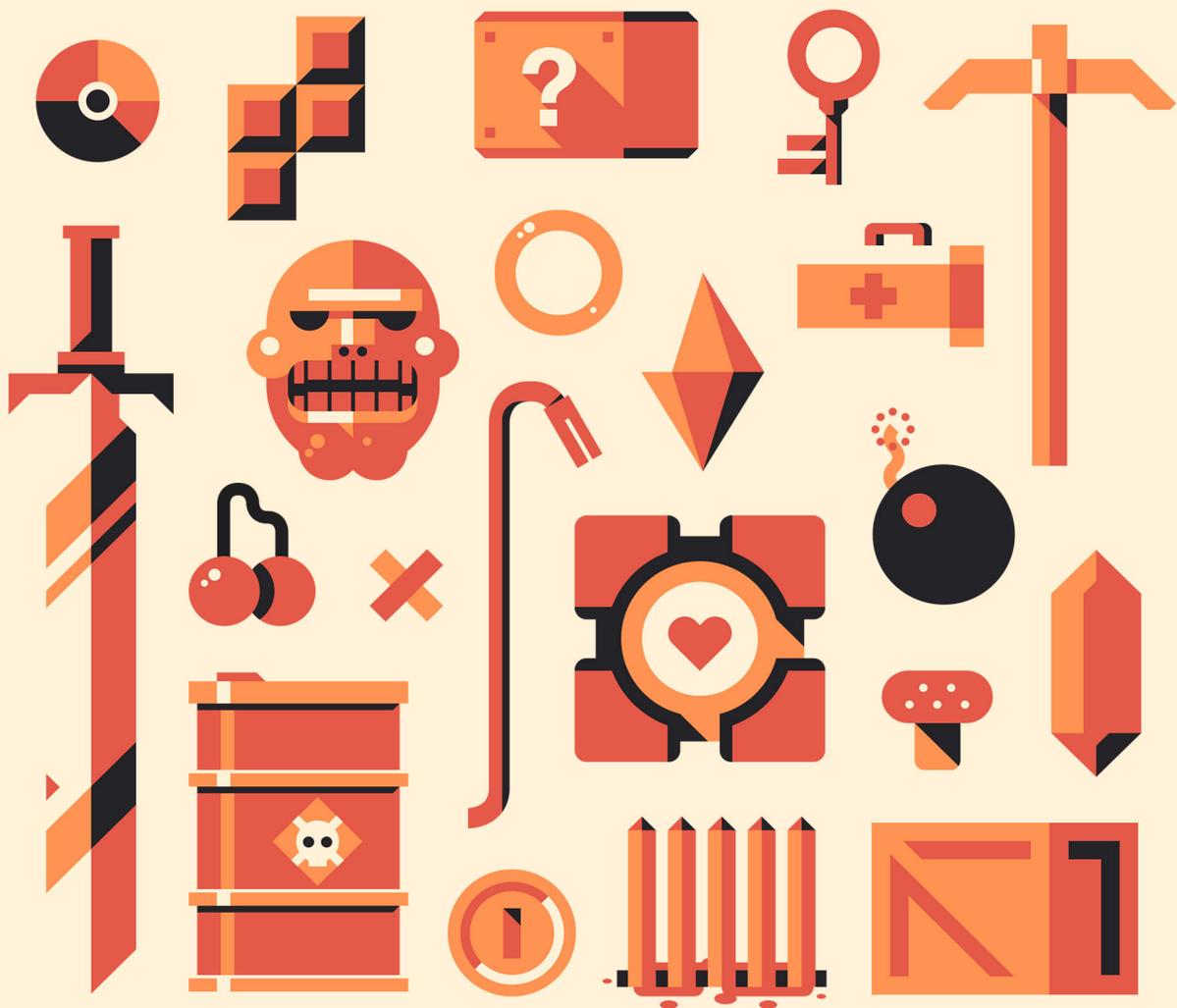


HAYWIRE MAGAZINE

ISSUE 6 • LEARNING



I recall with some embarrassment various times in my school career when I chose not to raise my hand because answering might mean having to disclose the source of my information (this is discounting all the other times I stayed silent simply because I wanted to sleep in peace): Historic dates lifted from *Age of Empires*, facts taken from *Civilization's* flavor texts, latinate words absorbed when writers erred particularly close to the inspiration of their games' own made up tongues.

The shame I associated with the admission aside, it should come as no surprise that you can learn things while playing videogames, because the same could be said about any activity, mundane or exciting. Data processing is a cornerstone of human existence: as the intricate supercomputers piloting slabs of meat that we are (awareness sure is weird), there's really no way to stop absorbing information. Our brains are hardwired to keep whizzing and whirring day in and day out, and we are always learning something.

In the case of games, there are rules and mechanics to come to terms with, patterns and structures to memorize, authored and emergent narratives to observe. And all these might be discarded as easily as they are picked up, if not for our desire to connect new experiences with old experiences. Even something as abstract as *Super Hexagon* can and has been read metaphorically. Games that reference the world around us in more detail all but invite comparison and interpretation.

The question of how direct such a transfer of knowledge might be and how easily we might be influenced by the encoded values and ideas of ludic systems (for either I suggest: not very) leads us back to the concerns of violence and games we covered in the last issue. But there are other ways to use that channel. Games have a lot to teach us, but are the lessons worthwhile?

After all, scraping together some of the background information provided in *Civilization* might help in a pinch, but start talking about the Aztecs conquering Russia, Gandhi nuking everybody and America inventing horse riding only after nuclear fission, and you might get a few funny looks. And yet, the systems on which one such revisionist experience is based allow you to extrapolate a certain view of history and human progress - the bonuses tied to democratic government, space colonization as a victory condition.

Learning is a constant process, and not one-directional either. Our medium is shaped by the ways fans draw inspiration from their games, developers from their fans, and critics from all three. How fitting then, that this issue marks our first anniversary, a reminder of all the things I got to learn over the past year. How fitting that it coincides with the start of a new semester for so many students, including our own Andrew Walt, who is returning to university for a Master's degree and well-deserved teaching assistant position.

It's almost as if somebody had put a little thought into theme selection.

Cheers,
Johannes Köller
Editor-in-Chief





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Citizen Bane

Johannes Köller on videogames' favorite nonsenseical yardstick.

Videogames seem obsessed with the idea of age. Their creators and coverage are both concerned with novelty and hyping up the next big thing to equal and sometimes worrying degrees. At the same time, their not so distant past has come to be worshipped through retro remakes, demakes and iconography. This tendency towards nostalgia is especially interesting considering various and frequent attempts to define the medium through its lack of history.

Ours is a medium in its infancy, to hear pundits tell it. Or maybe you prefer to talk of youth or adolescence, at any rate the consensus seems to be that videogames are not quite there yet, not quite of age, not quite ready to be put on the pantheon of art, culture and social recognition - next to literature and film. And it's true: Next to moving picture and written word, we are and always will be the new kids on the block. But maybe at over 50 years since their inception and around 30 years as a commercial industry, it's time to stop claiming youthful innocence and realize

that videogames have achieved all the things we wanted for them, and more. We just haven't been paying attention, because we were too busy demanding recognition.

One of the most commonly proposed litmus tests for being allowed to enter the realm of high culture is the creation of a "*Citizen Kane* of videogames." The

phrase betrays so many misunderstandings and ill-conceived ideas that I can barely begin to unpack a few of them in this article, and yet it has become a shockingly common thing for critics to demand or opine on. There's a wonderful dedicated Tumblr chronicling the latest round of Kane comparisons that followed *Bioshock Infinite* and *The Last of Us*, but it barely offers a snapshot of the trend. Even our own Ethan Woods summoned that specter - not to be confused with the Spector you might expect from him - not so long ago in Issue 1.

Let's start by talking about the actual *Citizen Kane* for once, the movie and not the gold-encrusted vision lodged in

maybe at over 50 years since their inception and around 30 years as a commercial industry, it's time to stop claiming youthful innocence and realize that videogames have achieved all the things we wanted for them, and more.

Let's start by talking about the actual *Citizen Kane* for once, the movie and not the gold-encrusted vision lodged in

the common conscience. The film the late Roger Ebert described as both the greatest film ever made and his favorite film. The film Swedish director Ingmar Bergman once called “a total bore”, and its creator “infinitely overrated”. Though perhaps it’s a subject I should leave to our resident movie critic Andrew Huntly. I cannot claim to know much about the history of film, and my knowledge of *Citizen Kane’s* significance is based more on hearsay than rapt, repeat viewing - something about innovation in areas of cinematography, complex sound and deep focus, which, in combination with it being one of the earliest nonlinear movies, supposedly helped shaped the visual language of film for years and decades to come.

I suspect that this relative helplessness in the face of its technical excellence and significance actually puts me on equal footing with many of the critics who demand a *Citizen Kane* of games. As I said, it is remembered as an icon more so than an actual movie and, in my experience, you rarely find somebody who has actually watched the whole thing, even among film students.

For now, I am less interested in what it has done to earn such reverence than I am in how it achieved that status.

Today, the notion that *Citizen Kane* is the greatest film ever made, the piece of cinema that legitimized the art form and unified its language, is pervasive to the point of being a commonly accepted truth. But developments of art history, the assertive judgement of significance and context, only ever appear obvious in hindsight. The film opened to crowded halls and positive reviews. Despite nine nominations, it was largely eschewed at an Oscar vote mired in controversy surrounding the wrath and threats of William Randolph Hearst over serving as the inspiration for (parts of) the titular character, but it could generally be described to have been well received.

However, apart from the superlatives critics so like to throw around, there was no real indication that it had made lasting impact. When it arrived in Europe a few years later, the likes of André Bazin, François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard showered it with praise and attention. Only Bazin & co are infamous for their attempts to

The idea that widespread cultural and social acceptance can be reached through a single, defining moment rather than a long, uphill battle is ridiculous.

legitimize film through verbose essays and strong, if slightly unreasonable rhetoric. They are responsible, among other things, for auteur theory, the view that a director is to their film as an author is to their book, the sole creator realizing an immaculate, personal vision. The theory was built to dismantle claims that film could never be art because of its collaborative nature, and honestly doesn’t hold a whole lot of water. Or it certainly isn’t as universally applicable as once proposed. People making strange claims because they worry about the status and acceptance of a new medium, stop me if any of this sounds familiar.

The British magazine *Sight & Sound* has been polling movie critics for a top ten list of best films once a decade since 1952. *Citizen Kane* held the top spot from 1962 to 2012, when it was dethroned by *Vertigo*, but was only a runner-up in the first poll, which crowned *Bicycle Thieves* king. A poll of critics and filmmakers at Brussels World’s Fair in 1958 named 1925’s *Battleship Potemkin* the greatest film, but you don’t see people clamoring for the videogame counterpart of that. *Citizen Kane* came in ninth place on the

list.

This brief tour of conflicting opinions is not supposed to slight *Citizen Kane’s* contribution to film, which I am very poorly equipped to judge, but to point out that it tends to take years and even decades before the importance of a piece of art can be properly put in perspective. And even then we will never reach universal agreement, neither on its merits nor on

It is twice foolish: first to argue that videogames still require a coming of age moment at this juncture, and then to expect the triple A industry to deliver it.

its significance, as the continuing reception of this supposed best film ever made shows. The idea that widespread cultural and social acceptance can be reached through a single, defining moment rather than a long, uphill battle is ridiculous.

Even stranger is the idea that we will instantly know when we have reached that moment. Whether you see it as refining opinions or the beginning of nostalgia, it took *Citizen Kane* over 20 years to grow on critics. And yet the phrase born from the film is thrown around in launch-day reviews, every time some game proclaims to set new narrative standards in the triple A space. If it’s good, it might be declared the latest in a lineage of ‘*Citizen Kanes*’

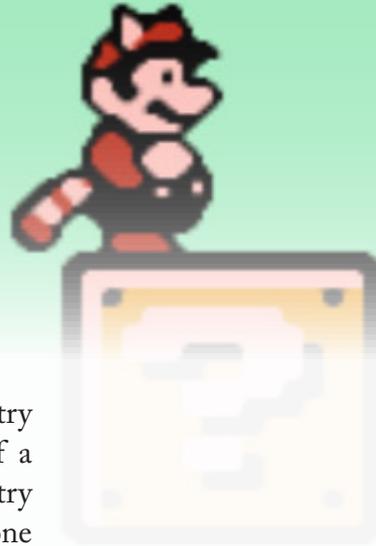
of videogames. Or it might be found lacking and, regrettably, we'll have to keep looking. Either option - "It is!" or "It isn't!" - maintains the myth that we still require such a gift from the gods to properly end the narrative of videogames' march to legitimacy.

If you do desire such a tipping point, look to the past. If we accept that it is impossible to fully appreciate the significance of any piece of art at the moment of its creation, it stands to reason that our *Citizen Kane* might have slipped by unnoticed. Maybe it was *Zork*. Maybe it was *Super Mario Bros.*, or *Doom*, or *Half-Life*, or *GTA*, or *Ocarina of Time*, or *Shadow of the Colossus*, or any other of the dozens of games people frequently declare the greatest of all time.

It is twice foolish: first to argue that videogames still require a coming of age moment at this juncture, and then

to expect the triple A industry to deliver it. The existence of a videogame blockbuster industry comparable to Hollywood alone should show that the transition to social relevance, and then normalcy, banality, has happened a long time ago. Instead we continue to measure the worth of our entire medium by the output of that bloated beast.

I mock the phrase "*Citizen Kane* of videogames" not to police other people's language - familiar as the desire may be for an editor - but because it betrays a certain inferiority complex in critics seemingly still embarrassed by their chosen medium. And that is an understandable reaction, in many ways. But by waiting in rapt silence for the biggest and most risk-averse studios to deliver something new, bold and outrageously well-crafted, we neglect so many other games. Acting as if such



titles were a necessity, or even a rarity, for the medium we cover, belittles the work of a scene for which 'indie' has become such an ill-fitting umbrella term: a vibrant and diverse group of creators from mid-tier studios to Twine zinesters, whose work is as daring and relevant as any art form could possibly hope for.

Big-name titles make for easy discussion. I can fairly safely assume that a large chunk of my audience will have played or at least heard of the new hotness, and that makes them a good talking point if you want to reach a lot of people. The same desire for universal appeal that brings in this large audience tends to keep them from expressing anything risky or personal, but it can be done, and, regardless of the fact, I maintain that there are worthwhile things to say even of the blandest of military shooters. I understand that

there are good reasons to cover these games in detail, and I'm as guilty of it as any other critic, indie cred be damned.

There's something profoundly cynical about the way many of my peers go about it though. I get demanding more from games, especially the games so big and hyped up they serve as the general representatives of our medium, for good or ill. Asking for our *Citizen Kane*, that videogames finally learn how to be videogames properly, goes far beyond that, and is frankly insulting to both the form and its most daring creations. Criticize Hollywood all you want, but don't get it mixed up with all of film. Maybe you shouldn't spend your entire life getting mad at its shallow creations while slavishly devouring each and every one. Maybe arthouse is more your style. Videogames offer both, and everything in between.

Intermission...

The Seven Deadly Sins of Gaming: Vos Furor?

Have you ever wondered what a Troll really is? Is it the misshapen beast that lives under a bridge, waiting for the three Billy Goatses to come across? Or that strange Norwegian doll with vibrant hair?

I can tell you what it isn't - and that's the inhabitants of the Second Circle.

A true Troll, if ever there was one, would be someone of such devastating wit that the slightest jibe could cut down the worthiest of opponents. The things that call themselves Trolls employ carpet bombing against people far weaker than themselves. Every last difference is dissected and used as ammo - while every similarity is also used. The continual bombardment of furious palm-slapping until there's the slightest reaction.

At that point, as if one, each Troll screams in victory. Their entire arousal to climax lasting seconds. Spent, they cut and paste with their own fluids, speaking of the day that they annihilated authority.

The Art of the Troll

- 1 · *You have said something, thus I equate you to Adolf Hitler.*
- 2 · *I have records that you said something.*
- 3 · *Saying this is akin to denying the opposite.*
- 4 · *The opposite view is held by opposing forces.*
- 5 · *The Axis was our opposing force.*
- 6 · *Therefore, you are Hitler.*
- 7 · *U MAD? U MAD? U MAD?*

Trollville lies on the opposite side to the Narcissists - Each Troll looks at the back of the Mirror, condemning the Narcissists for everything they think, do or say.

But the Narcissists never react. They cannot see the misshapen Trollkin. So the Trolls push their insults further into the realms of the scatological, desperate for that one moment to say "U Mad?" - but it never comes. Deeper and deeper they sift through their own innards, until they disappear in a tiny fart of insignificance.

HW

Killing Ain't So Bad

Ethan Woods
considers the pitfalls
of a protagonist
who learns through
narrative.



Education, education, education. Brother, we don't need no stinking education.

The opening to this year's *Tomb Raider* saw Lara Croft wrestle with the type of hurried, violent insanity that had yet to be witnessed outside of a late-night episode of *Hollyoaks*. Stranded, kidnapped and impaled, you'd have thought the first thirty minutes of her field trip would have put her off adventuring for a lifetime. In a talk with IGN however, lead writer Rhianna Pratchett described her objective as "a character who doesn't have all the answers, who is 21 and acts 21, and goes through that change throughout the game." In short: Lara had to learn to like it.

And indeed, 'learn' is the pivotal verb in Lara's latest outing. Her evolution unfolds according to specific and pragmatic educational objectives: how to survive and how to kill. For comparison, *The Last of Us*, whilst of broadly similar genre, offers the opposite experience. Joel and Ellie's journey is about the relationship between Joel and Ellie - not increasing their capacity for killing or even survival. As Joel,

allusions to twenty years'-worth of amoral apocalyptic experience inform a character for whom killing in the name of survival already fits like a glove. By the time Ellie ascends to the role of player-character, traveling with Joel has evolved her to a point where her own willingness and ability to kill needn't be questioned. Everything that is played remains in-sync with everything that is watched, insuring that, at the very least, gameplay and narrative do not undermine one another.

In *Tomb Raider*, the insistence on tethering the development of Lara's ease with killing to narrative beats ultimately wreaks havoc with the kind of controlled evolution it wants to show. In general, the game suffers from too abstract a portrayal. Take for instance the notion of survival that the game advertises as its core. Whilst it is an implicit element, it's not part of the player's experience. Hunting for food is restricted to a single objective early in the game, and is of greater benefit as a tutorial for the bow rather than a thematic touchstone. Of course, some degree of abstractness is necessary

for any work of fiction, we silently acknowledge that Ms. Croft must at some point need to go potty, even if we're not treated to the experience (My money's on a cheeky wee in the blood pool ripped from *The Descent*). But the extent to which this is relied upon to illustrate Lara's educational development makes for a muddled portrait - and it only gets worse when it comes to her proficiency for killing.

For Pratchett, the speed with which Lara races from Joan Baez to GI Jane is, if not a non-issue, an acceptable contention. In an interview with *Kill Screen*, she describes Lara's rather sudden transition to generic convention: "It's very difficult to keep that good affable character when they're having to slaughter loads of people. But what we tried to do with Lara was at least have the first death count." In essence, the emotion behind Lara's first kill is burdened with carrying the rather rote experience of fighting upwards of five-hundred more men over the following ten hours. Unfortunately for *Tomb Raider*, its audience is the savviest of the genre-savvy. Where a horror movie has to contend with an audience's knowledge of well-worn jump-scares and camera-

based trickery, *Tomb Raider* has to contend with the fact that your average gamer is responsible for more fictional deaths than Captain Kirk is illegitimate children. We haven't walked through the valley of the shadow of death so much as dug it out with our bare hands.

To an extent, the game gets this. When it is finally time for Lara to pop the bloodiest cherry of them all - that of a human male's precious, precious skull - cutscene turns to quick-time event as it becomes clear that her education must come at the expense of our own involvement. Undeniably, the broader motivation of having the player dispatch enemies in a way that is not so immediately familiar as the point and click kill is a positive one. Nevertheless, it's not a minute later

Simply put, the game's narrative ambition does not fit into its action-adventure template.

that the player and Lara are helpfully thrown into bullet-time and rewarded with 100 experience points for nailing two headshots. And with that, it's all over. The girl who dry-heaved from shooting a man dead is now making eye-sockets explode without breaking a sweat. Forget about the first kill compensating for the five-hundred that follow - it doesn't compensate for the next two. Simply put, the game's narrative ambition does not fit into its



As Joel, allusions to twenty years'-worth of amoral apocalyptic experience inform a character for whom killing in the name of survival already fits like a glove.

action-adventure template.

There are two possible responses to this: change the genre or change the story. *The Last of Us* takes care of the latter: pragmatic education is so fundamentally kept out of its narrative that no such overbearing contention ever rears its ugly head. And then there is *DayZ*, sat in a dark corner at the other end of the playground, counting down the days with scissors in-hand. Education is an entirely organic process in *DayZ*, not the singular succession of prescribed events it's turned into in *Tomb Raider*. Without a character-arc to fulfill, the player is, for all intents and purposes, playing themselves - their on-screen representative knows as much as they do, is as skilled as they are.

Killing in *DayZ* is a funny kind of thing. On the one hand, it's easy to see the game as a kind of drawn-out deathmatch, where a 'last man standing' mindset haunts the fields of Chernarus in spite of its inviability. On the other hand, it's a guilt-ridden episode of ifs and buts: "If only he'd have backed off" and "But what else was I supposed to do?" The reason for the latter is spawned from the context the game provides: you may not actually be killing someone, but you are likely wiping away anything from minutes to entire weeks of their time and progress. Of course, there is also the third, most devious hand, in which your reason is an indulgence of

light sadism.

In any case, whatever mindset you enter the game with is your own. If you're the kind of remorseless fetcher who's played a bandit from day one and you're comfortable with shooting someone, then the game doesn't ask you to pretend otherwise. And it won't actively guide you towards being nicer, or even more sadistic. Instead it facilitates an environment in which all actions are independently-driven, valid and yet not without consequence. It allows your own evolution in behavior to be guided by your own experiences.

Tomb Raider's problem is not that it wants to have its cake and eat it. It's that it wants to have two very different cakes marry each other before eating them both simultaneously. Certainly it's possible to have a cake of shooty-whizz-bang-fun and very serious seriousness all at once, but it takes more than a shoulder-shove's worth of insistence to get it working. The central flaw of the game's premise lies in its belief that it can redefine what it means for a player to kill a video game character just by grunting that that's what it kind of wants to do. It's a noble goal for certain, but one that demands greater forethought than *Tomb Raider* ever saw.

HW





The Pain of Lara Croft

Andrew Huntly wonders when hurting protagonists means more than killing them.

One of my earliest gaming memories is playing the original *Tomb Raider* with a joystick of all possible input devices. I recall getting fairly far into the game, until my approach simply stopped working. There was a ledge about an inch away from me that I could never reach, no matter how high I jumped or what objects I pushed beneath it. I never figured out how to reach it, so I soon gave up. Aside from a brief stint with the third game - my only memory of that being that I shot a tiger in the face - *Tomb Raider* never excited me since then.

So I was surprised that Crystal Dynamic's reboot captured my interest and held it up until release, and that when I finally played the game, I found a confident, engaging and frequently exhilarating action title. More work had gone into rounding out Lara's character than her body this time - thanks to the always excellent Rhianna Pratchett - and the action was tense and dynamic, taking elements from Naughty Dog's exemplary *Uncharted* series, but twisting and tweaking mechanics to form a (comparatively) grounded experience.

The action game within *Tomb*

Raider is where it really shines, while still telling a nice, if not revolutionary character based story. But there are stranger aspects to *Tomb Raider*, a few elements and creative choices that don't quite run together. It's not a constant feeling, spoiling the game like a sullen rain cloud. It's individual moments, set pieces and even fractions of seconds that pull away from the enjoyable action experience and completely change the tone for the worse.

A great deal of the more violent imagery in *Tomb Raider* seems to be culled from inherently dramatic, but vicious, bloody horror.

Possibly one of the most infamous examples is a death scene during a dramatic and exciting slide through river rapids that has Lara impaled on a pointed barb. It's evidently not a nice way to go: The barb goes through the bottom of her chin and out the back of her head, Lara visibly struggles and twitches, pulling at the branch

before finally dying. It's a gruesome and rough moment, more suited to *Resident Evil 4* than the adventurous tone of *Tomb Raider*.

The game is executed confidently, but it feels like some people at Crystal Dynamics had a different focus than others. The game visually references British horror film *The Descent*, an intense and violent flick about a group

of women who venture into a cave system and come face to face with unnatural, horrifying creatures. A great deal of the more violent imagery in *Tomb Raider* seems to be culled from inherently dramatic, but vicious, bloody horror. Lara's death animations certainly have that vibe to them, when they stray from the merely painful into the uncomfortable. They're not leering, nor do they revel in sadism, and I doubt they were put into the game with any ill intention, but in the context of everything else and the ideas and messages of the rest of the game, they seem very out of place.

It's even stranger considering pain is actually handled very well by the game. Crystal Dynamics isn't

afraid to hurt Lara. Within the opening five minutes she's impaled through the stomach and forced to remove the offending barb by hand. Powerful, painful scenes like this demonstrate a greater cohesion between the survival-action gameplay and the more visceral, horror elements. The gore and the blood here demonstrate a fortitude in Lara, a desire to survive that shows her as a capable heroine and not a fragile flower.

It's a very strange thing to say, but Crystal Dynamics are far more capable

Crystal Dynamics are far more capable at hurting their leading lady than they are at killing her.

at hurting their leading lady than they are at killing her. Before release, there was a great deal of talk about wanting players to feel for her, to create a desire to protect her. Thankfully, that vision doesn't really come across in the final product. Lara is able and willing to be hurt and scarred, to do horrible things in order to save her friends. We as players are not some guardian to hover over her and console her when she's wounded. The only time such parental feelings dawn are during the grisly death

animations, where her head is crushed by a boulder or a treebranch goes straight through her torso. And they're not about protecting so much as wanting the scene to end.

Deprived of context, the violence against Lara itself would not necessarily be a problem. The superb *Resident Evil 4* contains just as much horrifying avatar murder, and *The Last of Us* was never afraid to show us nasty things happening to both Joel and Ellie. It's the inconsistency that doesn't work in *Tomb Raider*. The vast majority of the game is about action with hints of a brutal survival theme - violent, but never unpleasant. Then it slips in these unnecessarily hard scenes, to no benefit for the game.



I'm not sure what Crystal Dynamics hoped to achieve with these horror elements, as they come and go in the blink of an eye. At one point, Lara wakes up in a room filled with sliced and diced corpses, dripping with blood, gore and grue. As soon as she steps outside the room, the building begins to tear apart from a wind storm in another high-tension, adrenaline-pumping action beat. The two don't gel, and the horror elements only serve to disorient and undermine the excellent action.

I can see the desire in *Tomb Raider* to go all out, to distance itself from the sillier entries of its genre and create a game that's darker, meaner and more hostile. But the real reinvention the game brings us isn't in being a harsher,

more realistic look at the world of videogames' best known archaeologist. It's a look at Lara as we've never seen her, human and fragile, but determined. She's not a ballet dancer with pistols, she's a young girl who is coping with a terrible situation. She doesn't always cope well, but she takes the pain and she uses it, fighting harder. When she tumbles from a roof and lands with a crunch, only to pull herself up again and limp on, it's far more evocative and far more meaningful than any of the times she's impaled or crushed. The new *Tomb Raider* isn't a great reboot because of how it kills the girl at the centre of the story, but because of how it hurts her, only for her to stand up again and push on.

HW

Write for us!

Contact us at

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Intermission...

The Seven Deadly Sins of Gaming: Aggregator

Let us look over the landscape that we have provided you with:

The Snipergangr of the Marshes, forever waiting. The Castigators, screaming through the Canyons. The Mirrors with the Trolls on one side and the Narcissists on the other. And the two sides of Limbo, where the Disparagers and the Obstainers wait, each vying for the next layer.

And to top this all? What could be the worst Gaming Sin of them all?

A simple one - one that doesn't even have to include gaming itself - one that, some could argue, isn't even a sin. You can see it everywhere in gaming though.

- 1 · *The Food-Stealer.*
- 2 · *The Boss-Kiter.*
- 3 · *The Noob-Tuber.*
- 4 · *The Ninja-Looter.*
- 5 · *The Kill-Stealer.*
- 6 · *The Team-Killer.*
- 7 · *The AFK-er.*

The First Level of Gaming Hell is reserved for the List-Makers and the List-Readers. Evil wretches that carefully reduce a complex individual, or a masterpiece of programming into a phrase. A slur for those they hate and an endearment for those they love. The *Citizen Kane* or the *Plan 9*. The Nickelback or the Daft Punk.

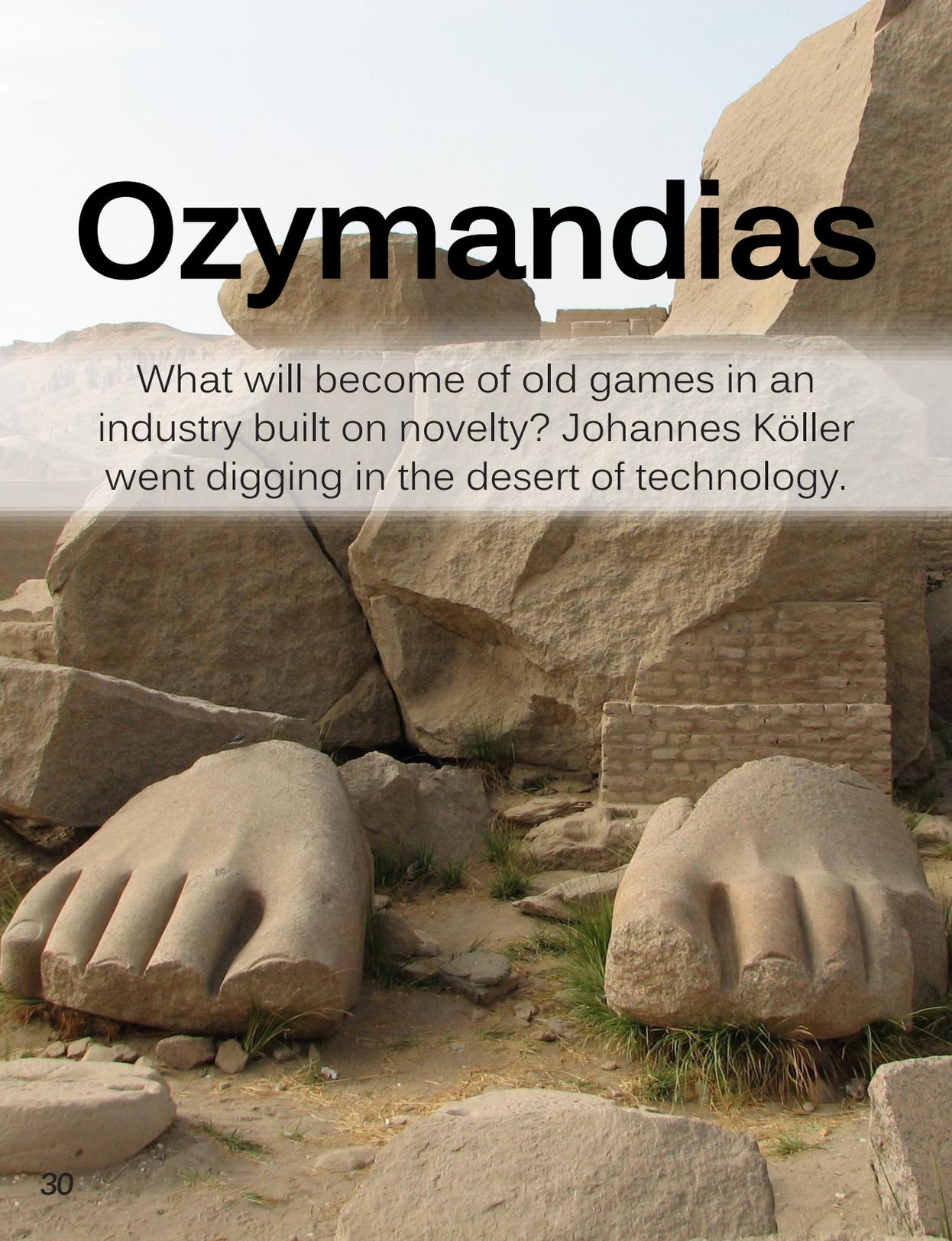
And why do they stay forever on the top? Because you let them. If you ever want to learn about who to hate next, or what to do, you just look at the lists of praise/shame. Why care if the information is out of date, misleading or prejudicial - scoop those regurgitated lists up and take them as your own. For the Maker or the Reader, it takes two key presses to paste out someone else's words and six sites will stand ready to take it under their own set of page views.

Sure, some of the time you'll disagree with the one-dimensionality you've reduced people and code to, but only until the next time someone asks you. Then you'll point to the Top Ten Online Rules Of Misanthropy and say "Yeah, that's because of this."

Wake up, smell the sulphur. You're the Top Layer. And so am I.

HW

Ozymandias



What will become of old games in an industry built on novelty? Johannes Köller went digging in the desert of technology.

305,000. That's the number of books available to me in Vienna's biggest public library. 6,893,831 - you can tell that one's from an academic environment because they provide an exact figure: It's the number of books spread across various university libraries in Vienna I have hypothetical access to. And that's still practically nothing. The New York Public Library offers 5,988,733 books, excluding its research section and, as before, periodicals and other printed items. The Library of Congress does not allow for lending, but names a collection of around 35 million books and 155 million items overall. Including some 3,000 videogames.

The massive conservational effort that libraries provide for the written word, as the museum does for images, is founded on the belief that access to the great texts and artworks of our past is essential to understanding not only art, not only history, but the human condition. So important are these temples of knowledge to education that historian and novelist Shelby Foote once described a university as "just a group of buildings gathered around a library." It might be professors and assignments that force you in there, but ultimately a good library contains all the knowledge spoonfed to you in lectures and courses, and then some.

Conservation is only half the battle though. Instead of locking history's

treasures in time capsules, these institutions are tasked with preserving them in a way that will keep them readily available, to make sure future generations can experience them as we did. For paintings, this requires careful storage and restoration, but not much else. Some awareness of historical context would not go amiss, but all a willing audience really needs to experience an image are functioning eyes. For books, this might require translation, edition and updating to modern spelling conventions, if the original has become incomprehensible to anyone without prior knowledge of the text. The format of bound tomes, however, has not exactly changed.

For videogames, this is where it gets tricky. The code that makes up digital art is comparatively easy to preserve, but performing that stored script depends in large part on ephemeral peripherals. Games need their appropriate consoles. Discs demand the appropriate reader, which needs to be connected via potentially outdated interfaces. Pulling the files and manipulating them to trick the game into thinking it's running on the right system, a process known as emulation, requires a lot of effort, and the results will need to be frequently updated to perform on current systems. Even so, older titles will inevitably lose something when taken from their natural habitat, as anyone who has

played the mobile port of an arcade classic can attest to.

Preserving something so fragile as a playable, digital illusion is challenging enough, but it's certainly not made easier by the problematic attitude the videogame industry has taken towards its own history. In the interest of fighting piracy, publishers are increasingly tying the creations of their developers to activation servers, or even demanding a constant connection. Removing the requirement or faking its fulfillment will add another tiresome step to emulation when they disappear. Online games, of course, are inevitably going to go down with their servers. Even barring the abolishment of such practices, these issues could be circumvented with deliberate aftercare for aging titles. But when a demand for backwards compatibility is maligned as being in itself 'backwards' not five years after original release, what are the odds of seeing effort put into the idea of keeping games playable fifty years down the line?

There is hope and increasing evidence that the nostalgia enthusiastic fans show for the videogames of

their youth may make their capitalist overlords rethink that attitude out of commercial interest. The importance of abandonware sites for conservation can hardly be overstated, but they operate in a legal gray area even when owners have gone out of business. Meanwhile, the online distributor Good Old Games appears to be making a killing by offering just what it says on the lid: classics brought to modern operating systems, DRM-free. Digital remakes have come into fashion with the spread of online marketplaces, which allow publishers to squeeze a bit more money out of old property.

This love for our digital past has done wonders for getting people to think about the importance of conservation, but ultimately nostalgia and a desire to monetize the same are too unreliable and fickle to record much of it. Few games can claim to have a fanbase large enough, or technically skilled enough, to achieve an updated version, but the effort to preserve should be as comprehensive as possible, rather than extending only to a canon of fan favorites.

The code that makes up digital art is comparatively easy to preserve, but performing that stored script depends in large part on ephemeral peripherals.

Consumer taste is neither a very good, nor a very reliable indicator for selecting items. It's doubtful that consumers managed to keep track of new titles even when their creation was left in the hands of an elite both equipped with expensive tools and proficient in their use. Now that the output of the medium seems to increase exponentially, following growing markets, the increasing popularity of game jams and the Zinester revolution heralded by Anna Anthropy, the idea has certainly been rendered obsolete. When Terry Cavanagh took to the stage of this year's GDC to talk about the work of Free Indie Games along with co-editor Porpentine, he observed that more than journalists, we need curators to deal with this explosion of creativity.

Sadly, the problems don't end there. Even if preservation is successful despite all technical difficulties, videogames are, by nature, far from easily accessible. It could be said that this medium is opposed to academic reading, to skimming and excerpting. Books can be flipped through, movies

and recordings can be fast forwarded to reach the part you are interested in studying. Only videogames tie progress to skill, investment and sacrifice. They are, as Tom Bissell notes in *Extra Lives*, structurally obligated to fight you every step of the way. Tools that future historians might greatly appreciate, such as fast travel or the ability to skip content, have even come to be maligned by purist fans.

Books can be flipped through, movies and recordings can be fast forwarded to reach the part you are interested in studying. Only videogames tie progress to skill, investment and sacrifice.

The entire problem is far beyond my level of technological understanding, and its many facets make me worry about the feasibility of conservation. It is worth noting, however, that even if our favorite creations turn out to be entirely ephemeral, it does not lessen their artistic worth. Much art has been created with a limited shelf life in mind, such as the Land Art of Robert Smithson, or Reverse Graffiti, a version of the popular street art that invalidates accusations of vandalism by selectively cleaning surfaces in order to paint with negative space. As these blanks are covered by fresh layers of dirt, the artwork disappears.

However, these are creations of intentionally limited duration, while the videogame industry seems to fight conservational efforts for all the wrong reasons: commercial interest, copyright worries and, worst of all, ignorance. Draconian online requirements are enforced without alternatives or exit strategies, since short-term profits and the opportunity to include ingame purchases outweigh the risk that the game might only live as long as its

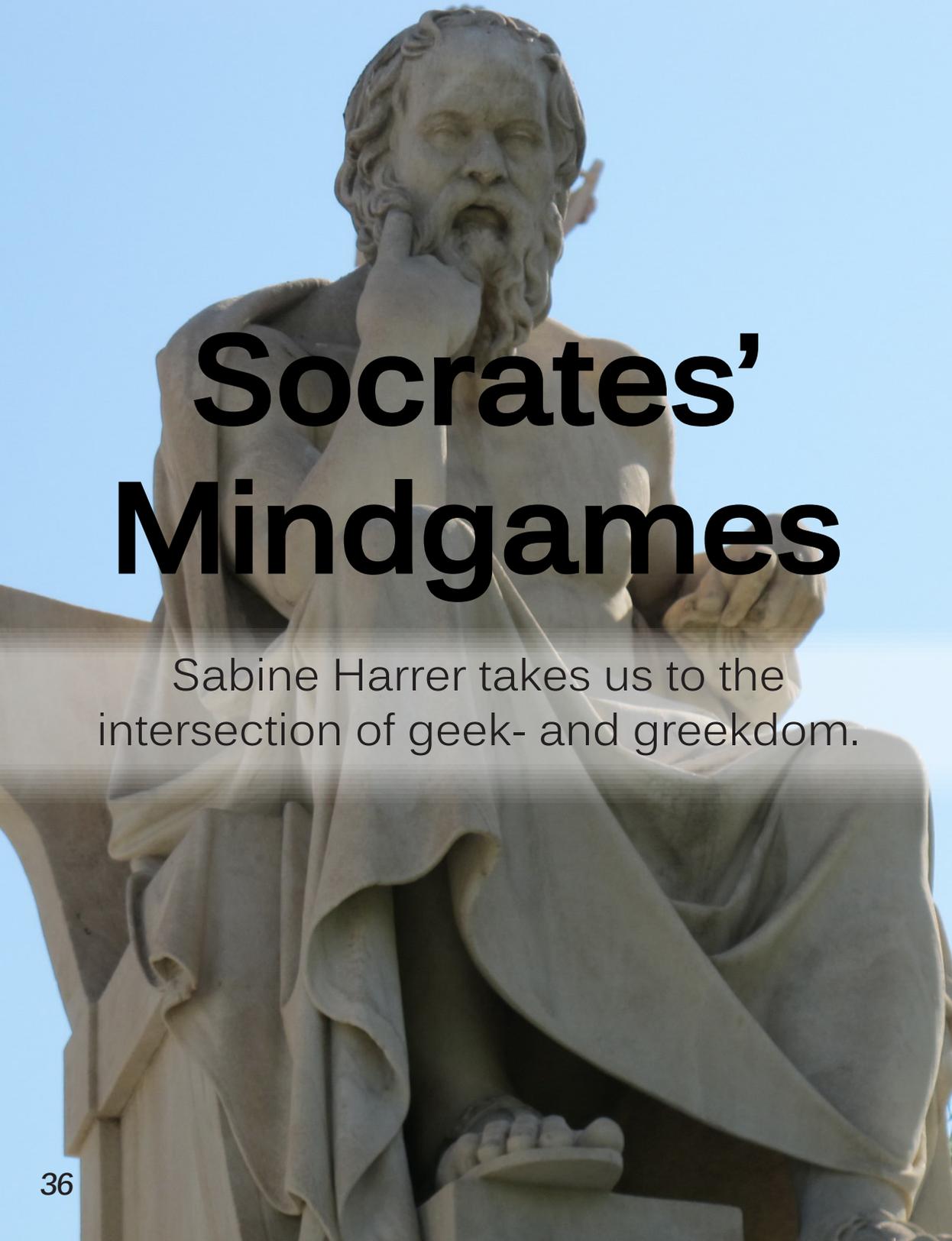
servers. Developers and publishers would do well to consider the implications of their preferred business models, but we as consumers should also be more firm in pressuring them to drop these practices, not just for getting the short end of the deal, but for the loss they might mean for the history of our medium.

Maybe we should all put a little less thought into our Steam libraries, and a little more into building a proper one.

HW



Spiral Jetty (1970), created on the shore of Great Salt Lake in Utah, is regarded as sculptor Robert Smithson's central work and is an example of "land art," a notoriously difficult medium to curate and preserve.



Socrates' Mindgames

Sabine Harrer takes us to the intersection of geek- and greekdom.

Learning is one of the two or three most complicated words in current games discourse. It has a tendency to silently creep into discussions via labels like social impact, change and education, and comes with a connotative weight that is rarely made explicit, because it doesn't feel comfortable to explain learning. It's simply too big and scary to be tackled adequately.

Of course, it wasn't too big for Socrates. From what we know he didn't explain learning per se, but established the related concept of Aporia - not to be confused with the indie game of the same name - in a conversation with his slave Meno. The Socratic version of Aporia is the smallest common denominator at work in all learning processes, whether you learn what to toss into the mortar

to season your curry or how to survive as a fragmented subject in late capitalist society. In Meno's case, it was all about understanding "virtue" as something eluding any clear-cut categorization.

Throughout the infamous Socratic interrogation, Meno becomes a learner by developing the ability to declare his previous conceptions as fallible,

and even more, as expired, yielding to fresh perspectives dawning on the horizon. Learning, thus, is a two-step process starting with the distortion and blankness of Aporia and ending in a moment of Epiphany: the retrospective insight that what one thought to know before has been replaced by something else.

It is not exactly made clear how and when this moment happens. When Meno, a young sophist who's a little too well-settled, too handsome and too self-assured, has his array of truths and beliefs carefully ripped apart by Socrates's stabbing questions, we do not know at which point learning really kicks in. Is it already when Socrates challenges his first assumption, that virtue is another word for wealth? Or is it when

he has already reached a state of total puzzlement and despair, in which he faces the learner's paradox - that the lesson can never be identified until it has already been taken in?

The same question keeps annoying us when we turn to 2013 and the way games afford, that is to say enable learning. Aporia and Epiphany have

As much as we'd like to make education fun, we will never be able to quantify what is happening to our learner during the moment of their epiphany. Nor should we.

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been keywords to explain the internal workings of games since Espen Aarseth's *Cybertext*, which argues that what distinguishes games from other media is that they confront their players with an Aporia they have to master by Epiphany in order to progress.

At first glance, this looks like great news for educators. If Aporia affords learning and games afford Aporia, we need games in our curricula! The hope is to find game mechanics, interfaces and narrative techniques which, analogous to Socrates' stabbing questions, can push the student into the desired state of puzzlement. Since games are all about crises that must be actively resolved, they already come very close to that state. For some reason kids love to be active like that, and if we can only tap into that desire and sneak some tiny little curricular goals into a fun system, we could easily direct and safeguard the learning effects of our classes. And on top of that, we might cash in the next prestigious tech-meets-knowledge fund awarded by some overzealous institution.

For teachers like me, it's certainly enticing to think of games as the great big answer to the unresolved questions to learning problems. However, if we expect learning to be a feature

hardwired into the latest technology, things will go terribly wrong. As much as we'd like to make education fun, we will never be able to quantify what is happening to our learner during the moment of their epiphany. Nor should we. But educational games hoping to dress-up a fixed set of lessons with 'fun' mechanics attempt just that.

Sadly, it's a common attitude to see Aporia as rhetoric, rather than human experience. For some of the prospective English teachers in my class "Perspectives on Games," it was crystal clear that fun, games and students reside in one galaxy, while seriousness, education and teachers reside in the other. This popular narrative demands that the educator pluck up courage, tools and technology, and boldly go into the realm of passivity, to invade idle minds and convert them into agents of knowledge. If this involves playing games, so be it, but only briefly, and only for the sake of education.

This view of teaching as invasion ignores that meaningful transformation and insight happen inside of a socially and culturally responsive human being, capable of ambiguity, negotiation and resistance. We can never know what thought process will take place inside a learner's head when we confront

them with a game quizzing them about London's tourist attractions, or promoting awareness of violence against women.

Assuming a direct relation between design goal and mechanical meaning boils down to reproducing the age-old myth of cultural elitism - the idea that learning is the product of top-down control, distributed by some self-appointed, "highly instructed" few. The tendency of elites to freak out whenever there's a new medium with potential cultural impact on the horizon is nothing new, but certainly seemed to increase during the 20th century, when popular media started to invade high culture.

From the Leavisist idea of the "Great Tradition" onwards, we can trace pessimistic protectionism towards each new piece of technology, an attitude that imagines learning to take place through instruction. We can see these characteristics recurring in the games and learning discourse: If we just got our hands on these games and made them educational, we could save players from their trifle motives and take them towards a higher insight while they still think they are playing.

This runs against Socrates' idea of Aporia, which only comes to the fore

via the whole vagueness of human learnability. For Meno, both Aporia and Epiphany are first hand experiences, which are triggered by a combination of technology and empathy: As the interrogator, Socrates is not only Meno's game designer, but also his close companion on the way through Aporia. It is vital for Meno's learning that his insights be externalized and reflected by a human agent.

As educators we have to acknowledge that Aporia happens in the lives of learners, and technology like games are highly ambiguous tools that need deep contextualization and negotiation by fellow humans. However, since games invite puzzlement and distortion as challenges to be resolved, they might teach us to be less scared of expanding our own boundaries, even if it hurts sometimes. I'm pretty sure this is what Jim Gee means when he talks about how games teach us about learning and literacy. He actually does not tell us to make games for learning, but he simply argues that we should look and listen carefully to the ways games find to engage players so as to make them culpable agents of Aporia. Games won't make us great learners. But they invite us to explore our capacity for learning.

Off The Grid: *Rogue Legacy*

Zachery Bricton waters his family tree with blood.

Rogue Legacy follows a lineage of dashing warriors and their individual attempts to rid a castle of monsters, loot its treasure, and avenge the royal line of their ancestral king. One after another, these brave sons and daughters will meet their maker, and by the time you overcome the four hidden bosses and control one lucky hero to the gilded throne room, you're certain to have gone through quite the family tree of various Sirs and Madams.

Characters are randomly generated, just as the castle layout rearranges upon re-entry. A 2D platformer with a floaty jump button, navigating the shuffled nature of the halls ahead is at first harrowing, each room with unknown and often immediate dangers to greet you. Spike traps, fireballs and bone juggling skeletons will eat chunks of health at a time, and you'll likely meet abrupt ends as you familiarize yourself with the movements of enemies and the nature of the castle's chambers.

When failure is frequent and much of the castle remains unexplored, *Rogue Legacy* is rather lovable. Each of your prospective heirs has a written bio you can look at before selecting them, revealing a myriad of personality, physical and psychological traits that can either act in favor or in detriment to your chances of survival. Sir Gregory IV might be a level 6 Knave, meaning he can dish critical hits left and right, but that he's also a bit lean on hit points himself. He's also colorblind, dyslexic and happens to fancy men. How far will he get?

It's a hilarious experience, but it suffers when the castle becomes more and more familiar. Even if random, the challenges are much the same, just reorganized, and repeated character bios do lose novelty. Collecting gold becomes an addictive force, as what you manage to pocket before death can be used to expand the family manor, offering interesting technology and class upgrades. Past a certain point, many

of these are shameful time sinks, offering diminishing returns for large amounts of plundering. Besides, the primary bossfights of *Rogue Legacy* all come down to dodging copious amounts of screen clutter, so the existence of such a massive tech tree is little more than distractionary padding. You can't buy reflexes, and that's all you really need to emerge triumphant.

Rogue Legacy is simply a fun matter of focus. Choose the finest champions offered to you and use their oddballs to your

advantage. A hero with dwarfism may find it easier to slip between projectiles, but if he has poor vision and thus presents you with a blurred screen, you'll just have to make do. But regardless of how much the family genes favor or curse them, the cartoon caricatures all move with the same bravado. Chest puffed out, sword pointing up and on, strolling powerfully past the castle gate as the entrance seals behind them. What confidence!

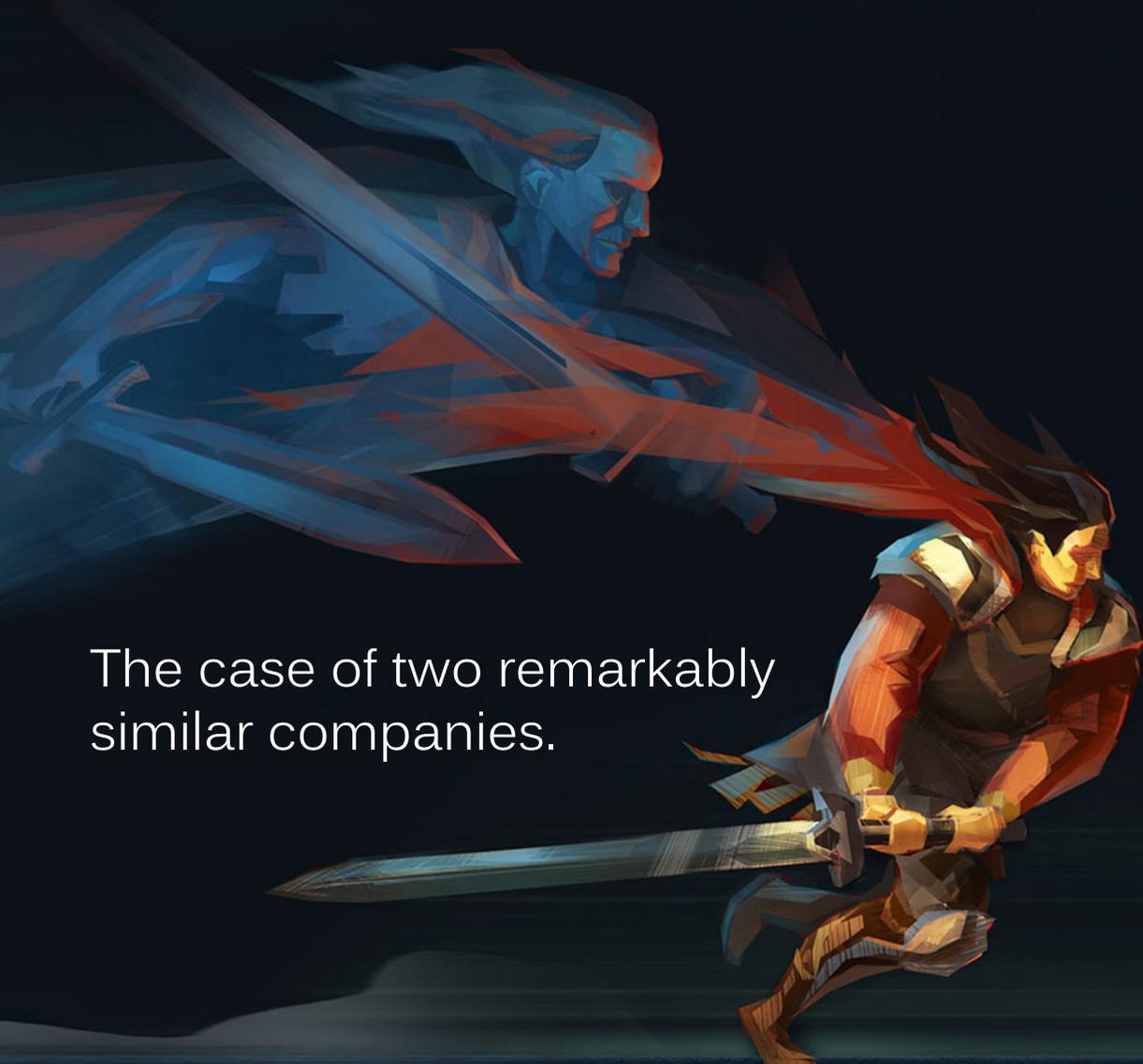


HW



Same Difference: Steam & Double Fine

The case of two remarkably similar companies.



Last time, I put you right about the new consoles - so this time I'm gonna ride over the latest hooah in the PC world. After last week, and my banning from Twitter, I've been told I've got to keep the language down as well - so here's the frassin' truth. So help me dog.

In the red corner: The Glutton of Gaming, the Alt-Tab of Text Messaging, the full of hot air: Gabe's Steam. And in the blue corner: Taking you to the Auteur Side, Tim and Tim again, the five blade Schafer's Double Fine Productions.

What's the similarity between a DRM-hungry sales machine and one of the darlings of Kickstarter? How about you wait until you've heard the FACTS!

They're not short on time.

Team Fortress - *Team Fortress 2*: Nine years. *Half-Life* - *Half-Life 2*: Five years. *Half-Life 3* is already late at nine.

Psychonauts 2: Notch says he's gonna fund it when he leaves game development. Probably around the same time *Minecraft* is finally released then.

They're not short on money.

Steam Hats - \$50 Million: 30,000 players per week dumping \$1.54 million bits of "refined metal" into the server cache.

Double Fine's Kickstarters: *Broken Age*, \$3.3 million - *Massive Chalice*, \$1,229,015

Deadlines are for other people.

When the wiki on Valve actually has a page of missed deadlines, you've got to

think "Maybe these guys need a diary."

However, when you're working for Activision and you say "Dude, we want 7 million and another year to finish our game" - then you've pretty much defined Valve time, and given them good reason to bounce yo' glutes.

They square off against the big guys.

Steam and EA/Origin? Best of friends. (That's what's called sarcasm according to my English buddies. Or Irony?) Steam and Activision? Activision pulled all their Bond Games. Steam and Ubisoft? Double DRM, because they don't trust each other.

Double Fine and Activision? Best of friends. (Also sarcasm - and you don't diss the CoDfathers, Schafer!) Double Fine and EA? Published *Brutal Legend*, told them to get lost over the sequel.

They square off against the little guys.

Broken Age: Wanted \$400,000. Got \$3.3 million. Then said "Not enough, sorry." What a cripe pile.

Lag 4 Dead 2: No-one wanted it. Loads of people said one year isn't enough to make another cool character like Zoey (unless she's also sort of like Cortana), even made a boycott group.

What happened? Gabe showed them footage and they folded like origami paper. Then we got Rachele and her Oprah screaming. Rubbish.

They release broke software and call it a test.

Double Fine: *Middle Manager of Justice*, released on the Apple Iphoney, wasn't meant to be. In fact, Apple released it so early that they had to call it a Beta.

Steam: *DayZ* and *Towns* were greenlit and released. Then they found out the games weren't even finished, and that *DayZ* (now *Infestation: Survivor Stories*) was a broken pay-to-win machine. Did they take them down? Nope, just called them 'Early Access' and let people buy into them. Freaking *Planetary Annihilation* is \$70 for a beta.

Watch those numbers. They give everything away.

Valve: *Team Fortress 2*, *Left 4 Dead 2*, *DOTA 2*, *Portal 2* - Do you see the links? Because I do!

Double Fine: What's a double? Is it two? Does *Broken Age* have 2 Player Productions as its second developer? Oh yeah, it does!

Let's take you on a FACT BLAST:

EDDIE RIGGS AND MIDNIGHT RIDERS? THE CAVE AND CAVE JOHNSON? BIG PICTURE AND MASSIVE CHALICE? DO THESE LOOK LIKE CONSARNING COINCIDENCES?

Never mind the frustration, feel the atmosphere.

Have you ever played *Psychonauts*? If by chance you're one of those poor suckers bottled up on this Burtonesque craziness, you'll know the 'Meat Circus.'

We're talking *Battletoads* with Blue Shell frustration level here. *Brutal Omelette* manages to make heavy metal seem lead-lined, and that's when you're not walking around a SCUMM landscape, looking to stick a duck in a pulley or something.

Steam itself is liable to crash out every time you open the messenger, but that's nothing when it comes to finding a server. The dedicated servers in *Lag 4 Dead* always stick you in the Middle Ages somewhere, with Ellis pinging higher than Jimmy Gibbs Junior. That's if you're not stuck on some gruel-playing server, or getting auto-kicked by a group of cigarettes waiting for a friend.

Does that not make you say "Hey, that sounds a little familiar?" You're darn tooting it does!

VALVE AND DOUBLE FINE ARE THE SAME COMPANY.

You may want to argue this, but you know in your heart that you're wrong and I'm right.

Any geek on the internet starts giving you trouble talking to you about two companies?

You come back to me and I'll make sure they know the FACTS.

I'm outta here. Peace.

HW



The Other Screen: Ongoing Investigations

Why tribulations on the watching of watchmen remain watchable.



A summer blockbuster season is now incomplete without two or even three big-budget superhero films. This year, we've got our share from both Marvel and DC with *Iron Man 3* and *Man of Steel* respectively. Both are continued examples of a trend that the past ten years of blockbuster filmmaking has followed: multiplex catharsis for an America still recovering from 9/11. While China is quickly catching up, American audiences still pull in the biggest box office, and the country is still philosophically reeling from the events in New York 12 years ago. As such, it only makes sense the popular entertainment reflects a desire for catharsis and reflection.

That said, there is something disturbing about the way modern Hollywood cinema has chosen to interpret these still relatively raw feelings. Last year's *The Avengers* featured an attack on New York so grand in scope and scale that you can only assume tens of thousands died in the carnage. But we're not meant to care for the dead, but to focus on the fortitude and skill of the heroes defeating an attacking menace. *Iron Man 3* uses loaded, calculated phrases

like "Nothing's been the same since New York" to call back to both this scene and its cultural reference point.

Meanwhile, *Man of Steel's* last act has been estimated to have cost 2 trillion dollars worth of damages to the Manhattan-esque city of Metropolis - but again, the death toll is suspiciously absent. Five years ago *The Dark Knight* presented a very interesting meditation on the aftermath of 9/11, creating a story about the fear and exploitation

of citizens from both terrorists and those they trust to protect them. Now, superhero movies visually reference it with whimsy and abandon, a cavalier set piece for good guys punching bad guys.

With this, a certain irony emerges. Zack Snyder, the man behind the *Man of*

Watchmen has become a strange commentary on the reckless abandon of superheroes and the hollowness of their films.

Steel, also directed the sterling comic book adaptation *Watchmen*, which was released back in 2009. With the increasingly ludicrous destruction shown in its contemporaries, *Watchmen* has become a strange commentary on the reckless abandon of superheroes and the hollowness of their films. When Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons released their original work in 1987, it was a commentary on the power of



superheroes and what kind of influence they would wield in a less fictional world.

The Superman-like figure of the story is Dr. Manhattan, a man whose powers are basically limitless. He can see through time and travel across the universe. He can grow to any size he wishes and can destroy men with the wave of his hand. But at the end of the novel, he's tricked by a mere human, Adrian Veidt, who unleashes a transdimensional squid monster upon New York city, forcing America and Russia to halt their arms race and stopping almost certain nuclear destruction. It's an excellent, witty spin on the fondness Silver Age comics had for patriotic heroism and foreign terror.

The film tweaked this slightly, with Adrian Veidt using the power generators that he and Dr. Manhattan developed to destroy major cities across the world, leading America and Russia to believe Dr. Manhattan has turned against Earth and forcing them to come together. Veidt considers the benefits of the betrayal to outweigh its dubious morals, and Dr. Manhattan agrees, forcing the other superheroes to either

die in protest or keep silent.

This huge moral dilemma offers an interesting counterpart to *Man of Steel*. Dr. Manhattan and Adrian Veidt both destroy and decimate for 'the greater good', to save the world from even greater destruction. But the film is aware of the gray morality of the situation. There's a darkness here, all the heroes knowing it was their responsibility to save people, not murder them by the millions. And yet, perhaps this was the best option.

Instead of crashing through buildings in a fist fight to the death, it's a quiet climax, but an achingly powerful one that lingers for a very long time.

The only option. To save the entire planet from nuclear destruction, they needed to turn the ire of the world's superpowers against them in the most potent way possible. Even when Rorschach's morals insist he tell the world, he demands Dr. Manhattan kill him so he can't go through with it. It's an ironic situation

and beautifully presented, exposing the vulnerability of superheroes and their impact on society and global politics. Instead of crashing through buildings in a fist fight to the death, it's a quiet climax, but an achingly powerful one that lingers for a very long time.

In *Man of Steel*, the destruction of Metropolis is little but eye candy. It's well shot and the special effects

are gorgeous, but the constant, lusty shots of military hardware and battling caped Gods amidst crumbling skyscrapers and running, screaming citizens is odd, and frankly a little disconcerting. Expensive as it may be, it feels cheap and dissociated, culling images of tragedies that occurred just over a decade ago and sexifying them with flashy CGI. On the Marvel side of things, *The Avengers* had just as much, if not more of an issue with this. The entire Marvel film universe built itself into a cacophony of sound and fury that escalated to a climax set in Manhattan where no civilian was even scratched by the villains, and the heroes tore apart skyscrapers with abandon. But it's okay, the film tells us. They're the good guys. They have to do this, to protect us. As breezy and as light as *The Avenger's* script was, it's hard to ignore the complete

disregard and abandon shown towards real world events, filling its frames with cheap parallel images in an attempt to resonate a silly superhero story with a real world act of mass murder.

When *Watchmen* was released in its original comic book form, it had much to say about the attitudes of superheroes and how they related to American culture. From the Vietcong-stomping Dr. Manhattan to the psychopathic noir detective Rorschach and the constant ticking of the doomsday clock, it was a twisted and highly intelligent story that delved deep and dark into the Silver Age. But with Frank Miller's gritty take on Batman and an overall more violent and sex-filled 90s for comic books, *Watchmen's* take on comics lost some of the impact. But now, 25 years after its release, both the film and the original graphic novel have become relevant in

a new way.

In theatres filled with superhero blockbusters, each finding new ways to tear down city blocks and tumble skyscrapers with little regard for human casualties or the cost of damages, *Watchmen* is a story about broken, desperate and confused superheroes who hold the power to destroy their own world, pondering the implications of such might. The destruction at the end doesn't arrive in a flashy punch-up - it's seen through a wall of monitors that destroys any sense of excitement or catharsis. It's a cold feeling of dread, of the capability and fallibility of superheroes and global superpowers, and the monumental weight that real destruction and real terror bring.

It's tiring to have the iconography of an event like 9/11 splashed across screens again and again without

consideration for relevance or even wit. There is nothing wrong with making parallels to 9/11 in big blockbuster tentpoles. Both *Watchmen* and *The Dark Knight* proved that you can handle the material in interesting, evocative ways. But the way many superhero movies choose to use it borders on distasteful, using it to fund millions of dollars worth of explosions and fighting, but providing little food for thought in the process. Before he dies, Rorschach asks Dr. Manhattan "What's another body amongst the foundations?", hammering home the impact of every life that will be lost that day, and just what acts of mass violence, terror and destruction mean to the world. The storytelling foundations of *Man of Steel* and *The Avengers* are built on the bodies of 3,000 people. Perhaps it's time to start treating them with the gravitas they deserve.

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Who we are...

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➤ *Haywire Magazine* is an amateur games journalism project developed by Johannes Köller and Andrew Walt. All written content has been contributed generously by and is entirely property of their author’s byline. All visual content has been retrieved through Google image search and is property of their respective owners.

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