points to an oil refinery (*Anno 2070*, Related Designs/BlueByte/Ubisoft 2011), which points to (*n*), which points back to a tobacco plantation—thus initiating a cycle that is to be continued... "[I]nterpretation is carried to infinity and never encounters anything that is not already in itself an interpretation." (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, p. 133).

As a network, these signs thus constitute "ways in which the real world and game worlds are bound together by intertextualities and economies of signs and sociocultural activities, which are inherently ritual-like" (Gazzard and Peacock 2011, p. 510). This holds so long as they all are read as power-ups in similar procedural contexts; but they do not remain power-ups pure and simple. In the third step, they begin to be interpreted by players, and so to be layered with new, non-inherent meanings—a process set in motion by the interpretative appropriation of the game elements, necessarily incurred by realizing them in their specific configurations and states through the act of playing (cf. Cremin 2012, p. 77).

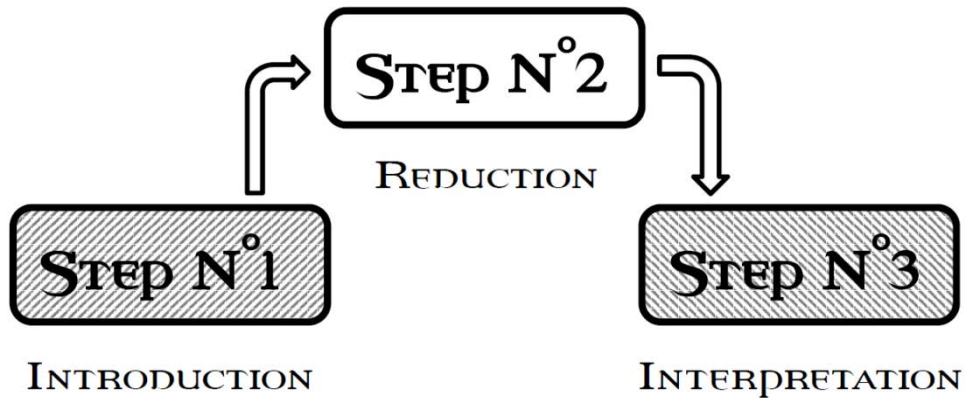


Figure 1: Three steps of transformation

This three-step transformation of historicized content—by way of introduction, reduction, and interpretation—clearly corresponds to the pattern of discourses within which games are situated, following Nohr’s (2014) inter-discursive connection model; the latter offers the best available diagrammatic visualization of the mechanisms through which any type of content is processed in video games, one which makes the connection readily apparent.

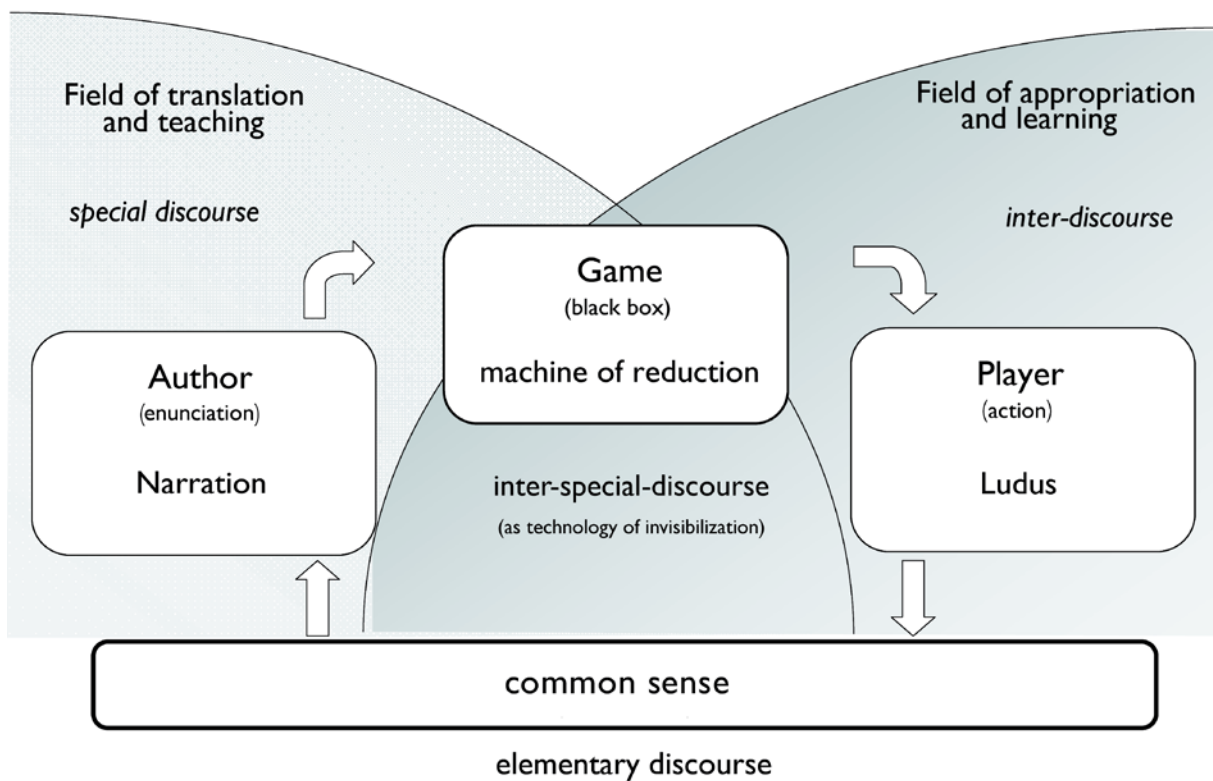


Figure 2: Rolf Nohr: Inter-discursive connection model (Nohr 2014, p. 15).

The element ‘tobacco plantation’ is introduced by the authors—the designers, programmers, publishers of the game—as a part of the narration, located within the field of the special discourse: this is Step N°1. Special discourses in this model are all discourses within a clearly delineated group of specialists, in this case the authors: game designers/developers. Their discourses may contain the same topics and terms as other discourses, but they impart a special meaning to them. The tobacco plantation thus becomes part of the black box of the game, the insides of which are neither visible nor understandable to the players, thereby also becoming reduced, emptied of content, and, above all, made into a sign as such. In the context of actual play, players apprehend the sign, first, exactly as that, located in the field of the inter-special-discourse—as a power-up: Step N°2. The inter-special discourse constitutes the discourse in which the special discourse of designers/developers intersects with the inter-discourse of the players (in which a discursive element from another discourse is situated via appropriation and learning within their own—in their own ways special—discourses). The inter-special discourse therefore works with a kind of symbolic pidgin language to establish a trading zone for concepts (cf. Huang 2005, p. 396)—concepts that are employed by both groups, authors and players, and are likely to carry different meanings within their respective special discourses, meanings that converge only partially. So while the power-up in question has been emptied of content, it nevertheless keeps its peculiar shape, the historicized shape of the tobacco plantation as which it appears in-game, and via this it can be connected by players to other signs on other circles, within the field of appropriation and learning. Being located, at this stage, in the inter-discourse—where discursive elements are invested with meanings to be incorporated in the special discourses of the players and, perhaps, finally even in the elementary discourse of common sense—the tobacco plantation’s inner emptiness and outer shape turn it into an object of projection for players, open to interpretation: Step N°3. In this context, the historicization of game elements takes on a particular significance as it forecloses certain areas of the field of appropriation for these elements. This phenomenon is best illustrated, perhaps, with toddlers’ sorting and stacking toys: a square block will not fit into a round hole. It may be green or red, a cube or a cuboid, but as long as its base is square, it will resist being pushed through the round hole. If, on the other hand, an element fits through the historicization hole, it will most likely be interpreted in historical fashion (cf. Schut 2007, p. 218).

Historicity, then Seriality

If a Nietzschean recurrence of a certain state of configurations within the game-world is to be the aim of this ritualized handling and patterning of play, this fits neatly with the view that games as such are inherently pleasure-bound activities⁹ while the eternal recurrence of the same is associated with the pursuit of a pleasure-principle (Bornedal 2006, pp. 112–113): with losing oneself by indulging in an eternalized moment of joyful consciousness, never-ending in its timelessness (Bornedal 2006, p. 130). This, in turn, mirrors the ‘flow’ concept as it is often invoked in game studies, especially when one takes into account the immersive effects of the player’s experience being directed towards a subjectified incorporation of the ‘game body’ (Crick 2011, p. 262)—thus producing the feeling of a “real” or authentic experience in the interaction with a video game’s simulated environment. Again, interpretation is

necessary to fill the gaps in the data that the system provides to players; this need arises not least because the graphical presentation and detached perspectives that modern games employ separate players from protagonists, and this separation must be overcome (Black 2012, p. 216). The mechanisms that provide video games with the possibilities to authenticate themselves in colorful ways are just the reasons why games need to resort to such forms of authentication in the first place (cf. Mallon 2008, p. 1).

In saying this, I am fully aware that the concept of ‘authenticity’ is fraught with difficulty in the context of video games and history. To experience a game as ‘authentic’ must not be taken to mean that the game conveys a message by being ‘factually correct.’ This holds especially true for historicizing games which are not, and can never be, windows onto a long gone past. Neither are history books, though, so it would be moot to belabor the point much further. What is meant here, on the contrary, is that a game that is able to convey the feeling of an authentic experience to its players is a game that has succeeded in presenting a convincing vision, in being a little world in its own right. Then the game has reached a state of authentication in which it ceases to irritate players and succeeds in immersing them instead. Interestingly, games dressed up in a historicizing fashion use the history in which they are clothed as one—and in many cases the most important—of their strategies of authentication (cf. Nohr 2014, pp. 20–21). Understood in this way, a successful historicizing video game is a game that, through careful presentation of selected historical elements, achieves a state of not-being-questioned by its players. The affective historicity of the game establishes a link to the real world that is crucial if the game is to be taken seriously (Ruch 2012, p. 334). Not for the sake of history, of course, but for its own sake!

Thus, this touch of historicity, if successfully applied, provides the game with a tacit conceptual integration into a wider imagination of history as an overarching archplot (cf. Hassemer 2014, p. 64) that provides “a classical structure, which includes the principal characteristics of causality, closed endings, linear time, [...] and a consistent reality” (Ip 2011, p. 113). Which, in turn—and this is where the process becomes awkward or problematic in the historian’s eye—may lead to a situation in which the representation of history used for authentication is taken as authentic in itself, as not-to-be-questioned. Affective historicity in this respect “acts as a kind of conceptual glue that holds the other content together in a simulation of real space that behaves more or less the way our own reality does” (Ruch 2012, 335), or that may be taken as a model for the reality of the historical world. Of course the jury is still out on this one—we do not know what it is that players take home from the games they play. Some recent studies indicate that in-game violence does not influence gamers’ behavior after all, at least not for the worse (cf. Festl, Scharnow, and Quandt 2013; Grizzard et al. 2014)—but that does not necessarily say anything about in-game history.

Turning to Nohr’s scheme once more, this is the point that has been left out so far—namely, the insertion of the results of step N°3 (interpretation) into what Nohr calls ‘elementary discourse,’ that body of common knowledge that everyone just knows or can come to know as such without much effort. This elementary discourse, which is very different from the historians’ discourse (cf. Montero Díaz and Paz Rebollo 2013, p. 162), is precisely what game designers draw upon in shaping games into

historicized ones—because these are precisely the elements that everyone knows and recognizes, that may appeal to pretty much anyone and lure them to play (and to buy!) their games. It may well be that the prominence that video games have achieved in our culture’s media landscape over the past few decades indicates that this process is already taking place on a much larger scale, especially if “the structure of a culture’s dominant media is a major shaper of that very same culture” (Schut 2007, p. 215). Once this media-cultural dominance is achieved, the discursive transformation of the historicized elements has come full circle, and the three-step scheme posed above is completed like this:

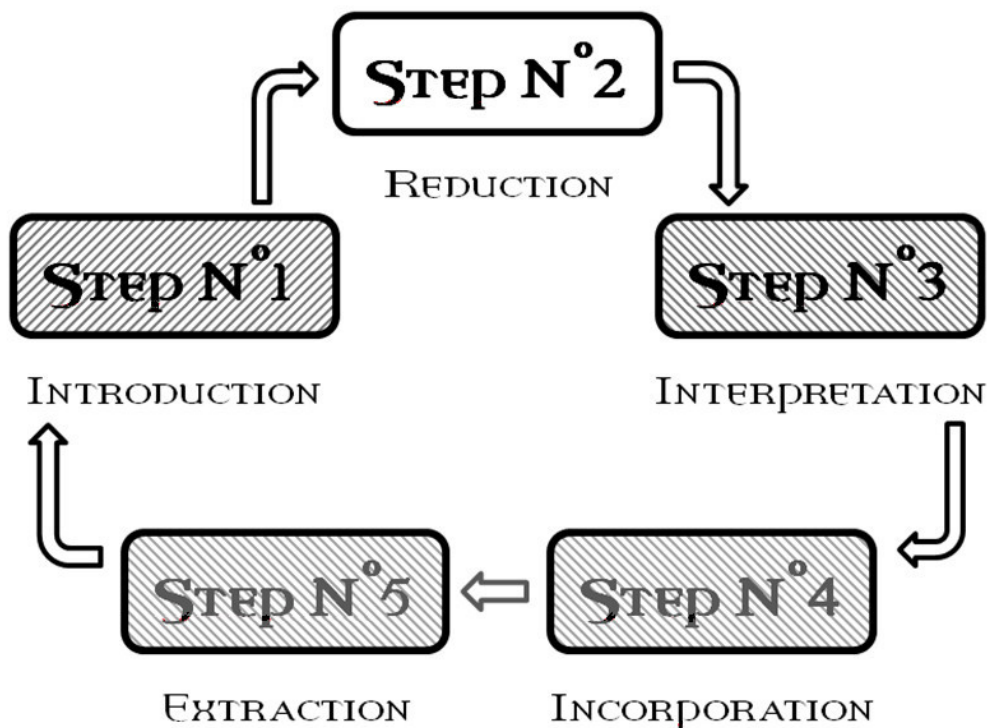


Figure 3: Five steps of serialized transformation

Divergence: History vs. Video Games vs. Historicity

This now completed circle of discursive transformation presents a key to understanding why serialized historicized games, by virtue of the very fact of their seriality, deserve special attention. Steps N°4—the incorporation of players’ interpretations of an element (such as the tobacco plantation) into the discursive body of mutualized knowledge—and N°5—the extraction of this interpretatively shaped historicized element for the purpose of interpretatively shaping a video game element in a historicized fashion and introducing it into a new game—are likely to have taken place in the production of any video game sequel. This serial logic applies also to a franchise like *Sid Meier’s Civilization*, which might not be accorded the status of a ‘genuine’ series on the grounds that it consists of something like revised editions rather than proper sequels; each installment of *Civilization* is part of a (seemingly eternal) recurrence and re-enactment of the same story and setting,

again and again. Whether sequels, remakes, updates, or some other forms of serial continuation are involved, the circle of discursive transformation ensures that “what goes around comes around.” Successful elements, elements that were appreciated by critics and/or players, are likely to re-appear in the successive installments of a series, in time becoming recognizable trademarks of certain games or franchises, cherished and remembered by their gaming communities not only for the pleasure they provide in being played on their own, but also for their function as empty signs referring back to the other parts of the series already played, and pointing forward to the envisioned and sometimes dearly hoped-for parts still to come. They may take on altered shapes, yet by virtue of their function they bind together the conceptually and chronologically disparate parts or installments into a series. In this way, the circle of discursive transformation is not so much a hermeneutic circle as a hermeneutic spiral, as the meanings at stake are not closed but perennially re-opened to serial continuation. The black box of the individual game situated at the intersection of the various discursive fields operates in this sense as a tool through which players may negotiate meanings and interpretations; it works as an “abstract machine” and “[t]hus when it constitutes points of creation or potentiality it does not stand outside history but is instead always ‘prior to’ history” (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, p. 163). As Nohr puts it,

video games have (at least) to be understood as a part of a discursive operation in which a society provides itself with a concept of history. In a radical abbreviation, such a position could be reduced pointedly to this: the historiography-discourse comes down to a reconfiguration and restructuring of the past in the light of the present. (Nohr 2014, p. 16)

In searching for the particular character of the history built into video games, historians will therefore do well to pay more attention to series of such games, for it is in their seriality that the special character of video games’ use of (factual) history as (affective) historicity is, I think, most readily apparent and available for analysis. The model that I have rather cursorily sketched in this article provides a tentative foundation upon which to undertake such an investigation, but the model clearly needs to be refined, or even replaced, with a better understanding that might emerge through more detailed studies of the phenomenon.

In doing so, special attention needs to be paid to the differences of perspective between games and (factual) history delineated above. Video games do not make an argument as to why they present anything the way do. Theirs is, again in line with Nietzsche’s thoughts in *Beyond Good and Evil*, a persuasive rather than demonstrative mode of reasoning:

there is nothing of ‘causal-connection,’ of ‘necessity,’ or of ‘psychological non-freedom’; there the effect does not follow the cause, there ‘law’ does not obtain. It is we alone who have devised cause, sequence, reciprocity, relativity, constraint, number, law, freedom, motive, and purpose; and when we interpret and intermix this symbol-world, as ‘being-in-itself,’ with things, we act once more as we have always acted—mythologically” (Nietzsche 1980, p. 36, cf. also p. 56).¹⁰

Nietzsche uses the image of perceiving and conceptualizing a tree: what we see are some leaves and twigs but never the whole tree as such; how do we know that a tree really is the reason behind these perceptions? Rather than demonstratively

constructing the tree step by step from the visual evidence we encounter, following the principles of logic and verified knowledge, we instead are prone to just imagine it; “one is much more of an artist than one is aware of” (ibid., pp. 113–114). Video games do not argue the correctness of their representations; when affected by historicized game elements, we are prone to use this affective historicity as conceptual glue to construe a coherent image of the processes presented to us as historical. Reading a game like a text in the historian’s way is thus a misinterpretation from the very start: games are simply not texts.

Fogu, for instance, seems to have suffered from this mistake when he criticized detractors of Sid Meier’s *Civilization* for their ahistorical reading of the game as text (cf. 2009, 116–118), only to compare it shortly afterwards to Jared Diamond’s books, thus textualizing it himself in the process of rendering it a masterpiece of “procedural rhetoric”: “To play is to move in the space defined by that set of rules, and in so doing the player creates a procedural rhetoric that makes claims about the world” (ibid., p. 118). I contend, therefore, that we need to be very careful with statements like Schut’s: “In many ways, the digital game medium is an ideal tool for building historical knowledge and understanding” (2007, p. 214). The problem is that this persuasive mode of reasoning, seen from the demonstrativist’s point of view, implicates beneath its surface a series of hidden demonstrative—causal, methodical, logically construed—arguments. As the game world is the outcome of contingent processes, a feat of interaction between game and player, these processes are the foundation on which the argument rests.

They determine first the Whither and the Why of mankind, and thereby set aside the previous labour of all philosophical workers, and all subjugators of the past—they grasp at the future with a creative hand, and whatever is and was, becomes for them thereby a means, an instrument, and a hammer. Their ‘knowing’ is creating, their creating is a law-giving, their will to truth is—will to power. (Nietzsche 1980, p. 145)

Nietzsche originally dedicated this sentence to the future philosophers he hoped to come, so it is perhaps only fitting that it is applied to video games here, given their cultural impact. If you acknowledge the surface of the game, you also declare silent approval to the particulars that produced it. In other words, in the very moment that you attribute authenticity to the colorful historicizing garment of a game, all the processes by which it was dyed, spun, woven, and sewn are in turn regarded as historical necessities, laws of history. Essentially this amounts to breaking down the difference between ‘affective historicity’ and ‘factual history.’ The contents of one’s own imagination as a player, formed in the course of going through the steps of (serialized) transformation under the influence of historicized game contents, may take on the same demonstrative character of statements about ‘what it was like, then’ that factual historical information claims. Historians may disapprove, but such breaking down and intermingling of affective historicity and factual history happens quite frequently, and of course not only in games.

In the three-step model of symbolic apperception of game contents (and the larger five-step model of serialized transformation) proposed above, this blurring of states begins with the third step: interpretation. This is, increasingly, a collective phenomenon, performed online – it spawns additional, fan-made content radiating from individual titles: blogs, mods, forums, wikis, YouTube channels, and so forth. On

these platforms, “the expansion of the circles is assured by interpretations that impart signified and reimport signifier [here: the game] (the interpretosis of the priest)” (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, p. 136). Those interpreting gamers who fulfill such a priestly function often do so by astutely insisting on the ‘factual correctness’ of the surface, of seeing to it that each soldier’s uniform represented on the screen is adorned with the proper buttons and that no weapons be found on the battlefield in 1941 that went into production in 1942 etc. (cf. Pöppinghege 2011, p. 463, 467).

Convergence: History, then Video Games, then Historicity

The processes delineated above converge in the implication that historically-themed game series, while seemingly staging history, are in fact engaged in producing affective historicity. Under the special conditions of their specific mediality as video games, they thereby unlink history and temporality, installing instead a ‘chronological’ framing – that is, they replace ‘time’ as the central narrative axis and structural principle that determines the methodology of historical explanation with their respective subject matter, consisting of the hidden processes and the surface forms they create and by which they are represented (cf. Winnerling 2013, pp. 725–726). An assassin’s cloak (say, in *Assassin’s Creed*) is an assassin’s cloak (in *Assassin’s Creed II*) is an assassin’s cloak (*Assassin’s Creed III*) is an assassin’s cloak (*Assassin’s Creed IV*) – regardless of whether it is 1191 or 1776. The cloak as an implement of the game is transformed from an authenticator—for inserting the avatar into its historical context—to a marker—for distinguishing the avatar from other figures, even in the haze and hurry of mortal combat (cf. Cremin 2012, p. 75)—to a sign referring on a meta-game level to other points in the series where the cloak fulfilled the same functions, and thus to an overarching constancy of interrelated gameplay mechanics that constitute one basic element of game seriality. Though it is to all appearances a thoroughly historicized element, the increasingly pronounced anachronism of the cloak moving through time, virtually unchanged, points to a disconnection of the element from its historical-chronological frame. From the perspective of a Nietzschean-persuasive approach, this is reasonable, as this approach does not aim at a linear deduction and therefore does not need time to be organized diachronically around the subject matter. Rather, the persuasive argument aims at a simultaneous/transhistorical presentation and therefore requires that its subject matter itself synchronically organize the flow of time—for games, like music, exist through being played in time, but they can be appreciated only as the quasi-synchronically perceived integrity of the moments they encompass (cf. Montero Díaz and Paz Rebollo 2013, p. 165). As ‘time’ within games and their narrations is not a part of the encoded program structure but always subject to players’ interpretation (Black 2012, 210, 223), it is not conceptually fixed but may be unlinked and re-configured. The cloak then is no longer organized by time, no longer belongs to certain periods only, which would define the exclusive contexts in which it can be used as a valid argument. Rather, the cloak itself becomes the organizer of time, in that it points to periods that may validly be inserted into the cloak theme and are thus connected by it, made part of a series—seriality being intrinsically chronometrical: I precedes II, II precedes III, and so on.

In a larger perspective, this applies of course not only to serialized games, as the reader may already suspect. It seems, moreover, that the framing of the series which sets an initial trigger for both reduction and interpretation of the games' signs is in many ways a special sub-framing of the genre-oriented framing that sets in almost automatically when two conditions are fulfilled: first, that there is more than one game at all, and second, that a given player has experienced more than one so far. As soon as the medium has branched out in sufficient breadth to develop specific codes, players will begin anticipating them, implementing the same process of reduction and interpretation on a more general scale. Serialized games are a special form of this as they trigger these processes, as it seems, twice—first with respect to genre, and then with respect to the series—and so double their effects. Seriality produces affective historicity (rather than factual history), which in turn produces a sort of de-temporalization. On an even more general level these findings might even be extended beyond genre to media in general, which would lead to the somewhat unsettling but, I think, correct conclusion that this process is at work within any kind of apperception of (and most likely not only of) historical content, even within scholarly history books. It is only more visible in video games because this medium still irritates us enough to provoke questions about such matters. That other, more traditional media no longer do so is due to custom and habit, not to their 'innocence' in this respect.

Thus, series of historicizing video games, by virtue of their very seriality, effectively kill off in themselves any factual history as the concept has traditionally been understood in Western discourse since the middle of the 19th century, replacing it with a form of affective historicity. In this respect, these games may reflect, as do other media featuring historical content (whether literature, film, TV, radio, comics, re-enactment, 'living history,' or live-action role playing), popular demands not satisfied by academia, or they may foreshadow a conceptual transition as part of the digital revolution. Only time will tell – if, indeed, this is still possible.

Games Cited

Activision/Creative Assembly (2002) *Medieval: Total War* (PC: Windows)

Activision/Creative Assembly/Sega (2004) *Rome: Total War* (PC: Windows)

Creative Assembly/Sega (2013) *Total War: Rome II* (PC: Windows)

Creative Assembly/Sega (2011) *Total War: Shogun II* (PC: Windows)

Creative Assembly/Sega (2006) *Medieval II: Total War* (PC: Windows)

Creative Assembly/Electronic Arts/Sega (2000) *Shogun: Total War* (PC: Windows)

Creative Assembly/Feral Interactive/Sega (2010) *Napoleon: Total War* (PC: Windows, Mac OS X)

Creative Assembly/Feral Interactive/Sega (2009) *Empire: Total War* (PC: Windows, Mac OS X)

-
- Ensemble Studios/Microsoft (2005) *Age of Empires III* (PC: Windows, Mac OS)
Ensemble Studios/Microsoft (1999) *Age of Empires II: The Age of Kings* (PC: Windows, Mac OS; PlayStation 2)
- Ensemble Studios/Microsoft (1997) *Age of Empires* (PC: Windows, Mac OS)
- Firaxis/2K Games (2010) *Sid Meier's Civilization V* (PC: Windows, Mac OS, Linux)
- Firaxis/2K Games (2005) *Sid Meier's Civilization IV* (PC: Windows, Mac OS)
- Firaxis/Infogrames (2001) *Sid Meier's Civilization III* (PC: Windows, Mac OS)
- Frog City Software/SSI (1997) *Imperialism: The Fine Art of Conquering the World* (PC: Windows, Mac OS)
- Frog City Software/SSI (1999) *Imperialism II: Age of Exploration* (PC: Windows, Mac OS)
- Infinity Ward/Activision (2005) *Call of Duty 2* (PC: Windows, Mac OS X; Xbox 360)
- Infinity Ward/Activision/Aspyr (2003) *Call of Duty* (PC Windows, Mac OS X; Nokia N-Gage; PlayStation 3; Xbox 360 (specially ported))
- LucasArts (1991) *Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge* (Amiga, PC: MS-DOS, Mac OS; FM Towns)
- LucasArts/Electronic Arts (2000) *Escape from Monkey Island* (PC: Windows, Mac OS; PlayStation2)
- LucasArts/FunSoft/THQ (1997) *The Curse of Monkey Island* (PC: Windows)
- Lucasfilm Games (1990) *The Secret of Monkey Island* (Amiga; Atari ST; PC: MS-DOS, Mac OS; FM Towns; Sega Mega-CD)
- Max Design/Sunflowers (2002) *Anno 1503* (PC: Windows)
- Max Design/Sunflowers (1998) *Anno 1602* (PC: Windows)
- Microprose (1996) *Sid Meier's Civilization II* (PC: Windows, Mac OS; PlayStation)
- Microprose (1991) *Sid Meier's Civilization. Build an Empire to Stand the Test of Time* (Amiga; Atari ST; PC: MS-DOS, Windows, Mac OS; SNES; N-Gage)
- Paradox Development Studios/Strategy First (2002) *Hearts of Iron* (PC: Windows, Mac OS)
- Paradox Development Studios/Paradox Interactive (2010) *Victoria II* (PC: Windows, Mac OS)
- Paradox Development Studios/Paradox Interactive (2009) *Hearts of Iron III* (PC: Windows, Mac OS)

- Paradox Development Studios/Paradox Interactive (2005) *Hearts of Iron II* (PC: Windows, Mac OS)
- Paradox Interactive (2003) *Victoria: An Empire Under the Sun* (PC: Windows, Mac OS)
- Related Designs/BlueByte/Ubisoft (2011) *Anno 2070* (PC: Windows)
- Related Designs/Blue Byte/Ubisoft (2009) *Anno 1404* (PC: Windows; Nintendo DS; Wii)
- Related Designs/Ubisoft/Koch Media (2006) *Anno 1701* (Windows; Nintendo DS; Smartphone)
- Telltale Games (2009) *Tales of Monkey Island* (PC: Windows, Mac OS X; PlayStation 3; Wii; iOS)
- Treyarch/Activision (2008) *Call of Duty: World at War* (PC: Windows; Xbox 360; PlayStation 2; PlayStation 3; Nintendo Wii; Nintendo DS)
- Treyarch/Activision (2006/7) *Call of Duty 3* (Xbox; Xbox 360; PlayStation 2; PlayStation 3; Nintendo Wii)
- Treyarch/IdeaWorks/Activision/Apple (2010) *Call of Duty: Black Ops* (PC: Windows, Mac OS X; Xbox 360; PlayStation 3; Nintendo Wii (partially ported); Nintendo DS; Apple iOS (partially ported))
- Ubisoft (2013) *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* (PC: Windows; PlayStation3, 4; Xbox360, One; WiiU)
- Ubisoft (2012) *Assassin's Creed III* (PC: Windows; PlayStation3; Xbox360; WiiU)
- Ubisoft (2009) *Assassin's Creed II* (PC: Windows, Mac OS; PlayStation3; Xbox360; Smartphone)
- Ubisoft (2007) *Assassin's Creed* (PC: Windows, Mac OS; PlayStation3; Xbox360)
- Valve/EA Games (2000) *Counter-Strike* (PC: Windows, Mac OS X, Linux; Xbox)

References

- Abel, G. (1998) *Nietzsche. Die Dynamik der Willen zur Macht und die ewige Wiederkehr*, 2nd ed., Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.
- Allison, T. (2010) The World War II Video Game, Adaptation, and Postmodern History. *Literature Film Quarterly*, Vol. 38 (3), pp.183-193.
- Anon: Victoria II. In *Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia*, on: [www.en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org), Available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_II [Last Modified: August 18, 2014; Accessed: August 27, 2014].

- Black, M. L. (2012) Narrative and Spatial Form in Digital Media: A Platform Study of the SCUMM Engine and Ron Gilbert's *The Secret of Monkey Island*. *Games and Culture*, Vol. 7 (3), pp. 209-237.
- Bornedal, P. (2006) Eternal Recurrence in inner-mental life. The eternal-recurrence-thought as describing the conditions of the possibility for knowledge and pleasure. *Nietzsche-Studien*, Vol. 35, pp.104-165.
- Christesen, P., Machado, D. (2010) Video Games and Classical Antiquity. *Classical World*, Vol. 104 (1), pp.107-110.
- Clearwater, D. A. (2011) What Defines Video Game Genre? Thinking about Genre Study after the Great Divide. *Loading...*, Vol. 5 (8), pp. 29-49.
- Cremin, C. (2012) The Formal Qualities of the Video Game: An Exploration of Super Mario Galaxy with Gilles Deleuze. *Games and Culture*, Vol. 7 (1), pp.72-86.
- Crick, T. (2011) The Game Body: Towards a Phenomenology of Contemporary Video Games. *Games and Culture*, Vol. 6 (3), pp.259-269.
- Deleuze, G., Guattari, F. (2013) *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, transl. and comm. by Massumi, B. London et al.: Bloomsbury.
- Elverdam, C., Aarseth, E. (2007): Game Classification and Game Design. Construction Through Critical Analysis. *Games and Culture*, Vol. 2 (3) p. 3-22.
- Festl, R., Scharkow, M., Quandt, T. (2013): Militaristic Attitudes and the Use of Digital Games. *Games and Culture*, Vol. 8 (6), pp.392-407.
- Fogu, C. (2009): Digitalizing Historical Consciousness. *History and Theory* Theme Issue 47, pp.103-121.
- Gazzard, A., Peacock, A. (2011): Repetition and Ritual Logic in Video Games. *Games and Culture*, Vol. 6, pp. 499-512. Available at: DOI: 10.1177/1555412011431359 [Accessed: July 7, 2014].
- Grizzard, M., Tamborini, R., Lewis, Robert J., Wang, L., and Prabhu, S. (2014) Being Bad in a Video Game Can Make Us More Morally Sensitive. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* [Online, ahead of print]. Available at: DOI: 10.1089/cyber.2013.0658 [Accessed: July 3, 2014].
- Huang, X. (2005) The Trading Zone Communication of Scientific Knowledge: An Examination of Jesuit Science in China (1582 – 1773). *Science in Context*, Vol. 18 (3), pp. 393-427.
- Hassemer, S. M. (2014) Does History Play the Role of Storyline? Historiographical Periodization as Theme in Video Game Series. In Winnerling, T., Kerschbaumer, F. (eds.) *Early Modernity and Video Games*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp.64-75.
- Heinen, A. (2011) Mediaspektion der Historiographie. Zur Geschichte der Geschichtswissenschaft aus medien- und technikgeschichtlicher Perspektive.

- Zeitenblicke*, Vol. 10 (1), par. 1-43. Available at: http://www.zeitenblicke.de/2011/1/Heinen/index_html, URN: nbn:de:0009-9-30184 [Accessed 05 July 2014].
- Ip, B. (2011) Narrative Structures in Computer and Video Games. Part 1: Context, Definitions, and Initial Findings. *Games and Culture*, Vol. 6 (2), pp.102-134.
- Kerschbaumer, F., Winnerling, T. (2014a) Postmoderne Visionen des Vor-Modernen. Des 19. Jahrhunderts geisterhaftes Echo. in — (eds.) *Frühe Neuzeit im Videospiele. Geschichtswissenschaftliche Perspektiven*. Bielefeld: Transcript, pp.7-20.
- Kerschbaumer, F., Winnerling, T. (2014b) The Devil is in the Details: Why Video Game Analysis is such a Hard Task for Historians, and how we nevertheless try. In — (eds.) *Early Modernity and Video Games*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp.ix–xx.
- Mallon, B. (2008) Towards a taxonomy of perceived agency in narrative game-play. *Theoretical and Practical Computer Applications in Entertainment*, Vol. 5 (4), ch. 1-5 [Online] Available at: DOI: 10.1145/1324198.1324202 [Accessed: July 7, 2014].
- Montero Díaz, J., Paz Rebollo, M. A. (2013): Historia audiovisual para una sociedad audiovisual. *Historia Crítica*, Vol. 49, pp.159-183.
- Nietzsche, F. (2000) *Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für alle und keinen*. Zürich: Manesse.
- Nietzsche, F. (1980) Jenseits von Gut und Böse. In Colli, G., Montinari, M. (eds.) *Friedrich Nietzsche. Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*, Vol. 5, München: dtv/de Gruyter, pp. 9-244.
- Nietzsche, F. (1973) Die fröhliche Wissenschaft. In Colli, G., Montinari, M. (eds.) *Friedrich Nietzsche. Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 5 (2), Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, pp.11-335.
- Nohr, R. (2014) The Game is a Medium: The Game is a Message. In Winnerling, T., Kerschbaumer, F. (eds.) *Early Modernity and Video Games*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 22-23.
- Pöppinghege, R. (2011) Pedanterie im Cyberspace. Zum Geschichtsbewusstsein von Computerspielern. *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, Vol. 62 (7/8), pp. 459-468.
- Reckwitz, A. (2003) Grundelemente einer Theorie sozialer Praktiken. Eine sozialtheoretische Perspektive. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, Vol. 32 (4), pp. 282-301.
- Rua, H., Alvito, P. (2011) Living the past: 3D models, virtual reality and game engines as tools for supporting archaeology and the reconstruction of cultural

heritage – the case-study of the Roman villa of Casal de Freiria. *Journal of Archaeological Science*, Vol. 38, pp. 3296-3308.

Ruch, A. W. (2012) Grand Theft Auto IV: Liberty City and Modernist Literature. *Games and Culture*, Vol. 7, pp. 331-348.

Schut, K. (2007) Strategic Simulations and Our Past. The Bias of Computer Games in the Presentation of History. *Games and Culture*, Vol. 2 (3), pp. 213-235.

Winnerling, T. (2013) Sicherer Berg, gefährlicher Feind. Natürlicher und militärischer Raum im Computerspiel zur Frühen Neuzeit. In Kampmann, C., Niggemann, U. (eds.) *Sicherheit in der Frühen Neuzeit. Norm – Praxis – Repräsentation* Weimar/Cologne/Vienna: Böhlau, pp. 712-27.

Notes

- ¹ The series at the moment consists of (main titles only): *Sid Meier's Civilization* (Microprose 1991); *Sid Meier's Civilization II* (Microprose 1996); *Sid Meier's Civilization III* (Firaxis/Infogrames 2001); *Sid Meier's Civilization IV* (Firaxis/2K Games 2005); and *Sid Meier's Civilization V* (Firaxis/2K Games 2010).
- ² The series at the moment consists of: *The Secret of Monkey Island* (Lucasfilm Games 1990); *Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge* (LucasArts 1991); *The Curse of Monkey Island* (LucasArts/FunSoft/THQ 1997); *Escape from Monkey Island* (LucasArts/Electronic Arts 2000); *Tales of Monkey Island* (Telltale Games 2009).
- ³ The series at the moment consists of (main titles only): *Shogun: Total War* (Creative Assembly/Electronic Arts/Sega 2000); *Medieval: Total War* (Activision/Creative Assembly 2002); *Rome: Total War* (Creative Assembly/Activision/Sega 2004); *Medieval II: Total War* (Creative Assembly/Sega 2006); *Empire: Total War* (Creative Assembly/Feral Interactive/Sega 2009); *Napoleon: Total War* (Creative Assembly/Feral Interactive/Sega 2010); *Total War: Shogun II* (Creative Assembly/Sega 2011); *Total War: Rome II* (Creative Assembly/Sega 2013).
- ⁴ Historically themed games of the series: *Call of Duty* (Infinity Ward/Activision/Aspyr 2003), *Call of Duty 2* (Infinity Ward/Activision 2006), *Call of Duty 3* (Treyarch/Activision 2006), *Call of Duty: World at War* (Treyarch/Activision 2008), *Call of Duty: Black Ops* (Treyarch/IdeaWorks/Activision/Apple 2010).
- ⁵ It therefore is necessary to add to the eight metacategories proposed by Elverdam and Aarseth a ninth, 'Iconography', to be subdivided into the dimensions of 'realistic' and 'non-realistic' iconographies, and the first one to be subdivided again into 'historical', 'contemporaneous,' and 'futuristic' ones. *Call of Duty* as historical and *Counter-strike* as contemporaneous clearly illustrate the difference. As Elverdam and Aarseth's model was conceived as an open-ended typology (cf. 2007, 20), such an addition should not pose a problem.

- ⁶ Itself the starting point of a new series: *Victoria II* was released in 2010, and there are rumors that *Victoria III* is in planning (cf. Anon. 2014, Sequel).
- ⁷ Itself the second part of the *Hearts of Iron* series: *Hearts of Iron* (Paradox Development Studios/Strategy First 2002), *Hearts of Iron II* (Paradox Development Studios/Paradox Interactive 2005), and *Hearts of Iron III* (Paradox Development Studios/Paradox Interactive 2009) (*Hearts of Iron IV* announced).
- ⁸ Aphorism 341: ‘Das grösste Schwergewicht‘.
- ⁹ As opposed to fun-directed activities. You may easily derive pleasure out of something that clearly isn’t fun, such as the successful completion of a particularly long, complicated, tedious task. Games are not made to be fun, but to purvey pleasure.
- ¹⁰ All Nietzsche translations by Helen Zimmern “as published in the Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche (1909-1913)”, see www.gutenberg.org: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4363/4363-h/4363-h.htm> [Accessed: August 27, 2014].