Half–Minute Hero and the genre–dependent construction of spatiality in videogames

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Videogame as virtual world

- Interactivity of videogames
- A videogame does not simulate *things*, but the *laws* that rule the behaviour of things (Frasca 2003:2–4)
- Virtual world: the simulation or implementation of a set of rules for the behaviour of objects
- So a *videogame is a kind of virtual world*. 
Videogame as virtual world

- Virtual world: both the goal and the result of the actions *may be* external to the virtual world. Example: *Facebook*

- Videogame: both the goal and the result of the actions *are* internal to the virtual world. Example: *Hitman: Blood Money.*
Virtual world as logical space of conditions

- What is, then, an object within a virtual world?
  Object: everything that works as *condition for* something else

- Concept of object in Wittgenstein

- Possibility of interrelation of objects in the virtual world = possibility of actions in the virtual world.
Logical space of conditions and goals in a videogame

- Pragmatic net of objects and meaning
- Meaning and goals
- Goals and immersion
Genres = outlines of logical spaces

When it is said of a videogame that it is of some genre, the gamer is being told *what kind of world is going to find* or, in terms of immersion–incorporation, *what kind of things the gamer will be able to do*. Example: *bottle in* Lost in Blue or in Manhunt

*Genres are* historical conventions consolidated by use (*not deducible from a principle*)
The Philosophy of Computer Games Bergen 2013

From logical space to physical space

- Videogame, as a virtual world, is a set of rules of dependency between objects.

- The representation of these objects is subject to the rules of dependency between objects (representation is virtualised).

- *So in a videogame the physical space depends on the logical space upon which the virtual world is constructed.*

- The Problem: the *logical space* is a kind of ontology, the *physical space* defines extensions.
From logical space to physical space


- *Situation, Place and Space*

- physical space in videogames = *the set of representations constructed from specific situations of objects, which situations are adjusted to a general model of conditions between objects.*

- physical space in videogames is always *logically qualified* by that which can o cannot be done
Genericity of the physical space

- If logical space determines physical space,

- And logical spaces are defined according to certain genres or combination of genres,

- Then the physical spaces are generically determined.
Genre-dependent construction of spatiality in *Half–Minute hero*

*Figure 1. Representation of a physical space “P”. Source: Half–Minute Hero, Marvellous Entertainment PSP, 2009*
Genre–dependent construction of spatiality in *Half–Minute hero*

*Figure 2. Qualified space A of P (simplified) if there is no object “ship”. White: Inaccessible space. Green: accessible space with low level enemies. Yellow: space with high level enemies. Blue: links to cities or end boss. The brown circle is the character. Source: prepared by the author based on the figure 1.*
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*Figure 3. Qualified space B of P when we sail on a ship. White: inaccessible space. Blue: the harbour (switcher between A and B). Red: space we can move through. Source: prepared by the author based on the figure 1.*
Genre-dependent construction of spatiality in *Half-Minute Hero*

- Role-playing video game: Hero 30 Mode

*Source: Half-Minute Hero, Marvellous Entertainment PSP, 2009*
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- Real-time strategy game: Evil Lord 30 Mode

*Source: Half-Minute Hero, Marvellous Entertainment PSP, 2009*
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- Shoot 'em up game: Princess 30 Mode

*Source: Half-Minute Hero, Marvellous Entertainment PSP, 2009*
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- Hack-and-slash game: Knight 30 Mode

*Source: Half-Minute Hero*, Marvellous Entertainment PSP, 2009
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- **Hub mode**
Conclusion

- **[A1]**: videogame as a kind of virtual world (=a net of objects or logical space of conditions characterised by its function or rules of use).
  A criticism should explain how the interactivity without an autonomy of the rules (implementable by means of a Turing Machine) is possible

- **[A2]**: generic outlines of such nets of objects/rules of use or logical space of conditions = genres of videogames
  A criticism should account for the different meanings of the objects in, for example, a platform game in relation to an RPG

- **[B]**: the physical space is constructed upon the rules of that logical space: because the logical space is established in the shape of diverse genres, so the physical space, dependent on the logical space, will be established dependent on the genres.
  A counterexample could be an alternative theoretical mechanism by which the physical distance in a videogame is independent from the set of goals (established with and from the existing objects, in accordance with one or various genres)

- **[C]**: RPG, Shoot’em, RTS and Hack–and–slash games from the analysis of *Half–Minute Hero*
  Criticisms to the specific characterisations of each genre are possible without affecting [A1], [A2] or [B].
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