Abstract

This thesis examines the way in which trans players of offline single-player video games interpret confirmed transgender characters and the characters with ambiguous gender identities, that might be interpreted on the trans spectrum by players and/or game developers. More specifically, the research examines how players engage with ludic elements related to those characters in conjunction with the game text, which includes dialogue and events depicted in cinematic cut scenes. Additionally, transmedia development and depictions of the characters in question might be analyzed. Theoretically, the study is grounded in and contributes to the nascent field of Queer Game Studies. It draws on the works of Adrienne Shaw, Alexander Galloway, and Jack Halberstam on game culture and queerness in games, such as queer representation, queer subversive readings of existing work, and countergaming, as well as Judith Butler's work on identity. Empirically, the research explores two existing panels with transgender developers, conducts semi-structured on-and offline interviews with transgender players of various ages, as well as autoethnography.

Key words: countergaming, transgender, video games, ludology