

## Notes

### Chapter 1

1. Bergström, "Implicit Rules of Board Games."
2. Björk, "Fabricated Innocence."
3. Nasar, *A Beautiful Mind*, 102.
4. Poundstone, *Prisoner's Dilemma*, 260.
5. Stenros, "Guided by Transgression," 13.
6. Kretchmar, "Competition, Redemption and Hope."
7. Nguyen and Zagal, "Good Violence, Bad Violence."
8. Weimer, "Consent and Right Action in Sport."
9. Suits, *The Grasshopper*.
10. Nguyen and Zagal, "Good Violence, Bad Violence," 6.
11. Juul, *The Art of Failure*.
12. Apter, *Reversal Theory*; Zillmann, "Excitation Transfer."
13. An extensive and wide-ranging body of research examines the toxicity of online cultures and its consequences, with which the open and unmoderated treachery in games like *EVE Online* is closely entwined. For recent exemplary introductions to this area of work, see Shaw, *Gaming at the Edge*; Paul, *The Toxic Meritocracy of Videogames*;

Gray, *Intersectional Tech*; Gray, Voorhees, and Vossen, *Feminism in Play*; Taylor and Voorhees, *Masculinities in Play*; and Harper, Adams, and Taylor, *Queerness in Play*. By toxic, I refer to the all too frequent occurrences of homophobia, sexism, racism, and ableism in online gaming spaces.

14. As a starting point for the breadth of research into the social-ity and social appeal of MMOGs, see Chen, *Leet Noobs*; Taylor, *Play between Worlds*; Nardi, *My Life as a Night Elf Priest*; and Corneliussen and Rettberg, *Digital Culture, Play, and Identity*, an edited collection on *World of Warcraft*.

15. Foo and Koivisto, "Defining Grief Play in MMORPGs"; Consalvo, *Cheating*, 118.

16. Stenros identifies seven grief play rhetorics in "Playfulness, Play and Games," 185–188.

17. *Diplomacy* is a strategic board game created in 1954, set in Europe in the initial years of World War I. Unlike most board wargames, *Diplomacy* has long negotiation phases where players form alliances and make promises that they can renege on in the simultaneous movement phase, where players' secret orders are revealed and executed at once, similar to *Survivor*'s simultaneous vote. Writing in 2017 for *Lifehacker*, Haoran Un called *Diplomacy* "the most evil board game ever made."

18. *Werewolf* (a.k.a. *Mafia*) is a social deduction party game in which players are secretly assigned a role, either as a werewolf or as a villager. During the nighttime phase, the werewolves secretly collude to kill a villager, and in the daytime phase, the villagers, who are in the majority, respond by voting to eliminate a suspected werewolf. Gameplay requires werewolves to be deceptive about their role, so that the villagers eliminate other villagers rather than the werewolves. The game ends when either team is the only one left alive. Since players in *Werewolf* are assigned their roles, the game is not an example of treacherous play. Although a werewolf is being deceptive, like the impostor in *Among Us*, the werewolf has not made a choice about whom to betray and whom not to betray.

19. Sicart, *The Ethics of Computer Games*, 218.

20. The prisoner's dilemma is a theory developed by Merrill Flood and Melvin Dresher in the 1950s that seeks to explain why two "rational" individuals might not cooperate, even if doing so is in their best interests. See Poundstone, *Prisoner's Dilemma*.

## Chapter 2

1. This is a simplification, as pricing varies across territories, and it is possible to purchase a subscription using in-game funds. Free-to-play accounts were introduced in 2016, but they are limited to certain skills and ships. If you are an *EVE* player, I hope you will forgive the simplifications throughout this chapter. *EVE* is extraordinarily complicated.

2. Paul, "EVE Online Is Hard."

3. See Bergstrom, "Imagined Capsuleers" and "Everything I Know."

4. Goodfellow, "The Russians Are Coming!"

5. As there is a short delay before CONCORD ships arrive to destroy the unprovoked aggressor, it is possible to destroy a mining ship even in high-security space. While the aggressor will definitely be destroyed too, this can be a profitable play style, as a third player can loot the destroyed ships for profit. See Bergstrom, "Imagined Capsuleers," for more on this style of play.

6. "o7" is a common colloquialism in *EVE*, intended to mimic a person saluting.

7. This page goes on to note that "scams that affect areas outside of the game may not be tolerated in the same manner," going on to cite examples such as impersonating CCP or using technical exploits or hacks. See CCP Games, "Scams."

8. ISK stands for InterStellar Credits, the in-game currency.

9. Warmelink, *Online Gaming and Playful Organization*.

10. Testament to the "realness" of these friendships, one Icelandic *EVE Online* player moved from Reykjavik to Cardigan, Wales, to live with and help run a bookshop that his friend—with whom he had

played *EVE* for nine years—had won in a raffle. See Smith, “How We Live Together.”

11. Sicart argues that, in playing, we create a “player-self,” a sub-identity that helps resolve the contradictions between our values in everyday life and our values when playing a game. Sicart, *The Ethics of Computer Games*.

12. Ceino, “One of the Biggest Scams.”

13. See CCP Falcon, “An Announcement regarding Real Life Harassment.”

14. Hilmar Veigar Pétursson, CEO of CCP Games, interview with author, April 16, 2019.

15. Pseudonyms used here for both players.

16. This use falls within the boundaries established by the developer, since it was contingent on misplaced trust rather than the use of a technical exploit or hacking their account.

17. This finding is echoed by Yasmin B. Kafai and Deborah Fields’s research into the (very different) virtual-world game *Whyville*, an educational internet site geared toward children aged eight to fourteen and predominantly popular with young girls. One of the participants in their study, Zoe, engaged in scamming motivated by a desire to make more virtual currency, part of what Kafai and Fields describe as part of a process of being “recognized as an inside player.” Kafai and Fields, *Connected Play*, 78–81. Among the many differences between *EVE Online* and *Whyville*, it is worth noting that scamming is against the rules in *Whyville* but still surprisingly pervasive; see Kafai, Fields, and Ellis, “Ethics of Play and Participation.”

18. Klastруп, “What Makes *World of Warcraft*,” 143.

19. Nguyen and Zagal, “Good Violence, Bad Violence,” 12.

20. This is not to say that this precludes it from still being play. As Jaakko Stenros notes, one-sided play (like the social domination of an *EVE* scammer) is still play. Stenros, “Guided by Transgression.”

21. This is a challenge in sandbox games like *EVE Online*, as perhaps more than in most other multiplayer games, it becomes difficult to

agree on what the “correct” set of unnecessary obstacles is in competitive play. I have previously referred to this challenge as the demarcation problem in multiplayer games (Carter, Gibbs, and Arnold, “Demarcation Problem in Multiplayer Games”), borrowing a theory from the sociology of science to understand how players construct play as being “acceptable” or “unacceptable” play. In another piece, I unpack the crucial role of scamming paratexts in this process; see Carter, “Massively Multiplayer Dark Play.” Ashley Craft also uses this as a starting point to argue that since you can’t *know* someone has consented to betrayal, theft in *EVE Online* is immoral. Craft, “Sin in Cyber-Eden.”

22. Carter et al., “EVE Is Real.”

23. Paul, “EVE Online Is Hard,” 17.

24. Boudreau, “Beyond Fun.”

25. Oskar Milik discusses the role of time and labor in this war in further detail in “The Digital Grind.”

26. Sky, “‘Gifted’ Fountain Stations.” In citing this article, it’s worth noting that TheMittani.com was a GSF-run *EVE Online* news website, named after the leader of the GSF. Its reporting was part of the war itself; the site was a propaganda wing of the GSF.

27. I have written on propaganda in the Fountain War in Carter, “Emitexts and Paratexts.”

28. Harrison, “The Accidental Spymaster.”

29. Juul, *The Art of Failure*.

30. Abramson, Seligman, and Teasdale, “Learned Helplessness in Humans.”

31. Jørgensen, “When Is It Enough?”

32. Hilmar Veigar Pétursson interview, April 16, 2019.

33. We have written about this phrase elsewhere, and it also fits into the broader discourse in gaming culture that seeks to establish a hierarchy between games that are “real games” and those (typically more casual) ones that are not. Carter et al., “EVE Is Real.”

### Chapter 3

1. See Carter and Allison, “Fear, Loss and Meaningful Play.”
2. Lahti, “*DayZ* Interview.”
3. Following the popularity of the mod, a stand-alone version of *DayZ* was released in “early access” in December 2013, but this version was critiqued as being incomplete and featuring many bugs and gameplay issues. A “full” version was not released until December 2018, just shy of five years later, with the game ultimately eclipsed by newer titles in the genre. At time of publication, *DayZ* has sold over four million copies, but—according to the website SteamCharts—averages fewer than five thousand concurrent players.
4. Jaakko Stenros identifies seven grief play rhetorics in “Playfulness, Play and Games,” 185–188.
5. With this, I refer to the way that griefing and trolling online often work—via their use of racist, sexist, and homophobic language—to exclude certain demographics from online games, perpetuating toxic culture. See Boudreau, “Beyond Fun.”
6. Stenros, “Playfulness, Play and Games,” 188–190.
7. Yee, “Motivations for Play in Online Games.”
8. Nick Yee continues to host the useful Daedalus Project website, which covers this work comprehensively. <http://www.nickyee.com/daedalus>.
9. Out of 1,704 respondents, only 22 identified as female (1.2 percent), and 2 identified as transgender. This gender ratio is the most uneven of which we are aware for an online survey of game players, which more typically see female participation in the 20–40 percent range. We speculate that the widespread use of proximity voice communication in *DayZ* may expose female players to a greater-than-usual risk of gendered harassment, leading to lower female participation in the virtual world—particularly in the context of the game’s established culture of simulated violent coercion as a form of play. We base this theory in part on comments from two of the female

respondents who described incidents in which they had received gendered abuse from male players. In addition, a small number of male respondents expressed or described aggressively sexist and homophobic behavior between players.

10. We did not find the mechanics, customization, escapism, and relationships player motivations. Their absence makes sense, as these ways of playing are not afforded by *DayZ* in the same way they are in a MMORPG.

11. Stenros, "Playfulness, Play and Games," 192–195.

12. The theory of flow was originally developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. It is often applied to understanding the appeal of digital games, via Jenova Chen, "Flow in Games."

13. Apter, *Reversal Theory*. For a useful discussion of Apter, see Stenros, "Playfulness, Play and Games," 67–68.

14. Hume, "Of Tragedy," 185.

15. Hume, "Of Tragedy," 132.

16. Zillmann, "Excitation Transfer."

17. Brendan Keogh, "When Game Over Means Game Over," 2.

18. Legarie, "Top 10 Scariest Games."

19. Notably, studies indicate that inexperienced players, who presumably have a less developed sense of the unreality and abstraction of in-game actions, experience more genuine distress after perpetrating violence in games. See Hartmann and Vorderer, "It's Okay to Shoot a Character"; and Gollwitzer and Melzer, "Macbeth and the Joystick."

20. Jørgensen and Karlsen, *Transgression in Games and Play*.

21. Klimmt et al., "How Players Manage Moral Concerns." See also subsequent work by Tilo Hartmann in "Moral Disengagement in Violent Videogames"; Hartmann, Toz, and Brandon, "Just a Game?";

Hartmann and Vorderer, "It's Okay to Shoot a Character"; Gollwitzer and Melzer, "Macbeth and the Joystick."

22. Bandura, "Selective Moral Disengagement."

23. Carter and Allison, "Guilt in DayZ."

24. Plunkett, "Secret behind the Success."

25. Julia Bopp has similarly studied the way that emotionally challenging experiences can be attractive to players, bolstering our knowledge of how negative emotions such as anger, sadness, and fear can be part of the appeal of games. See Bopp, "Aesthetic Emotions in Digital Games"; and Bopp, Mekler, and Opwis, "Negative Emotion, Positive Experience?" and "An Odd Kind of Pleasure."

26. Suits, *The Grasshopper*.

27. Salen and Zimmerman, *Rules of Play*.

28. Hilmar Veigar Pétursson interview, April 16, 2019.

29. For short periods during the mod version of the game, and later in the stand-alone (but after I collected my data), *DayZ* introduced a "humanity" points system that did introduce a connection between each life. The feature was controversial, with many critics saying it dampened the role-play potential of the game.

## Chapter 4

1. Crew, "Viewer Interpretations of Reality Television."

2. However, this is not always the case. One respondent to the *DayZ* survey described how he spent hours hunting down a group of players who had betrayed him, pretending to be a friendly survivor to get close enough to kill them with a grenade. Several stories have circulated online about *EVE Online* players using scamming or espionage against a player who had previously betrayed them, in some cases playing pivotal roles in the game's wars.

3. I have analyzed how play is valued in *Survivor* Final Tribal Councils in greater depth in "Valuing Play in *Survivor*."



4. Although not specifically on *Survivor*, but on other “in-the-wild” *Survivor*-style television shows like *Survivorman*, see Champion, “Survivor Shows and Caveman Masculinity.”
5. See Gabrielle Wall, “Outwit, Outplay, Outcast?”
6. Lindstrom, “*Survivor Vanuatu*: Myths of Matriarchy Revisited.”
7. Drew, “Pretending to Be ‘Postracial.’”
8. Giannetti and Sagarese, “Why You Shouldn’t.”
9. The practices of *Survivor* fans online are one of the key case studies in Henry Jenkins’s classic *Convergence Culture*.
10. Podlas, “Primetime Crimes.”
11. Podlas, “Primetime Crimes,” 172.
12. Is this all that different from studying a game as complex as *EVE Online*, though? Very little of what goes on in *EVE* is transparent to the scholar studying it; an account must be constructed through interviews with players, in-depth play of the game, and the close interrogation of what is made visible. Competing accounts can emerge through this process. From the standpoint of a social constructionist epistemology—a theory of knowledge and what can be known—researchers can never access the original experience.
13. Jeff Probst, *Survivor: Heroes vs. Villains* (2009) reunion.
14. This critique of the show is now discussed openly during tribal councils, also applied to *EVE Online* by Kelly Bergstrom in “Imagined Capsuleers.”
15. I use the framing of positive and negative valuation here, rather than boundaries of play, because I believe it better captures the way that play is constantly being negotiated and renegotiated in a hierarchy, rather than within clearly established or definable boundaries. See Carter, “Valuing Play in *Survivor*.”
16. Brooks, “Is Betrayal in *EVE Online* Unethical?”
17. Sicart, *The Ethics of Computer Games*.

18. Yet, in another interview, he argued, “If my own kids played this, I’d say, ‘Hey, I need you to lie, cheat, and steal your way to the end of that game. Do whatever it takes, claw your way to the end, it doesn’t matter. But don’t quit.’”

## Chapter 5

1. Björk and Holopainen, *Patterns in Game Design*.
2. Wadley, Carter, and Gibbs, “Voice in Virtual Worlds.”
3. A recent example of such harassment occurred in *Fallout 76*, an online open-world version of the popular *Fallout* games published by Bethesda. Almost immediately after launch, players reported being hunted down by homophobic players, and the developers had provided no way of reporting the players in game. See Good, “*Fallout 76* Players Permabanned.”
4. Certain ships cannot even be traded on the game market (they are “too big”), leading to the emergence of players like Chribba—the only trusted *EVE Online* player—who provide an escrow service for these transactions. Chribba wrote about his experiences in “The Art of Selling Trust.”
5. A rare exception to this among AAA titles is *The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind* (2002), where you can kill main quest characters and thus be unable to complete the game.
6. Some seasons (such as S22 *Redemption Island* or S38 *Edge of Extinction*) offer paths back into the game, but typically this is not an option.
7. Skill points in *EVE* are earned in real time, rather than in exchange for in-game actions, as is the case in other MMOGs. Older accounts have an unassailable advantage over new ones. If you die without having “backed up” your skill points (refreshing your clone), you can lose thousands of skill points equal to days or weeks of real time that cannot be recovered.
8. See Jørgensen, *Gameworld Interfaces*; Wolf, *Building Imaginary Worlds*; Björk and Holopainen, *Patterns in Game Design*, 56–57; Klstrup, “The Worldness of *EverQuest*.”

9. Krzywinska, "World Creation and Lore."
10. Carter, Gibbs, and Arnold, "Demarcation Problem in Multiplayer Games."
11. See CCP Games, "Scams."
12. To give an example, on *Survivor: Pearl Islands*, the player Jonny Fairplay instructed his friend to lie during the family visit challenge and say that his grandmother had died. This ensured Johnny was chosen to join the winner of the challenge on the reward, giving him much-needed food and a chance to strategize with the other players about the reward.

## Chapter 6

1. For instance, in the context of long-term *EVE Online* scams involving manipulated friendships, Ian Brooks argues that "a good person would not betray people for fun." Brooks, "Is Betrayal in EVE Online Unethical?," 5.
2. Nguyen and Zagal, "Good Violence, Bad Violence."
3. Paul, "EVE Online Is Hard."
4. Hilmar Veigar Pétursson interview, April 16, 2019.
5. A particularly egregious example is the "bonus room" controversy, first reported in *EVE News24* (see Teg, "Jester's Trek"), which was widely condemned by *EVE's* player community. In this case, an *EVE Online* scammer would subject victims to escalating emotional abuse in a private voice chat server. In response, CCP Games permanently banned the player, citing existing policy against real-life harassment.
6. Two recent articles that provide thorough overviews and an excellent introduction to this space are Chess and Shaw, "A Conspiracy of Fishes"; and Mortensen, "Anger, Fear, and Games." For a broader look at the conflicts that have emerged in the context of the diversification of video game culture, see Golding and Van Deventer, *Game Changers*.

7. In chapter 2, I noted that as few as 3 percent of *EVE Online* players are women, and of the 1,704 respondents to our *DayZ* player motivations survey, only 1.2 percent did not identify as male. That being said, scamming is not limited to these games and this type of player community. Research by Yasmin B. Kafai and Deborah Fields into *Whyville*, a virtual world game mostly popular with girls between the ages of eight and sixteen, found scamming to be pervasive. See Kafai and Fields, *Connected Play*; and Kafai, Fields, and Ellis, "Ethics of Play and Participation."

8. Sicart, *The Ethics of Computer Games*.

9. Hilmar Veigar Pétursson interview, April 16 2019.

10. Jeff Probst, if you're reading this, give me a call.

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# Treacherous Play

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