

Index

- Aarseth, Espen, 4, 79, 85
“Aber wir lassen es andere machen”
 (“But we have others do it instead”;
 Fontane), 23
Abzû, 43–44
Action at a Distance (Sprenger, Vagt, and
 Peters), xii
Activity theory, 3
Actor–network theory, 70, 74
AdVenture Capitalist, 19
Aesthetics of calm, 42
Affective ambience, 33, 36–37, 41–46,
 49
Affective systems, 42
Agential cut, 72–73, 76, 78, 82
Agential realism, xvii, 68–73, 75, 76,
 80, 82
Aimless wandering, 32, 37
AIR (Yoshimura), 33
Alexa (Amazon), 35, 42
“Algorithmic Art Manifesto, The”
 (Nake), 91
Algorithmic spectacle, 84, 96–99
Allegories of Control trilogy, 7
AlphaGo, xx, 53, 56, 57–58
AlphaGo Zero, 57–58
Ambience, xx, 28, 33–36, 37–46, 49,
 103–104
Ambient 1: Music for Airports (Eno), 33
Ambient literature, 42
Ambient Literature project, 35
Ambient media, 33–36, 42
Ambient play, 31–49
Ambient Play (Hjorth and Richardson),
 32
Ambient Television (McCarthy), 34–35
Ambiguity of play, 80
Anable, Aubrey, 42, 84, 86, 93–94
Anthropocentrism, challenges to, 70,
 73, 74
Anti-games, 13
Apperception, 48
Arcangel, Cory, 93–94
Architecture, 47–48
Arsenault, Dominic, 4
Art
 Benjamin on, xiv, 47–48
 computer-generated, 53
Artificial intelligence (AI), xx, 4, 51, 53,
 54–55, 57–58
Attention
 economy of, 22, 27, 47
 “selective,” 46
Auto battlers, 60, 61–62
AutoClippers, 60–61
Automata, xx, 53, 56–57, 58–59
Automated play, 51–65
Automatic players, 53
Automation, xx, 4, 53–54, 64–65
Automaton Chess Player, 56–57, 58–59

- Background aesthetic, 35–36
 Bandai Namco, 19, 21
 Barad, Karen, xi, xvii, xx, 68–70, 71–75, 80, 82
 Barrel organs, 27–28, 63
 Bateson, Gregory, 79, 81
 Benjamin, Walter, xiv, 47–48, 62
 Bio-object, 73
 Bit-narrative, 74
 Blizzard Entertainment, 60
 Blueprint Visual Scripting system, 5
 Bogost, Ian, xv–xvi, 16, 19, 91–92
 Bohr, Niels, 69–71, 76, 78
 Bonenfant, Maude, xiv
 Bots, 29, 59–60
 Bozdog, Mona, 11
Breath of the Wild. See *Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild, The*
 Butler, Judith, 70
- Calmness, 42–43
 Canned laughter, 24
 Cartesian dualism, 69, 70, 74, 80, 82
 Casual gaming, 62
 Central processing unit (CPU), 8
 CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research), 19
 Chang, Alenda Y., xvii, 74
 Checkers-Playing Program, 58
 Cheng, Ian, 51–52, 64, 92–93
 Chess-playing automata, xx, 53, 56–57, 58–59
 Chicago School of Media Theory, 2
 Choice, predetermined, 7–8
 Choice structure, conflated, 5
 Chun, Wendy Hui Kyong, 7, 32
 Circularity, 28
 Clicker games, 16
Clicker Heroes, 19, 25
 Close playing, xiii
 Close reading, xiii, 47
 Code injection, 73
 Cognitive evolution, 51
 Cognitive interactivity, 9
 Cologne Game Lab, 45
 Complementarity, principle of, 71
 Compulsive gameplay, 22, 47
Computer Game Worlds (Pias), xv
 Concentration, distraction and, 47–48
 “Concert Room Anecdotes” (Ord-Hume), 63
 Consalvo, Mia, xviii, 62
 Content optimization, pattern-driven, 34
Control and Freedom (Chun), 7
 Conway, John Horton, 3, 21
Cookie Clicker, 19, 25–26
Cow Clicker, 19
 “Cozy” games, 44
 Critical code studies, 95–97, 103
Critical Code Studies (Marino), 90
 “Critique of ‘Algorithmic’ Reason, A” (Mersch), 7
 Cultural techniques (*Kulturtechniken*), 93
- Dark Room, A*, 16, 19
Dear Esther, 3, 43, 44
 Deep Blue, 53, 56, 58
 DeepMind, 53
 DeepMind Challenge, 56
 Delegated play, 25–27
 Delegated pleasure, xx, 17, 23–25
 Democratization, 6
 De Paoli, Stefano, 63
 Deskillling, 62–64
 Diffraction patterns, 71
 Digital Games Research Association (DiGRA), xiii, 5
 Dis-play, xvii, 83–84
 Dispositif, 70
 Distance
 concept of, 89
 framework of, 102
 games and, x
 media landscape and, ix–x
 mediated, xii–xiv

- play and, xiv
- video games and, xi–xii
- Distant reading, xiii
- Distraction and concentration, 47–48
- Distributed attention (*Zerstreuung*), 48
- Distributed digital networks, 7
- Dota 2*, 62
- Dota Auto Chess, 62
- Dota Underlords*, 62
- Double-slit experiment, 70–71
- Dreeps*, 37–38, 40
- Dromocracy, 41
- Drudgery, elimination of, 22

- Eco, Umberto, 9, 27
- Ecology of mind, 70
- Einstein, Albert, ix
- Ellipsis, 8–10
- Embodied play, 13
- Emergence, principle of, 51–52
- Emissaries* (Cheng), 51–52, 58, 92–93, 94, 99
- Emissary Forks at Perfection*, 51
- Emissary in the Squat of Gods*, 51
- Emissary Sunsets the Self*, 51
- Endel, 34
- Eno, Brian, 33
- Envelopment, xx, 34, 35, 41–42, 49
- Epic Games, 5
- Ergodicity, 4
- Ernst, Wolfgang, 46
- Everything*, 38–39, 40
- Eye/Machine III* (Farocki), 90

- Fallout 4*, 55
- Fan Hui, 53
- FarmVille*, 19, 47
- Farocki, Harun, 84, 90, 92, 94
- Fazi, M. Beatrice, 102, 104
- Figurative cyborg, 74
- Film
 - Benjamin on, 48
 - interactivity and, 9–10
- Firewatch*, 13, 67, 73
- Flaneurs, 44
- Flappy Bird*, 73
- Flow*, 43
- Flower*, 43
- Flusser, Vilém, 84, 88–90, 94, 95, 97
- Fontane, Theodor, 23
- Forster, E. M., 31
- Freedom, illusion of, 5–8
- From Counterculture to Cyberculture* (Turner), 7
- Fuller, Matthew, 102
- “Furniture Music,” 33

- Galloway, Alexander R., xv, 7, 28
- Gamasutra*, 18
- Game Developers Conference, 18
- Game loops, 28
- Gameness
 - approaches to, xviii–xix
 - automation and, 64–65
 - gameplay and, 85
 - heart of, 3, 29, 69
 - skill and, 62
- Game of Life, The* (Conway), 3, 21
- #GamerGate, 12
- Gamer Theory* (Wark), 64
- Gamification, 36
- Gaming analytics, 75–76, 78–79
- Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture* (Galloway), xv
- Garite, Matt, 5
- Gender, 11–14
- Generation ZX(X)* (Bozdog), 11
- Giddings, Seth, 3, 74
- Giedion, Sigfried, xix
- Glaiel, Tyler, xviii
- Glancing, 48
- Glitches, 73
- Godville*, 19, 25
- Google
 - AlphaGo Zero and, 57–58
 - DeepMind Challenge and, 56

- Gratification, recurring, 22
Graveyard, The, 39
 “Great Spanking, The” (Lem), 57
Green (Yoshimura), 33
 Grinding, 17, 19, 22, 59–60
- Habituation, 32
 Hallnäs, Lars, 41
Hamlet on the Holodeck (Murray), 2
 Haraway, Donna, 69–70, 74
 Heat maps, 75–76
Heavy Rain, 29
 Hediger, Vinzenz, 12
 Henriot, Jacques, xiv
Her, 42
 Hjorth, Larissa, 32, 36
 Hoel, Aud Sissel, 90–91
 “Humans Are Machines of the Angels” (Jean Paul), 59
 Hybrid cultural agency, 74
 Hyper attention, 47
 Hyperlink, 10, 47
 Hypertext fiction, 3
- Identity politics, 12
 Idle (incremental) games, xx, 16–23, 54, 60
 “Idle Games: The Mechanics and Monetization of Self-Playing Games” (Pecorella), 18
 Immersive/emersive rhythm, 46
 Interactivity, xix, 1–14, 69
 Internet Relay Chat (IRC), 27
 Interpassivity, xx, 15–29
Into the Universe of Technical Images (Flusser), 88
 Intra-active play, 67–82
- Jaaniste, Luke, 34
 Janik, Justyna, xvii, 73
 Jayemanne, Darshana, xvii, 81
 Jean Paul, 59
Jeu, Le (Henriot), xiv
- Journey*, 43
 Juul, Jesper, 62, 69
- Kagen, Melissa, 13, 32
 Kantor, Tadeusz, 73
 Kasparov, Garry, 53, 56
Katamari Damacy, 21
 Kempelen, Wolfgang von, 56–57
 “Kill screen” glitch, 85
 Kim-Cohen, Seth, 104
 Kittler, Friedrich, 8, 87, 96–97
 Kongregate, 19
Künste des Kinos, Die (Seel), 28
- Lacan, Jacques, 25
 Lantz, Frank, xviii
 Latour, Bruno, 74
League of Legends, 97
 Lee Sedol, 56, 57
Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild, The, 33, 43, 44
 Lem, Stanisław, 57
 Literature, 8–9, 35, 42
 Live-streaming services, xviii. *See also* Twitch
 Löffler, Petra, 48
 Ludic mediation, xv
 Ludification of culture, 36
- “Machine Stops, The” (Forster), 31
 Macros, 29
 “Making Sense of Games,” 79
 Manovich, Lev, 4, 6, 9, 87, 91
 Marino, Marc C., 90, 103
 Masculinist hacker mythos, 12. *See also* Gender
 Massification of gaming, 63
 Massive multi-player online role-playing games (MMORPGs), 17, 22, 29, 59, 63
 Mastery, fantasy of, 11–13
 Material turn, 70
 Mäyrä, Frans, 74, 85

- McCarthy, Anna, 34–35
 Mckeown, Conor, 73, 95
 McLuhan, Marshall, 34
 Mechanical Turk, 56–57, 58–59
 Media aesthetics of play, xiv–xvii
Media Technologies and Posthuman Intimacy (Stasiński), 74
 Mediated distance
 across disciplines, xii–xiv
 concept of, ix
 Meditation games, 44–45
 Memex, 8
 Mersch, Dieter, 7
 Mind–body gap, 8–10
Minecraft, 59–60
 Mobile social gaming, 47
 Mods, xx, 59–60, 62, 63
 Modularity, 4
 Moretti, Franco, xiii
 Morse, Margaret, 2
Mountain, 38, 39–40, 74
 Movie games, 29
 Multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA), 62
 Münsterberg, Hugo, 9–10
 Murakami, Haruki, 43
 Murray, Janet H., 2
 Muzak Corporation, 33
- Nake, Frieder, 85, 91
 Narrative fiction, 9
 New materialism, 70
 Niantic, 60
No Man's Sky, 8
 Nonanthropocentrism, 73
 Nonperformance, passive, 13
 “Notgames,” xii, xix, 5, 13, 39, 43
Novelist, The, 74
Number (Glaiel), xviii
 Numerical representation, 4
- Observation, 70–71, 78, 93–94, 96–97
 Okun, Andy, 58
- “On Totalitarian Interactivity” (Manovich), 6–7
 Operational ambience, 33, 35, 36, 37–41, 49
 Operational images, 84, 90–92
 Operativity, 84, 88, 90–92, 94–95, 97, 99
 Ord-Hume, Arthur W. J. G., 63
 O’Reilly, David, 38–39
- Pac-Man*, 85
 Paglen, Trevor, 90
 Parikka, Jussi, xv
Particle Clicker, 19
 Particles, 70–71
 Passive nonperformance, 13
 Pattern-driven content optimization, 34
 Paul, Christopher A., xviii, 62
 Pecorella, Anthony, 18
 Pedercini, Paolo, 74
 Performative feminist philosophy, 71–73
Performativity in Art, Literature, and Videogames (Jayemanne), 81
 Perron, Bernard, 4
 Peters, John Durham, xii
 Pfaller, Robert, xx, 17, 23–24, 25, 29
Phone Story, 74
 Photo mode, 93
Photoplay, The (Münsterberg), 9
 Pianolas. *See* Player pianos
 Pias, Claus, xv, xvi
 Play
 agential realism and, 81–82
 slow, 37, 41–46
 study of, 78–79
Player Piano (Ord-Hume), 63
 Player pianos, x, xx, 63
Play Matters (Sicart), xvi
 Play of association, 9
Pokémon Go, 60
 Politics, 11–12
 Posthumanism, 70, 73–75, 103

- Postmodern simulation, 58
 Post-perceptual image, 95
Prince of Persia: Sands of Time, 11
 Procedural rhetoric, xv–xvi
 Progressive Automation mod, 59–60
Progress Quest, 18–19
Progress Wars, 19
Proteus, 39
- Quantum entanglement, theory of, ix
 Quantum mechanics, Copenhagen
 interpretation of, 70
 Queer play, 13
- Reaction time, measurement of, 78
Real Games (Consalvo and Paul), xviii
 “Realness” of games, 62
 Redström, Johan, 41
 Reinforcement learning, 58
 Repetition, 59–60
 Representational/computational fold,
 84, 87–88
 Representationalism, 72
 Representation and computation, ten-
 sion between, 85–87
 Richardson, Ingrid, 32, 36
 “Rise of an Ambient Video Game” (Gor-
 don), 44
 “Rise of Games You (Mostly) Don’t Play,
 The,” 18
Roguathia, 21
 Roquet, Paul, 42, 43
 Routines, 59
 Ruberg, Bo, 13
 Ruffino, Paolo, 36, 74
 Rusch, Raven, 45
- Samuel, Arthur Lee, 58
 Sandbox games, 8
 Satie, Erik, 33
 Seel, Martin, 28
 “Selective” attention, 46
 Self-acting AI agents, 53–54
 Self-care games, 44
 Self-optimization applications, 36
 Self-playing pianos, x, xx, 63
 Self-playing systems, xx
 Self-playing video games, xviii, 16–23
 Sensory soothing software, 44
 SethBligh, 73
 Shulgin, Alexei, 6
 Sicart, Miguel, xvi, 103
Sims, The, 55
 Sim Settlements, 55
 Simulation games, 8
 Slow play, 37, 41–46
Slow Technology (Hallnäs and Redström),
 41
 Social media platforms, xvii–xviii
Sous couleur de jouer (Henriot), xiv
Spannend/Spannung, xi–xii
 Spectatorship, xviii, xx–xxi, 83–99
 Speed-running, 13
 Spotify, 33–34
 Sprenger, Florian, xii
 Stasieńko, Jan, 74
 Steam, 19
 Storywalking, 11
 Street organs, 63
 Suggestive witnessing, 9
Super Mario Bros., 40
Super Mario World, 73
Surround (Yoshimura), 33
 Suspension of disbelief, xi
 Sutton-Smith, Brian, xiii–xiv, 78, 102
 System observation, 93–94
- Tamagotchi, 38
Tap My Katamari, 21
 Technical images, 84, 88–90
 Technical reproducibility, xiv
 Technological agency, 74
 Telemetry, 75–76
 Tension, 85
 “There Is No Software” (Kittler), 87
 Thiennot, Julien, 19

- Timex Corporation, 11
Tiny Bookshop, 43, 45–46
Traditional images, 88
Transcoding, 4
Turkle, Sherry, 58
Turner, Fred, 7
Twitch, xviii, xxi, 29, 51, 83, 92
Twofold image, 85
- Unit operations, 91–92
Unit Operations (Bogost), xv–xvi
Unity, 51
Universal Paperclips, xviii, 60–61
Unreal Engine 4, 5
Upton, Brian, xvi
Uricchio, William, 91
User telemetry, 75–76
- Vagt, Christina, xii
Variability, 4
Various Self-Playing Bowling Games
(Arcangel), 93–94
Virilio, Paul, 10, 41
von Neumann, John, 21, 57
- Walking simulators, 3, 13, 43, 44
Wandering, aimless, 32, 37
Wandering Games (Kagen), 32
Wark, McKenzie, 64
Waves, 70–71
Wildemann, David, 45
Winner, Langdon, 7, 11
Witcher, The (game series), 11
Women, computer manufacturing and,
11. *See also* Gender
Work and play, interference of, 36
“Work of Art in Times of Technical
Reproducibility, The” (Benjamin),
xiv
World of Warcraft, 60
- Yoshimura, Hiroshi, 33
Young, Thomas, 70–71
Zen Koi, 44–45
Zero-player games, 21, 29
Žižek, Slavoj, 17, 22, 23–24, 25
ZX Spectrum computer, 11

This is a section of [doi:10.7551/mitpress/13605.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/13605.001.0001)

Playing at a Distance

Borderlands of Video Game Aesthetic

By: Sonia Fizek

Citation:

Playing at a Distance: Borderlands of Video Game Aesthetic

By: Sonia Fizek

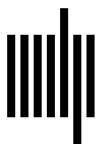
DOI: [10.7551/mitpress/13605.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/13605.001.0001)

ISBN (electronic): 9780262372190

Publisher: The MIT Press

Published: 2022

The open access edition of this book was made possible by generous funding and support from MIT Press Direct to Open



The MIT Press

© 2022 Massachusetts Institute of Technology

This work is subject to a Creative Commons CC-BY-NC-ND license.

Subject to such license, all rights are reserved.



The MIT Press would like to thank the anonymous peer reviewers who provided comments on drafts of this book. The generous work of academic experts is essential for establishing the authority and quality of our publications. We acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of these otherwise uncredited readers.

This book was set in Stone Serif and Stone Sans by Jen Jackowitz. Printed and bound in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Fizek, Sonia, author.

Title: Playing at a distance : borderlands of video game aesthetic / Sonia Fizek.

Description: Cambridge, Massachusetts : The MIT Press, [2022] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022000758 (print) | LCCN 2022000759 (ebook) | ISBN 9780262544627 (paperback) | ISBN 9780262372183 (ebook) | ISBN 9780262372190 (pdf)

Subjects: LCSH: Video games—Design. | Aesthetics.

Classification: LCC GV1469.3 .F56 2022 (print) | LCC GV1469.3 (ebook) | DDC 794.8/3—dc23/eng/20220603

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022000758>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022000759>

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1