

Abstract

This dissertation proposes a framework for the rhetorical analysis of games, videogames, toys and play activities. Even though play predates culture and games have long been pervasive in our civilization, the advent of videogames has pushed even further the role of games as communicational and cultural products. This situation demands a set of rhetorical tools that take into account the particularities of games and how they are played.

The main objective of this dissertation is to provide a foundation upon which building play rhetoric, one that is complete enough to take into account the core elements that contribute to the player's construction of meaning while engaged in play. In order to achieve this, it is first needed to question our current ontologies of play and game and propose an alternative one that shifts the current systemic bias towards an approach that also takes into account player performance.

Since ultimately the goal of this dissertation is to contribute to the nascent field of play rhetoric, it complements its theoretical tools with multiple examples of rhetorical analysis of games, videogames, toys and play activities.