

Tulia Maria Cășvean*

Understanding the videogame genre: a qualitative analysis of the “playing contract”

Abstract

Available in the widest variety of forms, with or without the “story” or the scoring, played alone (single player), with a few partners (multiplayer) or with many others (massive multiplayer online games), the videogames categories are built on multiple perspectives that depend on the observer and his or her agenda. Embedded in the popular culture, videogames exploit models and formal containers, pre-worked materials, well-known heroes, stereotypes and myths. Paraphrasing Umberto Eco, (1989) different videogame categories become a “playing contract” between producers and players, who should instantly recognize on its basis the videogame’s genre -characterized by multiple meanings, functions, production models and audience expectations, and evolving through time. The overall understanding of videogames depends on defining their genre framework as opposed to labels or marketing tools used by the game producers – a blueprint that requires an arrangement of specific elements. While not proposing an exhaustive genre categorization, this paper aims to assess the plot as a suitable criterion for videogame genre framework by correlating the specialists’ opinions on plot usage with the manner in which the plot is reflected into the game features. The findings and the conclusion of this paper are supported by in-depth interviews with industry professionals and by a videogames plot evaluation grid built in line with the methodology proposed by Aarseth, Smedstad and Sunnanå (2003) and Tobias’ plot evaluation (1993).

Keywords: videogame, genre, popular culture, genre theory, playing contract

1. Introduction

In comparison with other popular culture manifestations, videogames are more difficult to analyze because every time a “(part of a) game is played, the output that appears on the desktop computer or a console screen is different from any previous time, even if it is played by the same player under similar circumstances” (Malliet, 2007). This creates a difficulty to define what belongs to what and what the game designer intended versus what comes from the configuration done by the player. This is a strong argument to use qualitative research for understanding the videogames in the analyzed context, allowing the studied object “to provide with better and richer answers to questions” (Hossian, 2011, p. 145), given by the research.

Videogames use formal models or containers such as genre, characters, stories, environment, setting, and attract wider audiences to various types of content. The importance of the videogames genres revolves around players who are attracted or not by the producers towards new launches, affecting the industry. The videogames genre is connected with the selection of the content and the control of the access by interpreting the needs and interests of the au-

* University of Bucharest, Romania; tulia.casvean@gmail.com.

diences (McQuail, 1999, p. 181), serving as a communication bridge between producers, players and academics. As part of popular culture, every videogame belongs to one or several genres, which are “heuristic remnant” of the period when technology allowed producing quite simple, non-complex games (Aarseth, 2004, p. 363). Fast technological development and increased interest towards videogames of a wide audience led to an expansion and a hybridization of videogames genres. The successful fantasy massive multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPGs) *World of Warcraft* (Blizzard Entertainment, 2004), for example, can be classified under several videogame genres (RPG, strategy, quest) and, assessing the game as a whole, it is an hybrid fantasy combat game. Arguments that support the hybridization of videogames are given by Aarseth (2004, p. 363) when analyzing the videogame *Halo* (Bungie, 2001): it is an action game (“science fiction combat game”) mainly played in the first person (FPS), but occasionally a third person (“third-person driver”) that has components of puzzle and strategy (Aarseth, 2004, p. 363). Rich and complex cultural manifestations, the videogames should be understood and analysed using a genres framework that creates a narrative consensus for a mediated experience with a very strong cultural influence.

As the text unity is not in its origin but in the destination’s (Barthes, 2002, p. 224), the videogames transform the players in authors and co-authors of content often using the subaltern transmediality (Spiridon 2013, p. 141) and well-known genres. Gamers are usually very familiar with the genre of videogames, with few favourites in their repertoire, just as it happens in the case of cinema movies or TV series. They use their own genre labels – *de facto* genre – as Kress (2010, p. 115) observes, having a solid standing in the ordinary usage and being mostly motivated by the videogame’s title: sport, role-play or leisure game.

There are also *genres in actions*, available on the sites where players and game producers interact with one another (Clearwater, 2011 p. 37). The way that the industry understands and uses videogames genres is player-centric, focused on mechanics and game design patterns that deliver particular play-experiences. More details about the industry point of view are included in the Results section.

The lack of unique or at least clear criteria of some of the *de facto* and *in action* genres triggers difficulties for scholars who research videogame genres, because, as Aarseth (2004, p. 363) observes: “what works well as a sales term might not work at all as a theoretical perspective”. In this context, the typology proposed by Miller (2004, pp. 212-213) should be revisited and enriched with new criteria that respond to the present reality.

The aim of the present paper consists in a preliminary exploration of the possibilities of including the plot as a suitable criterion for creating a videogame genre framework. My intention is to investigate the validity of this criterion as being a “necessary and sufficient condition” (Chandler, 1997), and not just as a label or marketing tool acting as triggers for audiences. To achieve this objective, firstly I review the current situation of genres pre-existing studies. In addition, I use qualitative analysis to better understand the way the industry uses and builds the videogame genre, focusing mainly on secondary sources and face-to-face interviews with game developers, narrative managers and realization managers. The propose of the paper is to unify the specialists’ opinions from both academia and the industry with how the plot is reflected into the game features, provoking discussions and inspiring critical approaches that could bridge theory and practice.

2. Reflections on the genre and on the videogame genre

Genre are "fuzzy" categories that "cannot be defined as necessary and sufficient conditions" (Chandler, 1997) with no rigid rules, but actually "systems of expectations and hypothesis" (Neale, 2000, p. 158) that circulate among audiences, industries and academics. This "great genre illusion" points to the fact that genre is an umbrella word bundling disparate concepts under a single name and giving the false impression of unity (Arsenault, 2009, p. 157), a "codification of discursive properties" (Todorov, 1976, p. 162), stable structures, repetitive rules and conventions which function as a "transmission belt between producers and their receptors" (Spiridon, 2013, pp. 92-100).

Genres are firstly and foremost a boundary phenomenon (Glendhill, 2000, p. 221) that fixes "the meaning in a modal, generic and discursive form" (Kress, 2010, p. 122). Being an abstract concept rather than something that exists physically in the world (Feuer, 1992, p.144, quoted by Chandler, 1997), genres are units that can be described through abstract analysis based on pre-set criteria or through empirical observation of specific characteristics. Analyzing videogames, Laurel ([1991] 2014, p. 163) considers that genres are "a collection of information that includes the ethics and 'the rules of conduct' for different story types".

Linked with the cultural work of production and reception, the genres are difficult to define, being historically and discursive relative (Todorov, 1976, p. 164). Apperley (2006, p. 9) emphasizes a similar observation explaining that "the expectation is that the stability of genre will be tempered by innovation; this innovation may be technical, not necessarily stylistic". Chandler (1997) stresses the fact that both genre forms and genre functions are dynamic, while Kress (2010, p. 116) demonstrates that genres provide not just videogame kinds, but "means for contextualizing / locating / situating".

As per Todorov's (1976) genre definition, the videogames in a same genre have some common systemic features being recognized because their conventionality of structural, thematic and or functional criteria and industrialization. Järvinen (2007, p. 333) agrees and concludes that videogame genres "are found in the junction of game themes, system behaviour, and emotions and moods".

Inspired by the film studies, contemporary studies are focusing on several criteria for analyzing the videogames genres based on narratives, types of experience, structure, engagement or support (Herz, 1997; Wolf, 2001; Newman, 2004; Nieborg & Hermes, 2008). Another approach is taken by Wolf (2001, pp. 116-117) who sorts the videogames under 42 categories focusing on ludological elements such as the dominant characteristics of the interactive experience, the games' goals and objectives, the nature of the game's player-character and the player control. A careful assessment of Wolf (2001, pp. 116-117) categories shows that some are rather specific recognizable games with particular elements than unique and mutual exclusive criteria. Another classification focusing mostly on the mechanics is proposed by Poole (2000, pp. 35-58). The nine types of games are not mutually exclusive (for example sport type games could be considered simulation games). Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Smith, and Tosca (2008, pp. 41-44) develop a much simpler taxonomy, reducing videogame genres to four types: action, adventure, strategy, and process oriented games. Yet, the current hybridization and mutations of the videogames require further combination of those four main types.

A player-centric point of view is developed by Murray (2006, pp.9-10) who recommends not to enforce legacy genres boundaries, but to enhance practice within this new medium. In order to fuel new genres that would grow from a community of practice Murray suggests to

elaborate new expressive conventions and to think of “the characteristics of stories and games and how these separable characteristics are being recombined and reinvented within the astonishingly plastic world of cyberspace” (Murray, 2006, p. 10).

Lebowitz & Klug (2011, pg. 61-65) show that videogames recycle mythological repertoires (Greco-Roman, chivalrous, oriental, Egyptian, Nordic), stereotypes of gender, ethnic, cultural, national, historical and other well-known themes or even clichés. The most used themes and clichés mentioned by Lebowitz & Klug (2011, pg. 61-65) include: the hero amnesia, the conspiracy and betrayal, the last of his race, the brother or father recovered, the beautiful mysterious girl (often the last of her race) who holds the key to salvation or world destruction, the rebellious princess who falls in love with a warrior hero, the wise old man who gives valuable advice or the ancient civilizations that have left encrypted artefacts. Beyond these prefabricated models, characters, heroes, stereotypes and myths, videogames as popular culture artefacts reuse genres as well. Some of the genres are transmedial (S.F., horror, historical, adventures, and romance), while others are more specific (talk-show, shooter). However, the genres differ by the degree of standardization (Spiridon, 2013, p. 96), the familiarity with a genre enabling its audience to generate feasible predictions about events in the story.

Following Duff’s genres triad, based on structural, thematic and functional criteria (2014, p. xiii), videogames genres should be assessed as Arsenault suggests: a “phenomenological, pragmatic deployment of actions through the gameplay experience” which is “partly functional and partly aesthetic” (Arsenault, 2009, p. 171). Aarseth (2004, p. 364) proposes a radical systematization, using discriminative criteria: digitized versions of traditional games (card, board, dice, mechanical arcade games such as Pinball) and games in virtual environments, based on a simulation of a physical world, not necessarily similar to real world, and usually much less complex.

Particular milestones for genres’ frameworks have been identified by Aaretsh, Smedstad and Sunnanå (2003) and grouped under five headings: Space, Time, Player-structure, Control and Rules. The authors suggest that the model is flexible, any changes in terms of dimensions not destroying “the underlying principle” (Aarseth et al., 2003, p.53). The declared objective of the model is to outline genres that are more specific, not necessary used by the industry and popular game publications, in “a rigorous, analytical way” (Aarseth et al., 2003, p. 48).

3. Research Method

Practically, the videogames genres have been built on multiple perspectives (gameplay, story theme, context or player’s performance), not always mutually exclusive. Most classifications use “too many, arbitrary, incompatible or overlapping criteria generating a multi-dimensional typology” (Aarseth et al., 2003, p. 48). Considering that there is not much research literature for the domain and having no empirical evidences, building a genres “blueprint” using mutually exclusive frameworks would only take us half of the way. Instead, my objective is to collect in-depth insights about videogames genres and about how these are built and embedded in the videogames. In this context, I consider that a qualitative exploratory study, which embraces secondary sources (other scholars’ theoretical or empirical studies) and specialists’ opinions on the topic of interest (face-to-face interviews with professionals) helps formulating the research question: is the plot a suitable criterion for a videogame genre

framework? My intention is to answer it using qualitative methods that are less limiting in terms of time and resources needed.

In my approach, I searched for patterns mostly common in literature and movies, yet without forgetting that not all the videogames have a story. In this train of thoughts, I consider as a valuable beginning position the "20 master plots" proposed by Tobias (1993): Quest, Adventure, Pursuit, Rescue, Escape, Revenge, The Riddle, Rivalry, Underdog, Temptation, Metamorphosis, Transformation, Maturation, Love, Forbidden Love, Sacrifice, Discovery, Wretched Excess, Ascension, Descension. This typology allows a close up of videogames to other narrative media. Some of these tags are already *de facto* genre (quest, adventure) recognized as such by players, producers, and scholars. Others, like the "discovery" and "the riddle", could be applied to the videogames with no narrative pattern proving that the plot criterion is not limited to the videogames with a narrative pattern.

During the data collection process, I gathered information using Hossian's (2011, p. 144) qualitative research checklist: knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of industry representatives. I investigated the way videogames genre are used and built by the industry, focusing mainly on the plot usage (secondary sources and in-depth semi-structured interviews with game developers, narrative and realization managers). Subsequently, applied the methodology proposed by Aarseth et al. (2003, p.49): "the dimensional categories and their values are gathered by taking two similar games [...] and then try to describe the difference between them in a principal way". The plot dimension is assessed in line with the methodology is concentrated on the plot statement (Tobias, 1993), for both narrative and non-narrative games. The variables that support plot are evaluated by the common value with other media as the case of the beginning statement included in the game intro, characters, props, sound effects, or by very specific ones such rules or mechanics.

I ran four semi-structured interviews between August 2014 and April 2015, using Creswell's directions for phenomenological qualitative methodology (Creswell, 2007). I selected the interviewees based on their expertise (employees of Romanian branches of international game producers), ensuring variety: a former level designer, a realization manager, a narrative manger and an external communication manager. The respondents have expressly agreed to answer the questions for the research purpose I previously stated, as recorded on tape and on the signed forms. For the illustration of specific examples some verbatims have been quoted in the paper with the interviewee's consent. The consent protocols have been signed with all the participants before starting the interviews and only those who accepted the confidentiality terms (possibility of quoting them and of using initials of name and job title) were used in the paper. All interviews are full-length, at least one hour each, recorded, transcribed and analyzed.

4. Results and discussion

Understanding the industry view is a milestone for this paper because the producers lower the risk by delivering against popular genres that insure gratification and pleasure for the receptor. Explaining why players specialize in genres, the industry veteran Daniel Cook (2007, p. 1) acknowledges that when players discover that a game fits their entertainment needs nicely, they return to the store seeking another similar game.

The industry's professional's reflections on the genre show that from its early development ages, the game industry settled into several genres that everybody recognizes: sports,

strategy, racing, fighting, action, role-playing. Chris Crawford, a well-known game designer, (1984, pp. 19-40) focuses on mechanics: skill and action (combat, maze, sports, paddle, race, miscellaneous), strategy games (adventures, dungeons and dragons), war-games, games of chance, interpersonal games, educational and children games. Crawford observed that the basis of classification is not constant but varies during the history, influenced by the available technology (Crawford, 1984, pp. 39-40). Another game designer, Ernest Adams, emphasizes that the entire value chain of videogames industry was influenced by genre: “the retailers began organizing their shelves along these lines. Publishers created product plans based on them. Gamers learned, as Adams (2009, p. 1) observes, to prefer one genre over another and to identify themselves as fans of shooters or platformers or real-time strategy”.

Daniel Cook (2007, p. 1) reinforces the fact that similar game mechanics define the characteristic of gaming value, despite all the industry’s effort spent on innovation, branding, packaging and licenses. Using a lifecycle approach, following the economic pattern of any industrial good (introduction, growth, maturity, decline, niche), Cook (2007, p.2) shows that genres evolve over time as “players discover, fall in love, grow bored and then move on to other forms of entertainment”.

D.R., narrative manager, insists on the need of harmony among all videogame’s features and the genre: “The general genres have to match everything. Ideally, the graphics, the sounds, the story, the in-game actions, everything must match the genre. Ideally, the second time you look at the game, you know what it is about and you know the general feeling of it” [face-to-face interview, Bucharest, April 2015]. C.T., external communication manager, completes the same point of view considering that when creating a game a producer must deeply understand the audience in order to meet their skills and expectations. C.T. concludes that sticking to the popular genres lowers the risks for the industry, yet it inhibits any other innovation than technological [face-to-face interview, Bucharest, September 2014]. Narrative manager D.R. explains that “the genre is given by the game designer to the narrative team who has to build on it. This means that the narrative team must know the specifics of genres, even though in the case of videogames it can be broken down a little bit. For example, the war genre is the given action for everything, but with the story I can break it down a little bit and add romance or comedy to it, so add some different facets to the general genre” [face-to-face interview, Bucharest, April 2015]. Taking an opposite stand, the game designer Sid Meier considers that a genre should be a support for a chosen topic and not the start for designing a game: “first figure out what your topic is and then find interesting ways and an appropriate genre to bring it to life as opposed to coming the other way around” (Ruse, 2001, pp. 21-22). The fast development of mobile games and the limitations in terms of technology and story length forced the industry to have a different approach: “nowadays, with the mobile gaming industry, suddenly women are playing videogames and this completely opened up the market, so most of the games are casual videogames and the mobile companies are looking to draw women in embedding new genres in the games” [D.R., narrative manager, face-to-face interview, Bucharest, April 2015].

Summarizing the industry point of view, the player is the pivotal element and the purpose of delivering a playing experience is fulfilled through mechanics and game design patterns that support different genres.

Based on a clear methodology, respecting how genres conventions are always acting in combination or modules (Spiridon, 2013, p. 95), the criteria proposed by Aarseth et al. (2003) were assessed through several dimensions and values applied on a significant number of

games. Since videogames are equally rooted in the meanings, in the mechanics and in the performance, the industry standardizes videogames based on well-known genres tags. Adding a plot layer allows the integration of the transmedial genres, easily recognized by the audience in other narrative media like books, TV or cinema, and in genres such as horror, adventure, war or romance. The videogames gain from this transfer of meanings from other established media genres, as long this framework is a *de facto* one and is actively used by producers, sellers and audience. Plot, as a new dimensional category, should have supportive values as other media genres conventions, adapted to the videogames specifics: props, sound effects, genre pillar characters (i.e.: soldier, detective or zombie). Yet, there are many situations when a hybrid genre or an emergent one is forced by the sellers to merge with a well-established one, hopping that the tag is working as a “branding tool” and attracts the audience.

The current data analysis grid was populated against two axes, using the methodology validated by Aarseth et al. (2003) and the extended Tobias’ plot list (1993). The two axes are included in Table 1: the plot expression mode and the plot statement.

Table 1. The Plot Classification using Character, Props, Sound Effects, and Rules/Mechanics

	<i>The Plot statement</i>	20 master plots (Tobias,1993)	
		<i>Narrative Games</i>	<i>Non-narrative Games</i>
The Plot expression mode	<i>Game Intro</i>	Call of Duty (2003-2014), Ai draci (Romanian MMO), (Destiny (2014)	Hearthstone: Heroes of Warcraft (2014)
	<i>Character</i>	Return of the Phantom (1993), The Longest Journey (1999), Condemned (2005), The Heavy Rain (2010),	–
	<i>Props</i>	Portal (2007), Call Of Duty (2003-2014), Assassins’ Creed (2007-2013), DayZ (2013), L.A. Noire (2011)	Majhong (1992-2000), Minecraft (2009), FarmVille (2009-2012), Candy Crush Saga (2012)
	<i>Sound Effects</i>	Final Fantasy (1987-2010), Resident Evil (1996-2012), Amnesia (2010)	Guitar Hero (2005-2010)
	<i>Rules/ Mechanics</i>	Grand Theft Auto V (2014)	Chess Master (1986-2007), 2048 (2014), Tetris (1984)

The examination of the analysis grid showed that multiple plots could be used in one single genre (i.e. forbidden love and sacrifice can both be found in romance). When these plots are recognisable from other media, it becomes easier for the audience to connect the genre of a videogame with the one used by other media – as former level designer A.I. shows, the genre shooter, embedding multiple plots like Adventure or Escape, is easily recognisable and creates similar expectations across various media.

5. Conclusions and area of future developments

The difficulty of understanding the videogames genres framework is driven by the difficulty of straightforward definitions of game genres (cf. Wolf, 2001; Apperley, 2006; Clearwater, 2011). When compared with other media, videogame genres are built on both narratives and ludological elements.

The changes in videogame genre in the past years, triggered by technology progress and by the focus on player, led to an expansion and a hybridization of videogames genres. The hybridization of genre, specific for today's reality, rise research challenges. The lack of unique or at least clear criteria of some of the *de facto* and *in-action* genres generates difficulties for videogame genres research. The literature review offers insights about several videogames genres taxonomies (Poole, 2000; Wolf, 2001; Aarseth et al., 2003; Murray, 2006; Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Smith & Tosca, 2008) that allow examining, deconstructing, and comparing games.

It would be difficult to point out each of the necessary and jointly sufficient criteria for placing a videogame into a specific genre, standing out in a certain historical moment. Yet, for the moment, the criteria proposed by Aarseth, et al. (2003), are mutually exclusive, applicable to a large set of videogames.

In addition to the literature, for industry, genres are player-centric built, focusing on mechanics and game design patterns that deliver particular play-experiences (Crawford C., 1984; Cook, 2005; Cook, 2007; Adams, 2009; C.T., 2014; C.V., 2014; A.I., 2014; D.R., 2015).

The research question of this study – is the plot a suitable criterion for a videogame genre framework? – was answered by overlapping specialists' opinions on the plot usage with how the plot is reflected into the game features, using the dimensional category grid inspired by the methodology proposed by Aarseth et al. (2003). The analysis showed that the plot could serve as a convention for embedding the transmedial genres into videogames typology. The conclusions of the current research cannot be generalized due to the limited number of games included in the evaluation. Another limitation of the present study is that it can be argued that the grid could be linked with a specific historical moment, adapted for this specific point of industry development. Considering the genre as a “playing contract”, an extended empirical follow up study focused on players could contribute to the future advance of the topic. In addition, as future development, it is equally important to find proper labels for the genres based on the plot, recognized by scholars, industry and audience.

References

1. Aarseth, E. (2004). Quest games as post-narrative discourse. In M.-L. Ryan, *Narrative across media* (pp. 361-376). Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.
2. Aarseth, E., Smedstad, S., & Sunnanå, L. (2003). *A Multi-Dimensional Typology of Games*. Proceeding of the 2003 DiGRA International Conference: Level Up. 2 (pp. 47-53). Retrieved on February 11, 2015, from <http://www.digra.org/wp-content/uploads/digital-library/05163.52481.pdf>
3. Adams, E. (2009, July 09). *The Designer's Notebook: Sorting Out the Genre Muddle*. Retrieved June 15, 2014, from http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/132463/the_designers_notebook_sorting_.php.
4. Anderson, C. A. (2010). *Violent Video Games and Other Media Violence* (Part I). In R. Sagall, Ed., *Pediatrics for Parents*. January/February 2010, 26(1&2), 28-30. Retrieved July 22, 2015 from <http://public.psych.iastate.edu/caa/abstracts/2010-2014/10ApartI.pdf>.

5. Apperley, T. H. (2006, March). *Genre and game studies: Toward a critical approach to video game genres*. *Simulation & Gaming*, 37(1), 6-23. doi:10.1177/1046878105282278
6. Arsenault, D. (2009). Video Game Genre, Evolution and Innovation. *Eludamos. Journal for Computer Game Culture*, 3(2), 149-176. Retrieved on March 21, 2015, from <http://www.eludamos.org/index.php/eludamos/article/view/vol3no2-3/126>.
7. Barthes, R. (2002). The Death of the Author. In A. McCleery & D. Finkelstein (eds.), *The Book History Reader* (pp. 221-224). New York: Routledge.
8. Bolter, J.D. & Grusin, R. (1999). *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. London: MIT Press.
9. Bryce, J., & Rutter, J. (2002). *Killing like a girl: gendered gaming and girl gamers visibility*. CGDC (pp. 243–255). Tampere, Finland: University of Tampere. Retrieved March 12, 2015, from <http://www.digi-play.org.uk/media/cgdc.pdf>.
10. Chandler, D. (1997). *An Introduction to Genre Theory*. Retrieved March 22, 2015, from <http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/intgenre/chandler_genre_theory.pdf>
11. Clearwater, D. (2011, May 5). What Defines Videogame Genre? Thinking about Genre Study after the Great Divide. *Loading.... The Journal of the Canadian Game Studies Association*, 5(8), 29-49. Retrieved on April 12, 2015, from <http://loading.gamestudies.ca>.
12. Cook, D. (2005). *My Name is Daniel and I am a Genre Addict. The impact of psychological addiction on the game industry*. Retrieved March 23, 2015, from Lost Garden: http://lunar.lostgarden.com/essay_gen-readdict.htm.
13. Cook, D. (2007, May 15). *The Circle of Life: An Analysis of the Game Product Lifecycle*. Retrieved April, 1, 2015, from: http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/129880/the_circle_of_life_an_analysis_of_.php?page=2.
14. Crawford, C. (1984). A Taxonomy of Computer Games. In C. Crawford, *The Art of Computer Game Design. Reflections of an Master Game Designer* (pp. 19-40). Berkeley, California: Osborne/McGraw-Hill.
15. Creswell, J. W. (2007). Five qualitative approaches to inquiry. In J. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions* (pp. 53-84). London: Sage Publication. Retrieved May 8, 2015, from <<http://www.stiba-malang.ac.id/uploadban>>.
16. Duff, D. (2014). *Modern Genre Theory* (ed. first published in 2000 by Pearson Education Limited). New York: Routledge.
17. Eco, U. (1989). *The Open Work* (A. Cancogni, Trad.). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
18. Egenfeldt-Nielsen, S., Smith, J.H. & Tosca, S.P. (2008). *Understanding Video Games. The Essential Introduction* (ed. 2nd edition). New York: Routledge.
19. Feuer, J. (1992). Genre study and television. In C. Allen (Ed.), *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled: Television and Contemporary Criticism*. 138-59, London: Routledge.
20. Glendhill, C. (2000). Rethinking Genre. In C. Gledhill & L. Williams, *Reinventing Film Studies*. 221-243, London: Edward Arnold.
21. Herz, J. (1997). *Joystick Nation. How videogames ate our quarters, won our hearts, and rewired our minds*. Princeton, NJ: Little Brown & Company.
22. Hossian, D. (2011, September). Qualitative Research Process. *Postmodern Openings*. 2(7), 143-156.
23. Järvinen, A. (2007). *Games without Frontiers. Theories and Methods for Game Studies and Design*. Doctoral dissertation study for Media Culture, University of Tampere, Finland, 417. Tampere, Finlanda. Retrieved October 16, 2014, from <http://acta.uta.fi>.
24. Jull, J. (2007). *Without a goal. On open and expressive games*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. Retrieved August 9, 2014, from <http://www.jesperjuul.net/text/withoutagoal/>.
25. Jull, J. (2010). *A Casual Revolution. Reinventing Video Games and Their Players*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
26. Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality. A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. London and New York: Routledge.

27. Laurel, B. ([1991] 2014). *Computers as Theatre* (2nd edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Addison-Wesley.
28. Lebowitz, J. & Klug, C. (2011). The Hero's Journey And The Structure Of Game Stories. In J. Lebowitz & C. Klug (Eds.), *Interactive Storytelling for Video Games. A Player-Centered Approach to Creating Memorable Characters and Stories* (pp. 39-70). Elsevier Inc.
29. Malliet, S. (2007, August). Adapting the Principles of Ludology to the Method of Video Game Content Analysis. *Game Studies. The International Journal of Computer Game Research*, 7(1). Retrieved November 22, 2013, from <<http://gamestudies.org/0701/articles/malliet>>.
30. McQuail, D. (1999). *Comunicarea*. (D. Rusu, Trad.) Iasi: Editura Institutul European.
31. Miller, C. H. (2004). *Digital Storytelling. A Creator's Guide to Interactive Entertainment*. Oxford, UK: Elsevier.
32. Murray, J. (2006). From Game-Story to Cyberdrama. In N. Wardrip-Fruin & P. Harrigan, *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game* (pp. 7-11). Cambridge: MIT Press.
33. Neale, S. (2000). Questions of Genre. *Screen; The Journal of the Society for Education in Film and Television*. 31(1), spring 1990. 45-66, Retrieved April 22, 2015 from <https://genrefilm.wikispaces.com/file/view/Neale+on+Genre.pdf>.
34. Newman, J. (2004). *Videogames*. New York: Routledge.
35. Nieborg, D., & Hermes, J. (2008). What is game studies anyway? *European Journal of Cultural Studies*. 11(2), 131-146. Retrieved on February 2, 2015, from <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-227441>.
36. Poole, S. (2000). *Trigger Happy: Videogames and the Entertainment Revolution*. New York: Arcade Publishing.
37. Ruse, R. (2001). *Game Design: Theory and Practice* (ed. 2nd). Plano, Texas, TX: Wordware Publishing Inc.
38. Salen, K. & Zimmerman, E. (2004). *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals*. Cambridge: MA: MIT-Press.
39. Spiridon, M. (2013). *Popular culture. Modele, repere și practici contemporane*. Craiova: Editura Scrisul Românesc.
40. Tisseron, S., & Gravillon, I. (2010). *Psihologia Jocurilor Video* (Qui a peur des jeux video?) (D. Jipa, Trad.). București: Editura Trei.
41. Tobias, R. B. (1993). *20 Master Plots. And how to build them*. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books.
42. Todorov, T. (1976). The Origin of Genres. *New Literary History. Readers and Spectators: Some Views and Reviews*. 8(1), 159-170. Retrieved February 11, 2015, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/468619>
43. Wolf, M.J.P. (2001). Genre and the Video Game. In M. Wolf (Ed.), *The medium of the video game* (pg. 113-134). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.