

Game Studies

the international journal of
computer game research

volume 3, issue 2
december 2003

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When Seams Fall Apart

Video Game Space and the Player

by Laurie Taylor

Much of the current critical and theoretical literature on new media, including video and computer games, assumes both the conceptual transparency of the video or computer screen and the absolute authority of a rational scientific order.^[1] In keeping with these cultural prejudices, descriptions of the optical space of video games presume an uncomplicated optical scheme, founded on traditions of linear perspective. This can be seen with game designers, and game critics, treatment of video game perspective and point-of-view: video game spaces are understood to be the procedural outcomes of geometrically articulated orders derived from using program code and the physics of game engines.^[2] But, video game spaces are more than simply the sum of their code – they are experiential spaces generated through code and the player's interaction with the execution of that code through the medium of the screen. Given this multifaceted experiential component of games, an uncritical conception of spatial phenomenology and the verisimilitude of linear perspective fails to explain how video games operate. Critical theory, theory which explains how the player operates both *on* the game space and *within* the game space, is needed. In this paper, I propose that the models of subjectivity and agency offered by psychoanalysis provide a way to investigate the relationship of the player, player-character and the screen. For this investigation, I specifically examine how perspective shapes the field of the gaze and the implications of that shaping.

The video game player must perform at multiple levels while playing a video game. In this regard, the player *in play* is present in more than one spatial domain. Lev Manovich and Sherry Turkle have argued that this multiple presence is typical of new media interactions. One might argue that the video game player, because

she generally accesses information stored on her local computer (online games with remote servers are an important exception) she does not experience multiple presences as she does with other new media objects which are housed remotely. But, this observation neglects that the telepresent state is based on existing in multiple conceptual spatial domains, not on existing in separate physical areas. The telepresent state means that the subject exists in multiple areas in such a way as to be able to effect change in that (or those) other areas while also being able to effect change in the subject's physical space.^[3] Thus, telepresence is based on the subject's presence in separate simultaneous areas that are based on differing spatial domains, but not necessarily differing geographical areas.

Because users interact with the video games as media objects, they are afforded a place or function within the space of the new media object while continuing to occupy their own physical spaces. Video game players must also simultaneously function on differing spatial planes. Thus telepresence is particularly pertinent to the player's presence outside, within, and as formulated through the medium of the screen, which Sherry Turkle explored in the non-graphical spaces of MUDs and MOOs.

It is in this context that concepts of Lacanian psychoanalysis are applicable to the experiences of game play. Of this phenomenon, Sheila Kunkle writes that:^[4]

While he [Lacan] could not have foreseen the introduction of the computer and technologies allowing for virtual realities, Lacan could indeed see how the logic of the machine age meant that human beings would have to negotiate their fantasies and fears in different coordinates of space and time.

Connecting Lacan to telepresence is valuable because theories of Human Computer Interaction (HCI), film, performance and theatre based on purely cognitive psychological models are inadequate to explain the psychic complexity of telepresent relationship as articulated by means of the screen. Psychoanalysis provides a vocabulary and theory to discuss the complex operations of the visual and haptic with the multiple existences or presences in telepresent spaces. Critically, the player exists as the subject in one field and

then projects into the field of the game space. Thus, the subject exists in simultaneous multiple spaces, further complicating the relationship of the subject to her created representations. This paper serves as a preliminary investigation into the complex relationship of the player, both within and outside the game space, and the screen in terms of the player perspective, narcissism and the Lacanian gaze.^[5]

Given the tangled relationship of the player's presence outside the screen to the player's presence within the space of the screen, and as formulated through the screen, it may be easiest to begin with an example. Just as Freud worked from the cases of neurotic patients to illustrate the structures of the normal psyche, so we begin a "troubled" game, *The X-Files Game*, to illustrate problems of game structure. *The X-Files Game* is a first-person point-of-view game where the player plays through the character of FBI Agent Craig Wilmore. It is a first-person game, but not a prime mover first-person game.^[6] The term prime mover provides a distinction between works where the user acts on the screen itself, as with computer applications and games like in *Myst*, and games and applications where the user has a diegetic place, even if it is without a clearly defined spatial presence, as with games like *The Last Express* and with most first-person shooter (FPS) games. The first-person game space of *The X-Files Game* is visually articulated through a series of digitized video and photographic stills stitched together to create the appearance of continuity from one area to the next. As in most first-person games, the cinematic sequences are shown through the eyes of Agent Wilmore: other characters respond directly to the screen; the camera seems to perform as Agent Wilmore.^[7]

But, unlike most images from other video games, including other first-person games, is the image shown in Figure 1. Agent Wilmore is in his apartment bathroom. The entire apartment is shown from the first-person perspective, including Agent Wilmore looking in the mirror and seeing himself. For the player, this produces an uncanny, disruptive effect: ripping apart the seams of the game space.



Figure 1. Lack of Space and Place with the Disembodied and Unidentified First-Person Point-of-View. Agent Craig Wilmore's disembodied reflection staring out from the bathroom mirror. (Image from: Hyperbole Studios. *The X-Files Game*. Beverly Hills, CA: Fox Interactive, 1998.)

Under the normal conditions of the physics of this game world, Wilmore *cannot* look back at the player. Here, however, he seems to be doing just that. This looking back by Wilmore, who is more of a ghost haunting the game experience than a character, is troubling because it reveals the uncertainty and ambiguity of the positions and relationship of both the player (player-as-character) and the in-game character, Agent Wilmore. At this stage in gameplay, the player will have seen Wilmore in prior cinematic sequences, but only through the eyes of Agent Wilmore's coworker. In all other respects, the player has operated as Agent Wilmore. Thus, Agent Wilmore's place is within the space of the screen, as witnessed by others who are also within the space of the screen. But, the player is outside of the space of the screen and Wilmore is performatively aligned with the player, so Wilmore's place should also be outside of the screen.

Yet, Wilmore stares back at the player from the bathroom mirror. Wilmore's staring face disrupts the consistency of the game space because it throws into question the player's relationship to the role (Wilmore) that she is playing and it problematizes the spatial place of the player in relation to the game space. It shows the character's (Wilmore's) consistent lack of place, and thus the player's consistent lack of place. This confusion of space and place in *The X-Files Game* foregrounds aspects of the tripartite structure of the relationship of the player outside the screen, the player within the screen and the

screen as a medium of passage between these domains.

Most games stitch together their varied points-of-view to avoid moments like the possibility of Wilmore's voided position and thus disembodied and haunting image. Games stitch their seams together by combining different points-of-view for different acts within the game. *The Last Express* uses primarily first-person point-of-view. But, it relies on third-person for the fight sequences and for the frequent cinematic sequences which, when added to the constrained space of the train, allow the player an embodied perception of the game space.^[8] *The Last Express* also constrains the first-person view so that the character, Robert Cath, is never able to look into a mirror. In many third-person games, the characters look into mirrors or see their reflections, but their shown reflections are not problematic because their player-characters have a place within their game spaces and because their reflections are not a looking back, unlike Wilmore's looking.



Figure 2. *The Last Express* switching from first to third person for the knife sequence to avoid the odd breakage that occurs when players cannot function properly within the game space. (Image from: Smoking Car Productions. *The Last Express*. Novato, CA: Brøderbund, 1997.)

In effect, Wilmore's looking is the looking back of the gaming subject on itself, yet Wilmore is clearly not the subject because the player is never shown to embrace Wilmore as part of the structural relationship of the game space or as part of the player herself. Lacan writes of the

relationship that Wilmore's mirror reflection assumes:

I apprehend the world in a perception that seems to concern the immanence of the *I see myself seeing myself*. The privilege of the subject seems to be established here from the bipolar reflexive relation by which, as soon as I perceive, my representations belong to me. (*The Four Fundamental Concepts* 81)

Lacan here addresses how, while the subject has an embodied identity, the field of visual perception is outside of the subject and is then embraced by the subject as being internal when the subject perceives itself within that field. Thus, the gaze (visual perception) is outside of the subject and the subject reclaims the gaze and makes it a part of herself, and this includes her perception of her own representation. The uncanny effect of the gaze is that in it, one makes of oneself the object of perception, not the agent of perception, which is outside.

Wilmore's looking at himself in the mirror assumes that the player (subject) has embraced Wilmore in such a way that Wilmore's looking, while outside the player herself, could be internalized by the player in terms of her representation of Wilmore as herself. Oddly, the player is fundamentally separated from Wilmore specifically because of the first-person point-of-view that the game uses primarily and in this episode in an attempt to more fully align the player with Wilmore.

Part of the problem of Wilmore's looking is that the player could not have identified with Wilmore because of the game design. A player performs in response to the game, controlling an agent-position within or on the game and responding to new in-game data, be it information or action, from this position. Because the player acts *as* and *from* this position, the player must in some way identify with this, or the possibility of this, position at least enough to function in response to the game space. This does not mean that the player must understand how it feels to be an FBI agent caught up in a conspiracy involving aliens and nuclear weapons, all while sulking over his recent divorce. But, it does mean that the player must function well enough to avoid whatever function ends the game and that she must in some way desire to continue the game.

This connection between the player and the player's position in the game space implies a type of identification, in that the player identifies sufficiently with objects or characters of the game space to function in response to that game space through a self-image that is inserted into the constructs of the game space and then internalized by the player (subject).^[9] Lacan explains identification in these terms:

We have only to understand the mirror stage *as an identification*, in the full sense that analysis gives the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image – whose predestination to this phase-effect is sufficiently indicated by the use, in analytic theory, of the ancient term *imago*. (*Écrits* 2)

Lacan's definition of projective identification relates more closely to the psychic development of real subjects, but identification also includes the adaptation by a subject of an image. Developmentally, this operates within the mirror stage for the subject to adopt a socially acceptable (as such it is prompted and provided by the primary caretaker and the others that the subject encounters), and thus unified, image of self. Identification also functions after the initial development of the subject when the subject sees herself in another image and then incorporates this into her imaginary integrity. J. Sel Dor explains the latter type of identification through Freud's story of the butcher's wife, where the butcher's wife identified with her friend because she felt they had something in common: "This identification takes place in the manner Freud describes as the perception of 'a common quality shared with some other person who is not an object of the sexual instinct' (p. 108)" (233). In video games, identification as the perception of a common quality with an other, subject or object, occurs with relation to the player and the player's position to the game space as the player incorporates the player-character, which is her image in that game space, into her identity so as to become immersed in the game space. In her article on the apparatus of first-person shooters, Sue Morris explains how first-person shooters create a sense of primary identification through player agency by allowing the players to act directly on the game space as though they were a part of that space. Morris correctly

identifies that players have more direct agency in first-person shooters, due in large part because FPS games are identified by their predication on action and control, and that this sense of agency creates a sense of primary identification with the player as being within the game (89). Yet, FPS games also disrupt the gaze by removing the player from the field of the gaze. This disruption allows for the odd broken moments that occur with Wilmore in the bathroom, and that occur in FPS games like *System Shock 2*, where the player will be attacked by monkeys, and will not be able to see or fight the monkeys without first manually changing view to look down.

In different terms, Manovich discusses a similar relationship of the user or player to the image that relates to the user/ player within the screen:

An image acquires the new role of an interface (for instance, imagemaps on the Web, or the image of a desktop as a whole in GUI). Thus, image becomes image-interface. In this role it functions as a portal into another world, like an icon in the Middle Ages or a mirror in modern literature and cinema. Rather than staying on its surface, we expect to go 'into' the image. In effect, every computer user becomes Carroll's Alice.
(290)

Manovich is describing the process by which the user enters into a telepresent relationship as a precondition to enter into the other virtual space. While Manovich is speaking more generally of human-computer interaction, this can also be applied directly to the process by which the player enters into the game space. The player or user needs some sort of metaphoric transition to account for the multiple presences within the telepresent situation and the discontinuity experienced across these multiple telepresent spaces. In video games, a "cut scene" is often used to bridge the space of the screen, which separates the player from the player's position within the game space. But, the cinematic sequences alone do not connect the player to the space within the game. Identification can occur as the extension of ability to access objects within the screen, as occurs with the cursor and the computer user, or it can occur as identification with the role and position within the other space – this allows the player to connect to the space as more than an operator on that

space. Identification with the player's position in the game space, experienced as both a simple extension or duplication of the player and as the narcissistic incorporation of the image of the in-game position into the player's specular image, allows the player to enter into the game space as a valid and verisimilar agent of the game space.

Identification by the player with the player's position within the game space obviously functions differently based on the in-game point-of-view (as first-person, third-person and god-view games are perceptually different gaming experiences) and as based on the player's incorporation of the player-character into her imagined integral self. While identification allows the process to begin by allowing the player to see the shared traits with the player-character, the player's narcissism cements the relationship of the player to the player-character. Lacan emphasizes two dimensions to narcissism, one of which is erotic and drives the subject to perceive her own unity within herself and her corporeal image, and another which is aggressive in that the break between the subject's perception of unity in her image and the disunity that she is faced with are contradictory and thus cause tension and threaten the subject's image of unity. Narcissism is thus always founded on a misunderstanding of the structural integrity of the subject.

In video game play, a similar misprision or mis-understanding must occur. In video games, the player-character or player-position in the game responds based on the player's input through the interface. The player plays seeking the goals of the player-character and plays from the player-character's vantage point and so the player begins play based on shared traits with the player-character. These shared traits allow for identification. The player's narcissistic connection to the player-character occurs when the player embraces the player-character not just as having some traits in common with the player, but as being *part of the player*.^[10] This narcissistic acceptance is necessary for the player to enter into the game space as a part of the game space and for the player to traverse the medium of the screen. Without narcissistic projection, the player remains outside of the screen and can operate on the screen, but not from within the screen. Manovich describes narcissistic performance with other new media objects like CAVEs thus:

The user of such an installation is presented with her own image; the user is given the possibility to play with this image and also to observe how her movements trigger various effects. In a different sense, most new media, regardless of whether it represents to the user her image or not, can be said to activate the narcissistic condition because they represent to the user her actions and their results. In other words, it functions as a new kind of mirror that reflects not only the human image but human activities. (235)

Manovich is speaking of new media in general and how narcissism operates with all, but for the particularities of a character-driven video game, this relation of identification-projection-introjection is absolutely necessary. Though narcissism may reflect one's activities *on* the game space without an image, for narcissism to reflect one's presence *within* the game space an image is necessary. While the image can be represented in a video game as just a positionality, the player needs an image to accept the game position as a game character, a verisimilar agent of the game space.

Lacan states that identification is "namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image" (*Écrits 2*). In a video game with a position alone and no image component, the player can assume the position into herself, but the position becomes merely one more part of herself, without being a part of herself with certain characteristics. If I play as me in *Medal of Honor*, anything that happens is my doing; if I play from the third-person perspective of Alice in *American McGee's Alice*, then I am functioning, in a sense, as Alice. Alice is a part of me, but she is a determined part of me. Meaning that I can play as Alice and enter into her world through her. Thus, I can enter the space of Alice's world, Wonderland, by passing through the screen through my identification with and then psychic incorporation of Alice. In essence, Alice becomes my looking glass as any player-character can in a third-person point-of-view game. Playing first-person in *Medal of Honor*, I play as me so I never pass through the medium of screen; acting *on* the screen rather than *within* the screen because I have identified with and taken in only my own actions instead of a character's, as I do with Alice. Taking in my own actions does not allow me to pass through the screen, but only

to act on the screen because the screen acts as a divider until I can find a way into the game space – a way which an active image provides for and which an icon in a control panel does not. Essentially, from a position alone the player cannot enter into the game space as part of that game space because of the lack of context which embodiment, in third-person point-of-view games, provides.^[11] The very attempt to bring a player into the game space through the screen by means of a first-person point-of-view is, ironically, inconsistent because the first-person point-of-view assumes that the player herself can be caught into the structure of the game and can then be incorporated into the game space. In this way first-person perspective assumes that by enveloping the player as the player into the game space, the player becomes part of the structure of the game space.^[12]

The structural design of first-person point-of-view games like *The X-Files Game* dictates that the first-person agent, Agent Wilmore, should be within the space of the screen, but only as reflected through the other characters and not as discernable by the player. This is because Agent Wilmore, like other disembodied first-person characters, exists outside of the player's perceptual space. Also, first-person games posit that the player can assume the perceptions of the player-character and then merge with the player-character through the limited perceptual apparatus afforded by first-person games. Wilmore can be seen through the eyes of other characters, and thus in cinematic sequences, but Wilmore himself, in effect, cannot see because the player is performing as Wilmore. The player's performance as Wilmore removes Wilmore from being within the virtual image of the game space and it removes the player from projecting into Wilmore (because Wilmore does not exist within the game space) so the player also cannot enter into the virtual image of the game space.

Thus, both the player and Wilmore are removed from the game space. This is how most first-person point-of-view games operate, by allowing the player to function *on* the space, but not *within* the space.^[13] In first-person point-of-view games, the game space may seem to be cohesive, as basing itself on the authority of the objective scientific order, but Wilmore's looking in the bathroom mirror shows the break. In terms of the game space construction, Wilmore cannot look at the player because Wilmore does not exist as a part of the

viewable game space. Instead, Wilmore exists as an unidentifiable factor in the game space construction. Yet, Wilmore looks at himself in the mirror which shows Wilmore to have a place within the game space from which to look, even though he cannot, based on the game space construction.

The rupture effected by Wilmore's looking indicates the highly structured nature of video game point-of-view and perspective and how video games attempt to replicate, through their perspectival construction, the intentional looking of the subject. Wilmore's looking also shows how, often, the attempt at creating the intentional looking (with first-person games and other games that equate a geometrical showing with looking) fails because it assumes a subject for whom looking and showing are analogous. In an attempt to seem natural and intuitive, many video games have avoided these pitfalls of sight by removing the subject from the structured relationship of gameplay. In most first-person games, the player operates on the game world, but never within, which allows the world to be constructed from an imagined viewpoint – one that is completely ordered, understandable and without complexity. First-person video games seek to remove not just the subject, but all the ambiguous mis-identifications that accompany the subject which include questions of embodiment, the gaze and the paradox of the subject's own perception of self.

The paradox that first-person games attempt to cover or remove are, however, signalled in operations of third-person point-of-view games. Because third-person point-of-view games allow for the complexities of the embodied and complicated act of seeing, third-person games more easily avoid breaking the game space than first-person games. But, by the same token, third-person games are also more difficult to program because: they require a character model be designed; they require that the model operate correctly in terms of the game space design; and they must be programmed to deal with perspectives incompatible with the game's optics or physics (like seeing nothing but a wall for the screen when the player-character backs into a corner) or risk the destruction of the game space. The difficulty in programming third-person games signals the difficulty in representing consistent game worlds where the gaze functions without declaring its limitations. Because of their more complete representation of space and spatial presence, third-person games do

allow for a sense of embodiment and accept the ever-presence of the gaze to a greater degree than first person games. Lacan explains the gaze in terms of a situating within the field of seeing. Lacan uses an anecdote to explain the reduction of the subject to object in the field of the gaze, "It [a sardine can floating in the ocean] was looking at me at the level of the point of light, the point at which everything that looks at me is situated – and I am not speaking metaphorically" (*The Four Fundamental Concepts* 95). Being within the field of seeing means being within a continuous field. But first-person games respond to the player as the third-person character, which places both the player-character and the player into the same encompassing field of seeing, the gaze, even though the player is not inserted into that field in addition to the performative orders in which the player-subject already exists. A subject looking out into the world requires that the subject is inserted into the perceptual field and is situated at some point within that field. Thus to embrace the complexities of experiential space, the player must somehow be inserted into both fields of seeing.

Yet the insertion into this field is never a control over the gaze itself as some critics have claimed, "This is something," observes Lacan, "that introduces what was elided in geometral relation – the depth of field, with all its ambiguity and variability, which is in no way mastered by me. It is rather it that grasps me, solicits me at every moment" (*Four Fundamental* 96). Thus, the third-person point-of-view in a game does not clarify or ease the player into controlling the player-character; the player is able to identify and narcissistically embrace the player-character, but this embrace is not a clarifying or simplistically controlling embrace. The player does operate the player-character's movements, but the player does not master the player-character because the player is also caught in the mastering field of the gaze. The player does not become the gaze by being the player or the player-character; both are contained within the gaze and the gaze presumed by the game dominates the relationship because it is the structure of the relationship. Craig Saper writes of the relationship between subject and object and the gaze, "We forget our signifying dependence, and we forget that eyes function as markers of that dependence. We live not merely as part of a structure, but in relation to an Other" (48). In a video game setting, where the player is the subject and the player-character is the other, the player operates in the game in relation to the player-character

and to the game space, not as a fully external controlling agent. Thus the gaze is not simple or singular, the gaze is the dynamic oddity that pervades the perception of and the perceptual field of the subject. First-person point-of-view video games attempt to reduce this disruptive effect of the gaze. But, in doing so, first-person games allow for structural ruptures like Wilmore's staring out from the mirror, at the player, who sees herself in him.

Wilmore's mirrored/ mirroring image indicates a larger structural problem in the creation of video game spaces and the assumed relationship between the player and the player's presence in the game space, as articulated through the screen. While this essay has been a brief introduction to the problem of translation for the telepresence of the player outside and within the game space, more work is certainly needed on how the player enters the game space and the further complications of the screen. Also important to note is that the moment with Wilmore is especially awkward because it shows Wilmore in a mirror. Because video games must bring the player through the medium of the screen and into a new space, certain objects are afforded as transitions and as markers for the game space. These transition objects are most often mirrors, doors and windows. So to have a mirror as a ripped seam serves to disrupt the particular game and to disrupt the spatial construction of video games as a medium. As Manovich noted with the image object, the player is taught to expect certain objects to operate in a certain manner and when they do not, the artifice of the video game world becomes glaringly apparent. The player also expects the player-character to function in a certain manner as based on the player's own experience as a subject of the gaze, inside or outside the visual field of the game. Through narcissism, the player can use the third-person character image to enter the game space. While the use of third-person perspectives may seem logically counter-intuitive, they are often more intuitive for the actual game play experience because they allow the player to exist within the gaze as the object rather than the agent of perception and, for this, psychoanalysis affords a method of further investigation.

Notes

[1] See, for example: Janet Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997); Steven Poole, *Trigger Happy: Videogames and the*

Entertainment Revolution (New York: Arcade Press, 2000); and Richard Rouse III, "What's Your Perspective?" *Computer Graphics* 33.3 (1999): 9-12.

[2] Note also that this confidence, in a geometrical visual order is to some degree an extension of the optical presuppositions of the tools with which games are mapped out and constructed - the rendering applications and techniques used to create the on-screen images are almost exclusively founded on the linear perspectival paradigm.

[3] Indeed, the spectre of "videogame addiction," in which the player is transfixed to the screen, ignoring bodily needs (sleep, food, etc.) depends on this.

[4] Kunkle overstates her case - Lacan did foresee the emergence of computing technologies with relevance to the fantasies of the subject, though he did not know of virtual reality. See, for example, his discussions of cybernetics in Lacan's *Seminar I*.

[5]The player here is referred to as being within or outside of the screen. Often the player position within the screen is referred to as the player-character, but the player presentation in game space is not always a player-character in the sense of being a character that has a position within the created game space. Sometimes the player may control a group of figures (as with games like *Final Fantasy*) or may act as a God (with games like *SIMCITY*).

[6]I take the term "prime mover" from Chapter 7 in J. Yellowlees Douglas, *The End of Books or Books Without End?* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

[7] First-person games, like first-person cinematic shots, are generally created by having the camera perform as the character's eyes-this translates into the camera being shoulder height and having to pan up-and-down and side-to-side to look. A few cinematic sequences do show Agent Wilmore from an unidentified third-person point-of-view.

[8] While it is outside the scope of this paper, embodiment in video game spaces needs to be specifically and fully addressed. For an excellent discussion of embodiment in relation to film, see Vivian Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye* (Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1992.)

[9] This identification with the game space comes after the player has naturalized the game interface because otherwise the interface

would prove to be a barrier to her insertion into the game space.É

[10] Hence the awkward game play moments when new players, still unclear of their position in the game space, lift their arms while holding the controller to get the player to jump higher and lean side-to-side for a better view of the in-game space, despite the fact that the in-game space has no relation to their external game positionality except in terms of their actions on the game interface. These moments illustrate how the player has narcissistically internalized the player-character position such that the player physically acts as the player-character. They also help illustrate how narcissism is founded on a misunderstanding, the misunderstanding of an-other (be it a subject or object) as part of the subject. Sue Morris' work with FPS games also shows how players can conflate agency, through control of the player-character position, and identification, see Sue Morris, "First-Person Shooters - A Game Appartus," *Screenplay: Cinema/Videogames/Interfaces*, Eds. Geoff King and Tanya Krzywinska (London: Wallflower Press, 2002) 81-97.

[11] For a lengthy discussion of the odd, and critical, relationship of point of view to game play, see my thesis, "Video Games: Perspective, Point of View, and Immersion" (Master's Thesis, University of Florida, 2002: <http://purl.fcla.edu/fcla/etd/UFE1000166>).

[12] Player experience dictates the way in which point-of-view influences game play and game space immersion, but the actual game construction is still pivotal to the game play relationship. Lacan's *optical schema* described in *Seminar II* proves extremely useful in further delimiting the relationship of the player to the player's position in the game space as based on the game technical design, and particularly to the problems that Wilmore presents. While this paper lacks space for such a discussion, such a discussion is necessary.

[13] *The Last Express* is a notable exception.

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