

# Beyond Identification: Defining the Relationships between Player and Avatar

Luca Papale

## Abstract

When discussing what happens when a player acts into the game world by using an avatar, many people may refer to the feeling he or she experiences as “identification”. But while identification may indeed occur during play, it’s far from being the one and only type of psychological response that the player can have. Different kind of games, characters, and points of view induce different reactions in the player. This article discusses the matter, introducing the concepts of empathy, sympathy, projection, and detachment and suggesting taking them into account when examining the relationship that forms between a player and an avatar. Finally, a case study of *Heavy Rain* (Quantic Dream, 2010) is presented to summarize the content of the article and demonstrate how often and how easily a player can shift from one feeling to another while interacting with characters.

## What Does the Player Feel?

This article was born from a wish: the wish of deconstructing the notion of identification, an umbrella term indiscriminately used among press and gamer alike to describe the psy-

---

## Author Biography

Luca Papale (Caserta, 1988) is professor in “Theory and Techniques of Game Design” and “Theory of Transmedia” at the IUDAV (Salerno). He has worked for Electronic Arts, Alchemic Dream and TiconBlu, his remits ranging from localization tester, QA tester, press agent, community manager, and game master. He is author of *Estetica dei videogiochi. Percorsi, evoluzioni, ibridazioni* (UniversItalia, 2013), a monograph on video game aesthetics published in the book collection *Conscious Gaming* edited by ViGaMus, the video game museum of Rome. He also wrote the essay *Sognando Shadow Moses: grafica, gameplay e reiterazione come strumenti narrativi metareferenziali* (G|M|E n. 2, 2013) and the short novel “Vita da avatar”, published in the anthology *Le realtà in gioco. Storie straordinarie per vite ordinarie* (VV. AA., Multiplayer.it Edizioni, 2013).

chological process that triggers in the mind of the player when acting in the game world through an actorialized digital prosthesis. Digital prosthesis is a concept coined by Bruno Fraschini (2004) to describe the channel through which the player operates in the game world. The digital prosthesis can be unactorialized, transparent, as in games like *Bejeweled* (PopCap Games, 2001) and *Fruit Ninja* (Halfbrick Studios, 2010) and in digital versions of games like chess and solitaire; or it can be actorialized, as in the majority of narrative video games. This means that the channel between the player and the video game is a character or avatar, which can be more or less defined, more or less anthropomorphous, and more or less customizable depending on the type of game, narration, setting, and technology used.

The presence of actorialized digital prostheses in video games has pushed theorists, critics, scholars, and psychologists to face a question: Given that the player is using an “other than self” as means to act in the game’s world, how does the player’s own personality relate to the character’s personality? The answer that was given, and that is still given nowadays, is: “the player *identifies* with the character.” Now, even if (as I’ll point out) identification is indeed a possible answer for the aforementioned question, my issue with it is that using this term to describe *every* type of mental relationship between player and avatar is a very common tendency. This misconception, as much simplistic as uncritical, can be really damaging to the comprehension of the video game as a medium. The reason is that the term identification is used vaguely, and incorrectly, to describe diverse and heterogeneous psychological processes.

## Identification

As Adrienne Shaw (2010) noticed, the first reason why “identification” is used vaguely is that this term doesn’t seem to have a clear, proper and unilateral definition, as it assumes diverse facets depending on the lens used to describe its meaning. The first step, then, should be to “identify identification”.

In everyday language the concept of identification involves the process of describing, naming and classifying. That is, to identify. Within cultural studies this concept, while retaining aspects of this meaning, has also been deployed in a more specifically psychoanalytical sense in relation to the construction of identity. More particularly, identification is at the core of the processes of fantasy and attachment that are said to partially suture or stitch together discourses and psychic forces to constitute identity. That is, the process of identification involves a form of emotional investment in the discursive descriptions of our self and others that are available to us. (Barker 2004, pp. 92-93)

The quoted definition gives one good description the identification of the “self”, but what about the instances where identification is referred towards other agencies? Citing as examples the works of Cohen (2001), Oatley (1994), Zillmann (1991), and Green, Brock and Kaufman (2004), Shaw (2010) explained that, when related to fiction, identification was

often described as “taking the perspective of a character” or as “the process by which a viewer/player/reader takes on the role and mindset of a fictional character” (p. 130). This is perfectly summarized in Laplanche and Pontalis’s (2006) definition of identification, that is “a psychological process whereby the subject assimilates an aspect, property, or attribute of the other and is transformed, wholly or partially, by the model the other provides” (p. 205). In rhetoric, identification was defined by Burke (1950) as a tool to achieve persuasion with which a speaker tricks the audience into thinking that he or she shares the audience’s properties and values.

Given what has been said so far, it’s clear that it might be dangerous to use the term identification inadvertently, since the notion of identification grants agency to the video game and its characters, that is the ability to operate on, to influence, to manipulate, to persuade the subject player, at the point of altering the player’s personality. It’s precisely the alleged tendency of players to identify with the characters they play with, the cause of a long series of misunderstandings that imply that players are “victims” of video games, being passive recipients of values and behaviors: it’s the so-called “active media perspective” (Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Smith, & Tosca, 2008, p. 227) that is the base of most of the debates on violence and video games that have been the *leitmotiv* of video game evolution since the 70s.

### Empathy and Sympathy

Moreover, the abuse of the term identification not only has plagued the world of video games but also has long been a key element of film theory. Feminist film theorists, for example, racked their brains about how was it possible that a female viewer could enjoy watching movies when almost every film offered a male gaze and objectified women—how was it possible, in other words, that a female viewer could *identify* with the male protagonist when the woman on screen was treated as a passive receptor?

The knot was unraveled when film studies got rid of the restrictive notion of identification to include also empathy and sympathy among the psychological processes experienced by viewer in conjunction with the characters. Torben Grodal (2009) makes a distinction between the two, stating that empathy should be used “to describe simulations of other agencies that at least to a certain degree involve emotional action tendencies, say vicarious fear or shame” while sympathy describes “what happens when an agency such as a film viewer is emotionally touched by the fate of another agency, feeling, for example, pity or admiration for him or her” (p. 199). In other words, when experiencing empathy we share emotions *with* the character, while when experiencing sympathy we feel emotions *for* the character—directed towards the character. An example: You can feel empathy for somebody who lost a beloved one, by imagining the person’s emotions and somehow sharing them, even if at a different degree; on the other hand, the feeling you experience by feeling sorry for the person that is suffering is sympathy. Another example, with a more positive connotation: You can feel empathy in cases of infectious happiness, receiving “good vibes” from happy people; sympathy,

instead, refers more to situations that can be summarized with the sentence “I’m happy that you are happy”.

### **Projection**

If the notions of empathy and sympathy served the purpose of overcoming an obstacle in film theory, I don’t see the reason why it shouldn’t be the same for video games. By pulling empathy and sympathy alongside identification, you get a much wider spectrum of the psychological processes a player can experience when interacting with an avatar. But video games need to further expand this spectrum in comparison with cinema, given the possibility (endemic to the video game medium (1)) of “completing” the text by interacting with it: the possibility, in other words, of “putting ourselves” in the game and in the character. A movie character will stay the same every time we watch the movie. Maybe our perception as viewers may change from time to time, depending on our age, our personal experiences, our comprehension of the cinema as a medium, our mental status; but this doesn’t change the fact that the viewer’s influence on the characters’ psychologies is pretty much limited. No matter how much the audience tries to interpret the characters’ behaviors, sentences, and attitudes: a film viewer will never be able to directly condition them and will never have an active role in the creation of the characters’ identities.

In video games, on the other hand, players often have a huge power towards their characters. The zero grade of this power resides in the input itself: If the character goes left or right, if he or she jumps or crouches, it’s up to the player. On a higher level there are dialogues options or choices like deciding whether to advance with leveled guns or going stealth. At the top level there are those decisions that determine the very personality and appearance of the character: Lawful Good Paladin or Chaotic Evil Barbarian? A tall, blond human or a bearded dwarf? Male or female? Name?

All these options the player has of influencing a video game character fall within the notion of projection. Projection is the conceptual opposite of identification: Whereas the latter implies that the player assimilates and adopts psychological traits of the character he or she is using, projection takes place when it’s the player that makes personality, values, and choices flow into the avatar—which might or might not reflect the player’s own. In other words, the player might choose to create a “virtual clone,” but might also choose to create a new “person” from scratch that does not reflect any of the player’s values or personality traits (at least, on a conscious level).

### **Detachment**

Also, it has to be kept into account the scenario in which, although in presence of an actorialized avatar, the player is not feeling any particular emotion. We can label this non-feeling for the character “detachment”, which might be caused by two different factors or a mix of both:

On one hand, detachment might be indeed what the game designers want the player to experience, to keep him or her focused on the game action and to have the game seen as a simple action-response space. There is an avatar indeed, but it is nothing more than a tool to manipulate the game world, not so different from a mouse cursor. In other words, its only purpose is to be functional to the gameplay. The emotions the player experiences are stimulated only by the action that takes place in the game: The fear that the character could fall in a pit or be overwhelmed by foes, it's the mere fear of game over; the same you can experience when tetrominos in *Tetris* (Pajitnov, 1984) started to fall at high speed. On the other hand, detachment might be unwanted by the game designers and be the result of a failure in involving the player in the narrative and or in the gameplay, be it for clunky dialogues, awkward controls, unconvincing acting, bad animations, bad learning curve, etc.

### Avatars' Characterizations

Not only identification, then, can be used to explain what happens in the player when he or she interacts with an actorialized avatar, but also projection, empathy, sympathy or even utter indifference. Five psychological mechanisms which are triggered depending on the game genre, the specific moment, the player's current emotional state, but above all depending on the type of character the player is dealing with.

Francesco Alinovi (2011) partitioned these types depending on their character depth. The lowest level is the zero dimensional or a-dimensional personality, which indicates a total absence of characterization. This personality type is typical of those role playing game characters that are created from scratch by the player—like *Baldur's Gate* (BioWare, 1998) or *Mass Effect* (BioWare, 2007) and whose traits are decided by him or her, including the physical appearance and almost all the ethical and moral choices to be made during the course of the story. Characters belonging to this category facilitate projection because they let the player decide how to mold them: They are neutral containers (2). The a-dimensional personality is also typical to many characters belonging to the platform genre and the action genre and its sub-genres, towards whom the player seldom develops emotional interest, staying quite detached from them; the same can be said for those games where the player manages a wide variety of actorialized but not characterized digital prostheses, live sports simulations, or strategy games.

Just above the a-dimensional you can find the one-dimensional personality. Characters that display this kind of personality tend to show one single personal trait or value—whether that be positive or negative; we can cite, for example, the eponymous protagonist of *Duke Nukem 3D* (3D Realms, 1996), whose psychology reduces to a series of gross jokes and the propensity to shoot everything that moves, or Link in *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* (Nintendo EAD, 1998), who incarnates the concept of courage itself.

Two-dimensional characters go a step further: They display a personality that is sufficiently developed, but they often fall into cliché and tend to shift between two opposite extremities. Alinovi (2011) mentioned Lara Croft as example, but we could add *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune's* (Naughty Dog, 2007) Nathan Drake (the big-hearted rascal), *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time's* (Ubisoft Montreal, 2003) nameless prince (the arrogant nobleman who discovers the value of humility), and many others.

Finally, we have three-dimensional characters, the unforgettable ones, with rich and complex personalities, that for the moment constitute a minority in the fictional digital worlds. Three-dimensional characters are, for example, *Silent Hill 2's* (Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo, 2001) James Sunderland and *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots'* (Kojima Productions, 2008) Old Snake.

### Points of View

The point of view plays a very important role on the matter. To facilitate identification, for example, first person surely comes in handy. Since we can't see the character (just like we can't see ourselves in the real world) and since we are seeing the game world through its eyes, this kind of point of view drives the player into accepting more easily a new identity: there aren't obstacles between the player and the character, nothing to separate them, the symbiosis is nearly absolute.

Projection, instead, may occur in several ways. While using an avatar that replicates as much as possible the player's personality, first person view is the better choice (for the same reasons why it works with identification); however, for avatars in which the player has not put much of himself or herself (or whatever the player perceives as "self"), third person view is recommended so that the player can observe the "creation" from the outside. The most versatile solution would thus be to always allow the player to switch from the two points of view, like in *Fallout 3* (Bethesda Game Studios, 2008) or *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* (Bethesda Game Studios, 2011).

Empathy and sympathy are mostly achieved by using third person view. In both cases, in fact, it is very important to see the character as a whole, in order to take cognizance of its corporeity, but also to see on its body the consequences of its actions—be it getting wounded, casting a shielding spell, changing outfit, etc. In other words, by being able to see the avatar from the outside, the player can be more aware of its presence in the game and can be able to recognize it as a separate entity. In *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots* (Kojima Productions, 2008), we saw Snake rubbing his back in pain and complain about his ailments to feel sympathy; in *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* (Ubisoft Montreal, 2003), it's necessary to see the prince confront Farah to notice his attitude gradually changing. We need to see his facial expressions to "feel" the aversion (that later turns in love) that the prince feels towards her, but above all we've got to see his royal clothing getting ripped and torn until it becomes

a rag, leaving him bare-chested—that symbolizes his transformation from an arrogant prince to a humble yet fiery warrior.

Finally, detachment is often felt by the player when the distance, in addition to being an emotional distance, is also a spatial distance. Long shots in platform games and some action games and distance shots in most of the strategic games show the avatars being very distant, almost out of sight and (then) out of our emotional reach.

## Emotions

It should be noted that detachment, projection, identification, empathy and sympathy are psychological processes: They are means to get players feel emotions. That said, one same emotion can be reached via several different psychological processes, but it's also true that some types of emotions are better achieved via specific kind of avatars, points of view, and related psychological processes.

Let's say I'm playing *Silent Hill 2* (Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo, 2001) and getting fond of my avatar, James Sunderland, feeling sympathy towards him. Suddenly, a Mannequin comes out of a closet and attacks him. In this situation, it's possible that I would experience sheer fear: a jump scare, a feeling that I, the player, am in danger—the same kind of fear I could experience when attacked by a monster while playing *Penumbra: Black Plague* (Frictional Games, 2008), acting in the game world via a kind of avatar which promotes projection (the title's protagonist, Philip, is basically undefined, and never shows any kind of characterization, leaving the players the chance to project themselves in his body). But, on the other hand, in the *Silent Hill 2*'s example I could easily, at the same time, experience apprehension for James and feel the urge of saving him, while when playing *Penumbra: Black Plague* I would hardly feel worried for the protagonist, given that I, the player, am one with him and don't see him as a separate entity.

For these reasons, emotions and related action responses that are directed towards ourselves are usually better achieved via those psychological processes that put ourselves at the center of the game action (identification and projection), while emotions and related action responses that are directed towards others are usually better achieved via empathy and sympathy. Finally, detachment works better to keep the player focused on the game action, but also to give the player a good laugh (e.g., Mario falling in a pit can more easily amuse the player than making him feel sad or responsible for Mario's demise).

It should be noted that what has been stated so far is an exemplification meant to create a theoretical structure which purpose should be to point out which tools, aesthetics, and conventions game designers should, in my opinion, use to convey a certain emotion or feeling in the player. These are not to be taken as fixed rules, and they are not necessarily meant to be followed strictly when designing a game. This is also because players' emotions and feel-

ings are seldom of one single type, when playing a game, and they tend to shift from one to another, often overlapping in unintuitive ways; the same goes for the psychological processes the player experiences to reach those emotions and feelings.

Player/Avatar relationship	The player feels like he/she is...	Emotions more easily triggered	Impact on player's identity	Suited type of avatar	Suited P.o.V.
Detachment	Controlling the avatar	Amusement, focus on the game action	None	A-dimensional	Long shot or distance shot
Projection	Owning the avatar or being the avatar	Pride, fear, excitement, urgency	Variable		Variable
Identification	Becoming the avatar		Severe	One-dimensional	First person view
Empathy	Aligning with the avatar	Apprehension, affection, sorrow, vicarious pride ( <i>naches</i> )	Minimum	Two-dimensional	Third person view
Sympathy	Protecting the avatar		None	Three-dimensional	

Table 1: The Player/Avatar relationships and their characteristics.

### Case Study

A case study in this sense could be *Heavy Rain* (Quantic Dream, 2010). In this game, the player controlled four different characters, whose fates were linked by a common thread, all related one way or another to a mystery revolving around the killings of several children. Having multiple characters to use is a rich soil to allow diverse emotional reactions and psychological processes, but even if we take into account one single character (Ethan), we can verify that this game has the potential to favor all the possible relationships between the character and the player previously described. Ethan was presented to the player as the stereotypical American family guy: father of two, beautiful wife, big house, working passionately as an architect. The dream crashed suddenly into a series of tragedies: the death by car accident of his first son, the following divorce, the relocation into a suburban house, and finally—the main event of the narrative structure of the game—the kidnapping of his second son by a serial killer that would cruelly test Ethan's worth as a father and his willingness to sacrifice himself to save his son. Each successful test granted Ethan a hint about the location where his son was kept prisoner.

By advancing through the game, the player will probably feel emotionally touched by Ethan's



sufferings, feeling *sympathy* for him, but also *empathy* in sharing his pains, fears and worries. Empathy that might result in full *identification*: The player might end up not just sharing a reflection of his emotions but also totally assuming the role of father and feeling personally involved (this is especially likely to happen if the player is a parent in real life). But the opposite might also occur: The player could feel a total *detachment* towards what is seen. Maybe the player finds the gameplay boring, maybe the acting or the voice dubbing aren't convincing enough, maybe there are noticeable plot holes, up to the point that the player sees Ethan's trials as mere "levels" to play through. In any case, a heavy dose of *projection* is bound to happen in *Heavy Rain*, given that one of its core mechanics is the chance to choose among several ethical and moral choices that open the way to (or impede) new narrative branches.

One of the trials Ethan has to face involves killing a man in cold blood: a stranger's life in exchange for his son's life. Both Ethan and the player know nothing about the appointed victim, apart from the fact that he is a drug dealer. Ethan goes to this man's place and after a brief scuffle he gets the upper hand, and he's ready to kill him. That's when the drug dealer shows him a picture of his two daughters and asks him to spare his life.

What to do? The drug dealer is scum, no doubt: His life is not worth a child's life; but he's got two daughters, who will lose their beloved father if Ethan pulls the trigger; but maybe it would be better for them to be fatherless than having a drug dealer as a father; but how could Ethan's son react to the discovery that his life meant another person's death—and how could Ethan bear the guilt? In other words, in that moment you have got to choose quickly while also taking into account a lot of factors. Moreover, killing a person is no joke, and Ethan is already on the run for being suspected of being the serial killer himself: Can he run the risk of killing the guy and thus compromising himself even more? The decision will also be influenced by how the previous trials went: Maybe we want to spare the man, but having failed previous trials, we are in a desperate need of clues.

It's clear that in a case like this, every player will reason differently, with a different mixture of rationality and emotionality as guide. Detached players will choose randomly, or base it on how they want the story to develop: for example, if interested in obtaining a "good" ending, the player will do what is asked and kill the man. Emotionally involved players might, on the other hand, choose depending on how they think Ethan would act, or maybe what they would do in his place.

## Conclusions

There are really too many factors to take into account, and this is true for both the analysis of this single scene and the video game medium *tout court*. Overcoming the limitation of considering identification the only possible relationship with the avatar the player can experience is, in my opinion, a necessity. Making a distinction between the different psychological

processes players can experience, and the diverse sensations they can feel while relating to a video game character, would help game designers to design better experiences. For one, they would be fully aware of the fact that, in video games, not always the player “is” the character. Let’s take for example the video game *Yesterday* (Péndulo Studios, 2012). In this game, the player controlled three different characters that were linked by a common thread. Each of them has a unique and peculiar personality, and still, each time the player controlled one of them, the game used the second person as pronoun. So, when playing as Henry White, his ID card in the inventory would actually be “your” ID card, and when he tried to retrieve a suitcase from under a pile of debris, a message would pop up and say: “No matter how hard you pull on the handle, you can’t get the suitcase out from under the rubble”. The usage of this kind lexicon makes an implicit and yet clear statement: “you”, the player, and Henry White, the character, are one. But this is deconstructed by the fact that, later on, you switched character and started using Cooper instead. When clicking on the tunnel entrance, a message said “Henry is on the other side of this tunnel, and he’s in trouble.” So, now you are not Henry anymore, but you are Cooper instead. And again, Cooper’s actions were described as your actions (e.g. “you grab a box of matches”); the same happened later on when you switched to the character of John Yesterday. This is confusing to the player, since the player would probably be more likely to perceive all three characters as “others than self” and keep an “external” perspective on them, also considering that the player is the only one to know the whole story: It turns out, in fact, that Henry and Cooper were actually the game’s villains, and this was unbeknownst to John, while the player is aware. Considering all this, how can all the three different characters be “you”?

Anyways, this paper has only begun an exploration that still needs to be carried out in depth. Its intended purpose is not to give answers, but more to raise questions. Identity itself is a blurred, fluid concept. Identity is a process, more than a state. For this reason, everything that might alter it or interfere with it can’t possibly be perfectly framed; we can only catch glimpses of it—fleeting ideas which will probably never answer the question: What is identity? After all, as the Patriots say in the final speech in one of the most beautiful and witty works of fiction revolving around the concept of identity, Kojima’s *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty* (Konami Computer Entertainment Japan, 2001): “Does something like a ‘self’ exist inside of you?”.

### Endnotes

1. Actually, there might be some instances where also cinema grants the possibility of projection. This is especially true for P.o.V. porn movies, in which one of the actors (usually the male performer) is almost never shown: This way, the spectator can project and fully immerse into the scene, seeing it from the performer’s point of view and thus imagining being in the performer’s place.

2. This applies, however, only to the extent that it's the game designer, in the end, to draw a line to the players' freedom to customize their characters. "Real" freedom hasn't been achieved yet in videogames, given that the player is still acting in a fixed, predetermined space with set rules and scripted events.

### References

3D Realms. (1996). *Duke Nukem 3D*. PC: GT Interactive Software.

Alinovi, F. (2011). *Game start! Strumenti per comprendere i videogiochi*. Milan: Springer.

Barker, C., (2004). *The SAGE dictionary of cultural studies*. London: SAGE Publications.

Bethesda Game Studios. (2013). *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*. Multi-platform: Bethesda Softworks.

Bethesda Game Studios. (2008). *Fallout 3*. Multi-platform: Bethesda Softworks.

BioWare. (2007). *Mass Effect*. Xbox 360: Microsoft Game Studios.

BioWare. (1998). *Baldur's Gate*. PC: Black Isle Studios, & Interplay Entertainment.

Burke, K. (1950). *A rhetoric of motives*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Cohen, J. (1991). The 'relevance' of cultural identity in audiences' interpretations of mass media. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 8, pp. 442-454.

Egenfeldt-Nielsen S., Smith J. H., & Tosca, S. P. (2008). *Understanding video games. The essential introduction*. New York/London: Routledge.

Fraschini, B. (2004). Videogiochi & new media. In M. Bittanti (ed.), *Per una cultura dei videogames. Teorie e prassi del videogiocare* (pp. 99-135). Milan: Edizioni Unicopli.

Frictional Games. (2008). *Penumbra: Black Plague*, PC: Paradox Interactive.

Green, M. C., Brock, T. K., Kaufman, G. F. (2004). Understanding media enjoyment: The role of transportation into narrative worlds. *Communication Theory*, 14(4), pp. 311-327.

Grodal, T. (2009). *Embodied visions: Evolution, emotion, culture and film*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Halfbrick Studios. (2010). *Fruit Ninja*. Multi-platform: Halfbrick Studios.
- Kojima Productions. (2008). *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots*. PlayStation 3: Konami.
- Konami Computer Entertainment Japan. (2001). *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty*. PlayStation 2: Konami.
- Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo. (2001). *Silent Hill 2*. PlayStation 2: Konami.
- Laplanche J., & Pontalis, J. B. (2006). *The language of psychoanalysis*. London: Karnac Books.
- Naughty Dog. (2007). *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*. PlayStation 3: Sony Computer Entertainment.
- Nintendo EAD. (1998). *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*. Nintendo 64: Nintendo.
- Oatley, K. (1994). A taxonomy of the emotions of literary response and a theory of identification in fictional narrative. *Poetics*, 23, pp. 53-74.
- Pajitnov, A. (1984). *Tetris*. Elektronika 60: Alexey Pajitnov.
- Péndulo Studios. (2012). *Yesterday*. PC: Péndulo Studios.
- PopCap Games. (2001). *Bejeweled*. Browser: PopCap Games.
- Quantic Dream. (2010). *Heavy Rain*. PlayStation 3: Sony Computer Entertainment.
- Shaw, A. (2010). *Identity, identification, and media representation in video game play: An audience reception study*. Publicly accessible Penn Dissertations: Paper 286.
- Ubisoft Montreal. (2003). *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*. Multi-platform: Ubisoft.
- Zillmann, D. (1991). Empathy: Affect from bearing witness to the emotions of others. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Responding to the screen: Reception and reaction processes* (pp. 135-168). Hillsdale, EJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.