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Technocultural Citizenship and Counterpublics: Player Agency and Worldmaking in Queer Video Game Spaces

Abstract

Queer spaces in video games are often thought of as game spaces in which queer characters, relationships, or sex merely exist (Consalvo 2003). This undermines the queer potential of the game space itself as it is encountered and experienced through play. Drawing upon José Esteban Muñoz's discussion of queer potentialities (2009), and Janet Murray's discussion of agency in virtual environments (1997), I argue that queer game spaces are not marked only by the presence of queer representation or content, but rather can be identified by the queered sense of player agency that these spaces allow. Queer game spaces can emerge as discursive counterpublic spaces that an inaugurate queer futurities, specifically in terms of programming and the experience of gameplay. The queer player agency made possible by queer game spaces suggests a notion of queer technocultural citizenship that extends from the simultaneous creation and play of agency in games, to the creation and play of different understandings of equality in digital space. This highlights the problematic notions of equal or democratic play and participation, usually associated with discussions of queer game content and digital spaces. Simultaneously, it emphasizes the potential of queer play and creation in queer counterpublics to initiate digital worldmaking as a new form of gendered, sexed political literacy.

Introduction

In game studies scholarship, queer space is defined as spaces of play or interactivity occupied by queer characters, relationships, or sex.[1] Studies of game spaces generally examine the interplay between particular game elements, such as immersion and player agency. On the other hand, studies that discuss queerness in relation to games often focus on how queer players negotiate their offline identity to avoid hate speech.[2] While retaining the discussion of player agency, studies of game spaces[3] themselves are often narrowly focused on the degree of agency granted to an ostensibly "neutral" player stripped of all markers of racial, ethnic and gendered identities. Such research tends to come out of an interest in how technological antiquity[4] or advancement[5] of games affect the expressive game elements that work to produce certain levels of player agency and immersion. Non-technologically based studies of game space also focus on the agency allowed to the player, but usually within the context of a problematically deduced utopic modelling[6] of agency in a society.[7] In this paper, I argue that the player agency made possible by queer game spaces suggests a notion of queer technocultural citizenship that emerges from the simultaneous creation and occupation of agency in games. At the same time, this also extends to the creation and occupation of different understandings of equality in digital space. As a result, queer game spaces have the potential to provide alternative modes of political engagement to marginalized individuals. These alternative modes allow the production of communal belonging and political critique through the reconstruction of normative political processes. I demonstrate these political potentials by contrasting the design of

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player agency in *Sunset* (Tale of Tales, 2015) and *Hack 'n' Slash* (Double Fine Productions, 2014), which suggest a more productive understanding of political agency—not merely as an ability to interact or participate, but also an ability to *design* the system in which one interacts.

Due to the large disconnect between research on queerness in games, and research on game spaces, there is little scholarly work concerning the queer potential of game spaces. Game studies scholar Adrienne Shaw asserts that studies of games that draw upon queer theory should move beyond analyses of queer content and representations alone. In "Circles, Charmed and Magic: Queering Game Studies," Shaw suggests that game scholars should focus, instead, on how games can be productive for understanding the oppressive power structures that define legitimate and illegitimate player and game behaviors.[8] Shaw thus suggests a move towards theorizing a queering of game design and production. Expanding the understanding of queer video games to include queering game design conventions can allow us to tap the potential of queer games in issues of queer activism and the production of more inclusive gaming cultures. The Queer Games Scene is one such manifestation of a more inclusive gaming culture. As a recent coming together of queer gamers and game designers in an online space, the Queer Games Scene molds these amateur game creators into a community.

The Queer Games Scene and Queer Player Agency

The Queer Games Scene[9] is a phenomenon that has produced understandings of games that align with what Shaw proposes—i.e. being useful both for producing queer representations and for extending the boundaries within which digital products are designated as games. One of its key figures is Anna Anthropy, a trans-identified game designer who makes games about being queer. In her book,[10] Anthropy presents a manifesto for non-professional game designers to start making their own games with free or easy-to-access software for the purpose of turning video games into objects of contested cultural and historical possession. For Anthropy, it is important to understand games in relation to what they mean to marginalized gamers. In her discussion of meaning production in games, Anthropy cites and invokes the logic of procedural rhetoric as established by Ian Bogost. According to Bogost procedural rhetoric states that the rules of the game create spaces of possibility that the player is supposed to explore. Based on the actions that the rules make possible, the game uses the rules to make an argument about the process of something, or about how something in the world does or should work.[11]

Anthropy's consideration of procedural rhetoric as integral to game design envisions the ability to design a space of possibility that adequately expresses the experiences of marginalized gamers. However, this theorization of queer game space design in video games via the understanding of procedural rhetoric remains limited, as it only applies to a "neutral" digital space in games, separate from the cultural and historical legacy of identity-based exclusion attached to the video game medium itself. Considering that Anthropy's goal for non-professional game development is to contest this mythical understanding of neutrality, it seems that procedural rhetoric alone is not enough for understanding the design of queer video game space.

Developing a theory of designing queer video game spaces is the first step towards contesting this oppressive legacy. Normative gamers (typically represented as cis-gendered, heterosexual, white males) and gaming culture maintain exclusivity by forgetting or removing non-normative gamers from video game histories. According to Laine Nooney (2013), both lay and academic histories of video games tend to be patrilineal and exclude the presence and participation of non-normative members of gaming culture.[12] Without this historical recognition, it may become difficult for queer gamers to identify themselves as gamers, or to find belonging in gaming cultures. The Queer Games Scene offers a corrective to this cultural and historical exclusivity by producing games that illustrate a gaming history that is inclusive of queer gamers.

Many of the products of the Queer Games Scene are technologically simple relative to mainstream games, and rely more heavily on older game formats. This use of old gaming interfaces produces a historical memory of the queer gamer by including queer content in older game formats. Simultaneously, it queers video game history

by disrupting dominant memories of gaming; such games often draw upon a media memory associated with dominant memories of gaming, and subversively use that media memory to construct the presence of a queer gamer. The queer gaming histories produced by the movement produces a queer relationality within the context of gaming, and provide the starting points from which a queer gaming community can be (and has been) founded.

One product of the Queer Games Scene that draws upon this media memory concept is Anna Anthropy's *Dys4ia* (2012), an autobiographical game about Anthropy's experience with hormone replacement therapy. The game is very simplistic in terms of both design and player activity. Anthropy's game relies on older game formats similar to classic products in canonical gaming histories, such as *Pong*

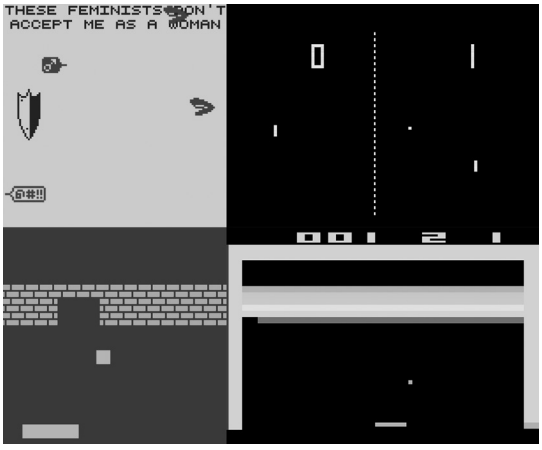

Fig.1: *Dys4ia* levels (Bottom left and top left), drawing from *Pong*

(Atari, 1972), *Breakout* (Atari, 1976), and *Pac-Man* (Atari and Namco, 1980).

The lack of recognition of queer gamers in gaming histories limits their agency within normative gaming cultures. The Queer Games Scene then, is a radical reclamation of that agency that empower players via the disruption of oppressive gaming histories. However, the way these products establish player agency deviates from established understandings of player agency within games studies.

Janet Murray defines player agency as "the satisfying power to take meaningful action and see the results of our decisions and choices."[14] For Murray, agency and authorship are two different roles; while the interactor of the environment or game is trying to achieve agency, the author has a more procedural role in the game in that the author is responsible for "writing the rules for the interactor's involvement."[15] Because the products of the Queer Games Scene emphasize both the playing and the creation of games, the agency reflected in these products suggests a more fluid relationship between authorship and player agency; the normally clear separation between the two is queered so that the player/author can occupy both positions in a digital space. The ability to *both author and play* a space is necessary for the creation of a historical memory of a queer gamer. Not only does the gamer use digital and game space to create a gaming history in which her existence is recognized, but the gamer also plays within that space to experience this created gaming history.

Cultural Citizenship and Counterpublicity in the Queer Games Scene

In a non-gaming context, Renato Rosaldo writes about the concept of cultural citizenship, which he describes as "the right to be different and belong in a participatory democratic sense."[16] Cultural citizenship thus serves as the desired goal for many social movements focused on marginalized groups that seek out a sense of belonging. These social movements may involve the construction of counterpublics, which are publics made up of discursively subordinate groups that place themselves in opposition towards dominant publics.[17] The space provided by counterpublics to gain and perform agency allows participants to form an alternate sphere and eventually enter the public sphere based upon their own articulations of the discursive or political conflict between publics.[18]

The idea of being allowed to exist as a different kind of gamer is similar to Rosaldo's concept of cultural citizenship, which entails that one should be able to participate and have agency without having to assimilate to a dominant culture. By endowing a queered sense of player agency, Queer Games Scene products also allow queer game players to identify as "gamers" without having to assimilate to the normative demands of dominant gaming cultures that reject the idea of a queer gamer. However, the Queer Games Scene differs from these social movement processes in one crucial way. Rather than having a community of queer gamers form

a counterpublic to gain cultural citizenship, the participants of the Queer Games Scene reverse this direction of producing belonging by constructing for themselves a sense of cultural citizenship from which a community and counterpublic can be built. The Queer Games Scene's construction of citizenship in gaming culture through self-made gaming histories produces a community upon which a queer counterpublic of gaming can be founded. Queer counterpublics generally allow for constituent members to engage in queer worldmaking, or to imagine and perform queer utopias.[19] A "queer gaming counterpublic" allows members to author and interact with spaces of queer futurities and possibilities. By displacing citizenship as an end goal, the Queer Games Scene queers the production of belonging itself. Instead, by working towards the production of counterpublics, the movement undermines the idea of a perceivable end goal of belonging in favor of imagining and producing more dynamic possibilities of belonging.

Queering Technocultural Citizenship

Despite its utility, the idea of cultural citizenship does not adequately account for the Queer Games Scene products' ability to simultaneous occupy both the author and player positions. As a corrective, I connect the ideas of cultural citizenship and player/author agency by theorizing a new concept of citizenship, which I refer to as "technocultural citizenship," by which I mean here, a very specific form of belonging within the Queer Gaming Scene.

Christopher Kelty's discussion of recursive publics provides a useful starting point for theorizing technocultural citizenship.[20] According to Kelty, a recursive public is collectively concerned about the maintenance of its form of communication and association according to that public's understanding of a moral and technological structure. For Kelty, recursive publics are significant because their structures of association are freely accessible to their members for modification, and thus these structures are always being modified in a democratic way and are in a constant state of experimentation. Although Kelty doesn't specifically address the concept of citizenship, his discussion of the significance of recursive publics is a precursor to my theorization of technocultural citizenship. Recursive publics provide members with meaningful ways to participate in digital space. Indeed, this may be the kind of citizenship that digital cultures seek out: the ability to construct, modify, and control digital spaces for its members, without risking the erasure of that space.

However, Kelty's discussion of public formation does not account for the ways in which excluded or queered participants can become empowered, especially in gaming publics that may form through moral and technological understandings of what constitutes a video game. Kelty's discussion falls short of explaining the need for preserving the sense of belonging that is produced according to the technological and moral order that a recursive public is interested in maintaining. For Kelty, the significance of recursive publics doesn't seem to be tied to preservation of memory or belonging; rather, it is tied to the ability of individuals to make changes to digital structures as they please. An uncritical acceptance of recursive publics as a model for technocultural citizenship problematizes the formation of digital belonging for groups in which historical memory acts as a basis for community building.

The Queer Games Scene offers an alternative understanding of technocultural citizenship that seems to resolve the problems of belonging seen in recursive publics. Unlike recursive publics, the Queer Games Scene does not collapse the positions of agent (or player) and author by equating digital participation with practices of digital creation. Rather, it conceives of participation and digital authorship as distinguishable positions that can be occupied simultaneously. Through the ability to both participate and create, participants can not only modify or queer ludic structures, but are also able to interact with those queered structures; the sense of belonging then, is the product of this form of engagement.

Worldmaking in Queer Video Game Spaces: An Alternative Digital Literacy

Together, the abilities granted to queer gamers through the concepts of queered player agency, technocultural citizenship, and counterpublicity work to produce the political potential of the design of queer game spaces. I refer to this political potential as "worldmaking," and define it within the context of queer gaming as the ability to imagine,

construct, and play within potential political or social structures and futures that address the needs of queer individuals, which may not be addressed or recognized by currently existing structures.[21] Here, worldmaking is not necessarily meant to invoke the construction of detailed fictional worlds for a finalized media product, but rather is meant to be understood as part of a constant feedback loop-like process that allows participants to create a future that directly responds to the every-changing conditions of the present. Practices of worldmaking in queer game spaces allow participants to imagine and construct understandings of queerness (and understandings of games) that are not presently extant. This enables members to critically examine understandings that do currently exist, to find what is lacking and to construct or reconstruct game spaces accordingly. This idea of forgoing a definitive or pragmatic end goal in favor of investing in more imaginative ways of being is very much aligned with José Esteban Muñoz's concept of the horizon.[22] Muñoz discusses queerness as a desired way of being in the world that doesn't seem to exist in current conditions, and instead exists as a distant potential future. For Muñoz, the activity of imagining a queer horizon, or hoping for a future in which queer ways of being exist and are legitimated, is a significant political activity in that it allows an individual to recognize that the conditions of the present are somehow lacking.

Within the framework of Muñoz's queer futurity and horizons, the Queer Games Scene provides the potential for forgoing dominant understandings of political and discursive concepts such as equality, in favor of more differential understandings of these concepts that may be more accommodating to queer individuals and other minorities. Through digital game space, it becomes possible for individuals to "worldmake" potential futures for themselves that include these differential understandings of political concepts as a way of highlighting and protesting exclusivities surrounding presently existing understandings of these concepts. By using a tangible and flexible form of counterpublicity to demonstrate differential understandings of political concepts, minority groups can open themselves up to more possible ways of existing as a people within a society, rather than simply assimilating to a dominant group.

The worldmaking abilities that can be produced in queer game spaces also have the potential to function as a digital literacy or political form of "writing" that can allow minority groups such as queer individuals to control how they are articulated in public discourse. As the worldmaking potential of queer game space is derived from the author/player fluidity seen in queered player agency and queer technocultural citizenship, it is necessary to also understand worldmaking as a potential digital literacy in terms of this fluid author/player relationship. Worldmaking as digital literacy not only allows queer people to articulate themselves by "playing" within discursive tools and structures. It also allows them to "author" their own discursive structures as a way of articulating their futures and desires in ways that do not require assimilation to a dominant power. This understanding of worldmaking as a form of digital literacy is significant, as it demonstrates the need for accessible and tangible literacies. Such literacies can allow a minority population to articulate itself into discursive existence, while also allowing it to maintain control of by imagining and articulating its futures. A blindness to such "queer worldmaking" can, and has often led to a suppression of the agency of the player. The 2015 game, *Sunset* released by Tale of Tales is a case in point.

Failed Player Agency in *Sunset*

In *Sunset*, the user plays as Angela Burnes, a young African American woman who works as a housekeeper for an affluent weapons manufacturer named Gabriel Ortega. *Sunset*'s gameplay consists of completing cleaning tasks set by Ortega. The player can interact with various objects in the apartment. Depending on the object being interacted with and how the player chooses to interact with that object, the player can influence the progress of the city's civil war occurring outside of the apartment. However, the game demonstrates a failure to produce gamer inclusivity, despite its attempt to celebrate non-normative player agency and participation in gaming culture. This failure is significant in that it not only works to debunk understandings of digital game space as providing freedom of movement and interaction to all participants, but it also serves to demonstrate the need for worldmaking as a kind of digital literacy that not only allows interaction

with discursive tools, but also allows access to the construction of these discursive tools.

The ability of the player to determine the events of warfare from a distanced and irrelevant position in *Sunset* suggests an attempt at empowering a representation of marginalized or queered players. However, the game fails as an attempt at queering player agency, since the player's ability and agency to direct ludic activity remains separate from the space in which the ludic and discursive action of the plot takes place (the player remains inside the apartment, while the plot occurs outside of the apartment).

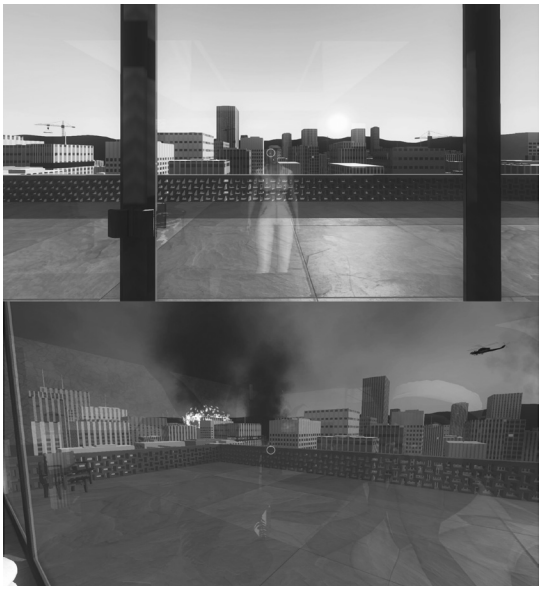

Fig. 2: *Sunset*, normal city view (top) and war-torn city view (bottom). War plot occurring outside apartment while Angela stays inside.[23]

Thus, the game does not necessarily recognize the player as an agent within the game space. This portrayal of the player's agency is also problematic because it is represented as lacking any sort of difference or queerness indicative of the marginalized position from which it came. The game misleadingly seems to represent the player's distanced actions as agential activity, rather than appearing as originating from a non-agent. *Sunset* ultimately eliminates the possibility of participating in game space in a way that differs from the ways that mainstream players are expected to interact. *Sunset*'s failure as a model for producing queer gamer belonging emerges from the fact that the player is not able to produce a lasting memory of herself beyond the space of exclusion that is forced upon her. The erasure of queerness as the player's actions enter the public sphere also works to demonstrate the problem of limited digital literacies that may not allow access to the ability to both make and play within discursive tools of worldmaking. Without the preservation of the player's differences, the futurity of the player's articulated discursive existence in the public sphere is at risk and removed from the player's control.

Player/Author Agency in *Hack 'n' Slash*

An alternative and more productive use of queer game design elements can be found in the game *Hack 'n' Slash* (2014). Released by Double Fine Productions, *Hack 'n' Slash* manages to successfully construct a queer futurity and a potential for a queer counterpublic of gaming. The user plays as an androgynous female elf who, with the help of a fairy sidekick, must navigate through surrounding obstacles to rescue an imprisoned princess from an evil wizard. *Hack 'n' Slash* places a strong emphasis on learning and using a programming language, and focuses on coding as the main mechanism of play. Rather than using weapons to conquer enemies, the player in *Hack 'n' Slash* can navigate through the in-game environments by using a hybrid port/sword weapon to "hack" into the programming of various objects in the game in order to recode them for the player's use.

Considering that the main player character is an androgynous female (inviting queer identification), and that the entirety of the game is focused on a female protagonist learning to code and using code to her benefit, *Hack 'n' Slash* seems to very clearly be

Fig. 3: *Hack 'n' Slash*, player character learning the logic of code.[26]

making reference to the Girl Games Movement of the 1990s. The games that were marketed to newly recognized girl gamers of the 1990s were produced to appeal to stereotypical notions of "girls' interests," while working under the guise of making girls more technologically literate.[24] These so-called "pink games"[25] provoke the question of which models of agency are made available to mainstream versus girl (or otherwise excluded) gamers.

In terms of producing a sense of queer gamer belonging, *Hack 'n' Slash* recognizes the lack of cultural citizenship provided by the Girl Games Movement and further produces a model of queer technocultural citizenship that is successful in creating a lasting historical memory of a queer gamer. The game itself suggests an overcoming of frameworks of citizenship and agency produced external to feminist and queer gaming through the player's necessary defeat of the evil wizard (coincidentally depicted as a white male) who plots to take over the game space through his programming skills. The basic idea of play in *Hack 'n' Slash* can be understood as invoking a fluid author/player agency. The player can code the conditions of the immediate game space not only to play the actual game, but also to produce the queer player agency and belonging that are necessary for the claim of a queer technocultural citizenship. The player thus produces queer gamer belonging not just through the representation of the queer player in a game space, but also by queering the construction of the game itself via the player's reconstructions of the game's code.

Further, the game ensures that the player's actions are not lost upon the other characters, and works to preserve the memory of the player and her actions through the sidekick's narrations to an unknown party. The narration demonstrates the use of queer gamer memory for the construction of a community of other queer gamers. The sharing of a historical[27] memory of a queer gamer not only shows the potential for producing belonging for queer gamers, but also shows potential for the construction of a queer technocultural citizenship.

Once the player beats the game and frees the princess, the sidekick starts narrating. In the present time of the game, the sidekick narrates the futures of the player character and the princess, even though these narrated events haven't happened yet, and aren't guaranteed to happen. The sidekick narrates that the player character and the princess will work together to undo the coding damage done to the game space by the defeated wizard. Following this narration, the player character and princess both agree that they should go out into the game space and undo the wizard's code (though the player herself does not see this happen). This action of realizing a narrative future that has not yet happened, models a movement towards a queer counterpublic of gaming. Not only are the characters leaving the scene to chase a conceptual horizon, but can also realize that horizon tangibly through a re-authoring of spaces occurring beyond the game's narrative. This demonstrates the non-teleological role of queer counterpublics of gaming used by the Queer Games Scene.

Finally, *Hack 'n' Slash* demonstrates the utility of a digital literacy of worldmaking that is understood in terms of author/player agency fluidity. In contrast to *Sunset*, not only is the player able to articulate her existence and influence in the public sphere (done by battling and defeating the evil wizard), but she can also articulate her existence through self-constructed tools of discursive (and literal) worldmaking (done by reprogramming elements of her environment to find, battle, and defeat the wizard). As demonstrated by the end of the game, digital worldmaking that allows for both creating and playing provides the player with access to a digital literacy that allows her to articulate her future per her desires. By engaging in such a digital literacy of worldmaking that is afforded by queer digital space, the player can maintain control over her discursive existence and futurities, and does not risk the absorption of her discursive futurities into powerful social, political, or economic forces.

Conclusion

The concepts of queer player agency and queer technocultural citizenship to understand the design of queer digital and game spaces provides excluded gamers with the ability to produce their own understandings of belonging. As a community sphere, queer gaming spaces allow the construction of queer counterpublics and futurities in gaming discourse and makes worldmaking abilities accessible. Worldmaking abilities in queer game spaces tangibly demonstrate

and provoke differential understandings of larger discursive concepts, such as equality. As a type of digital literacy, worldmaking provides access to the ability to play with and construct discursive tools and structures. This endows queer gamers and other minorities with the power to articulate their discursive existence and maintain control over their discursive futures. Theorizing the design of queer spaces in video games beyond the simple presence of queer content serves to highlight the value of games and game spaces for purposes of personal and political expression.

Mary Michael is a graduate student in the Cinema and Media Studies Program at USC. Her research looks at how interactive media produces new understandings and practices of community and citizenship, primarily through innovative and experimental design of digital/new media interactivity and aesthetics. She aims to study and produce new media literacies and artifacts that allow communities to re-imagine and strategize their collective agency, specifically in relation to marginalized immigrant communities.

Notes

1 See Mia Consalvo, It's a *Queer World After All: Studying The Sims and Sexuality.* (New York, NY: GLAAD Center for the Study of the Media and Society, 2003). MSWord file, available in Academia.edu (https://www.academia.edu/654441/Its_a_queer_world_after_all_Studying_The_Sims_and_sexuality): 7-8. Accessed on September 27, 2017.
2 Adrienne Shaw, "Circles, Charmed and Magic: Queering Game Studies," *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 2.2 (2015), 64-97.
3 See notes 4, 5, and 6 below
4See Nick Montfort, *Twisty Little Passages: An Approach to Interactive Fiction.* Cambridge and London: MIT Press (2005). Kindle e-book, Chap 1.
5See Michael Nitsche, *Video Game Spaces: Image, Play, and Strutcture in 3D worlds*. Cambridge and London: MIT Press (2008).
6 See McKenzie Wark, *Gamer Theory.* Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press (2009). Wark suggests that game space can be understood as a utopic version of physical space because game space offers the same in-game agency to different players, regardless of their identity. I find this formulation to be a problematically deduced one because, not only does this suggestion not take into account the disparity in access to newer technologies such as video games due to identity discrimination, but it also implies that the near-limitless in-game agency based upon and marketed to white, cis, straight, middle-class men acts as a kind of agency that all people (regardless of identity) desire to mimic.
7 For a more thorough literature review of LGBT Game Studies, see Adrienne Shaw, "Circles, Charmed and Magic: Queering Game Studies," *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 2.2 (2015), 64-97.
8 Adrienne Shaw, 87.
9 See Brendan Keogh "Just Making Things and Being Alive About It: The Queer Games Scene" *Polygon,* May 24, 2013, Accessed on September 20, 2017, https://www.polygon.com/features/2013/5/24/4341042/the-queer-games-scene. I refer to this phenomenon as the "Queer Games Scene" rather than the "Queer Games Movement" to remain consistent with my argument that the Queer Games Scene organizes the roles of counterpublics and cultural citizenship within a political activist framework differently from the way that most social or political movements arrange these concepts.
10 Anna Anthropy, *Rise of the Videogame Zinesters: How Freaks, Normals, Amateurs, Artists, Dreamers, Drop-outs, Queers, Housewives, and People Like You Are Taking Back an Art Form.* New York, NY: Seven Stories Press (2012), 7-10.
11 Ian Bogost, *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press (2007).
12 Laine Nooney, "A Pedestal, A Table, A Love Letter: Archaeologies of Gender in Videogame History," *Game Studies: The International Journal of Computer Game Research* 13.2 (2013).
13 *Dys4ia* screengrabs from *Dys4ia* (Anna Anthropy, 2012). *Pong* and *Breakout* images from Wikipedia. *Pong* image available from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pong (accessed September 15, 2017) and Breakout image available from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breakout_(video_game) (accessed September 15, 2017).
14 Janet Horowitz Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace.* New York: Simon

and Schuster (1997), 126.
15 Janet Horowitz Murray, 152.
16 Renato Rosaldo, "Cultural Citizenship and Educational Democracy," *Cultural Anthropology* 9.3 (1994), 402.
17 Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," *Public Culture* 14.1 (2002), 49-90.
18 Tea Hvala, "Streetwise Politics: Feminist and Lesbian Grassroots Activism in Ljubljana," In *Feminist Media: Participatory Spaces, Networks and Cultural Citizenship*, edited by Elke Zobl and Ricarda Drüeke (2012), 123-135. Bielefeld: Transcript.
19 Sarah M. Steele, "Performing Utopia: Queer Counterpublics and Southerners on New Ground," In A *Critical Inquiry Into Queer Utopias,* edited by Angela Jones. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 131-148.
20 Christopher M. Kelty, *Two Bits: The Cultural Significance of Free Software*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008.
21 I borrow the term "worldmaking" from Nelson Goodman, but I'm using the term in a more literal and less symbolic way than what Goodman originally proposed. See Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Hackett Publishing Company, 1978).
22 José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity.* New York and London: NYU Press, 2009.
23 Screengrabs from *Sunset* (Tale of Tales, 2015)
24 Yasmin B. Kafai, Carrie Heeter, Jill Denner, and Jennifer Y. Sun. Preface to *Beyond Barbie and Mortal Kombat: New Perspectives on Gender and Gaming*, edited by Yasmin B. Kafai, Carrie Heeter, Jill Denner, and Jennifer Y. Sun. (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2008), xi-xxv.
25 Ibid.
26 Screen grab from *Hack 'n' Slash.*
27. The word "historical" here is not meant to invoke an association of past real-world events. In addition to referring to a simple record of events performed by the player character, the word "historical" is also meant to convey the analogous action of disrupting normative gaming histories by forcing an indexing of the queered player's actions rather than allowing her actions and presence to be erased from that history.