Martin Lorber,
Felix Zimmermann (eds.)

History
in Games

Contingencies
of an Authentic Past

Martin Lorber, Felix Zimmermann (eds.)
History in Games

Editorial

The series is edited by Gundolf S. Freyermuth and Lisa Gotto.

Martin Lorber (M.A.) studied musicology, philosophy and anthropology at the University of Cologne. He is co-founder of the Clash of Realities conference and teaches at the University of Cologne.
Felix Zimmermann (M.A.) is a doctoral candidate at the a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School for the Humanities Cologne. His research focuses on experience-based engagements with the past and especially on the atmospheric potential of digital games and its implications for questions of authenticity. He is a member of the group »Geschichtswissenschaft und Digitale Spiele« (AKGWDS).

Martin Lorber, Felix Zimmermann (eds.)

History in Games

Contingencies of an Authentic Past

[transcript]

TH Köln-University of Technology, Arts, and Sciences supported the publication of this volume.

Technology
Arts **Sciences**
TH Köln

Table of Contents

The Politics of Authenticity

Preface and Acknowledgments

MARTIN LORBER & FELIX ZIMMERMANN

In 2019, the international conference on the art, technology, and theory of digital games, *Clash of Realities – International Conference on the Art, Technology, and Theory of Digital Games*, provided for the tenth time the opportunity for interdisciplinary exchange and dialogue related to digital games. Lots of experts from fields like the humanities, economics, politics, and the game industry discussed pressing questions concerning the artistic design, technological development, and the relevance and role of digital games in society. The conference was organized by the TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences and financed through the support of the Film und Medien Stiftung NRW, The City of Cologne, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and Electronic Arts Germany.

Since its foundation in 2006, the Cologne-based conference Clash of Realities has approached the medium of digital games from the perspective of many different scientific disciplines and has also included the practice of developers. However, the dedicated historical perspective did not appear until the tenth edition of the conference. Since the conference has become one of the most important interfaces of academic research and artistic creation, this was high time. Therefore, we want to thank the program board of the Clash of Realties conference which was open to the idea to organize a historical game studies summit at Clash of Realities and trusted us in our choice for the speakers (which was very much the work of Felix Zimmermann). And we thank the team of the Cologne Game Lab (CGL) of the TH Köln for the tremendous practical support both beforehand and during the conference. Also, we want to thank the speakers who came to Cologne, Germany, in November 2019 and made the summit possible: Adam Chapman, Maxime Durand, Angus Mol, Eugen Pfister, Angela Schwarz, and Esther Wright. They are the reason the summit "History in Games – Contingencies of an Authentic Past"

has been a great success. Most of the lectures of the summit are collected in this volume, in addition there are some other papers which, for various reasons, were not presented at the summit but which complement this volume quite wonderfully.

Additionally, we want to thank Gundolf S. Freyermuth and Lisa Gotto, the editors of the book series this volume is a part of, for welcoming the historical game studies in their renowned series "Studies of Digital Media Culture." Most notably, we want to express our gratitude for the inspiring insights the authors in this volume offered us and for how friendly and professional our collaboration has been. And to Anh-Thu Nguyen and Markus Zimmermann we are grateful for their invaluable help with the editorial work and their thorough proof-reading of the chapters in this book. Furthermore, we want to thank Felix Zimmermann's colleagues at the working group "Geschichtswissenschaft und Digitale Spiele" (Historical Science and Digital Games [AKGWDS]) who inspired the summit with their commitment to establish the field of historical game studies in Germany, Austria and beyond. Finally, we want to give our thanks to the TH Köln for supporting this publication.

We wish you, dear reader, a fruitful and rewarding time with this book.

Introduction

Approaching the Authenticities of Late Modernity

Felix Zimmermann

Abstract

Where do we end up when we enter the time machine that is the digital game? In this introduction, I want to explain how to arrive at such a question and give some preliminary answers. I will first offer a short and cursory history of authenticity which leads to our present age, the world of late modernity. I will elaborate that authenticity has reached its status as an almost ubiquitous term because it signifies a condition of the individual of late modernity who appears to be in constant search for the authentic to satisfy a seemingly insatiable desire. In will continue in concluding that it is the digital game in particular that offers an authentic experience—especially when it appears to paradoxically give unmediated access to the past. We will have to (re)consider the relationship of the digital game to history, the past and consequently the kinds of authenticity we are dealing with. The papers in this book aim to do just that, as I will show at the end of this chapter.

A Short History of Authenticity

As a term of the historical sciences, 'authentic' can be traced back to the *interpretatio authentica* of juridical and religious texts in the 16th century. This approved interpretation of a given document was delivered by persons of authority.

'Authentic' was therefore used to identify an object as 'approved' or 'legitimate'.[1] Two still potent semantic contents of 'authentic' originate from this earliest use of the term: Firstly, regarding something that can be called 'object authenticity', 'authentic' can still refer to an object which has been approved as correct or valid by a person of authority. Secondly and building on this, 'authentic' is still to this day linked to questions of authority and power and therefore raises the question of who is in a position to declare something as authentic.[2]

In the 18th century, the noun 'authenticity' came into popular use. The historical sciences began to use the term to describe historical sources of verified origin.[3] Simultaneously, the term was infused with another semantic level, one of an aesthetic kind. Consequently, the complexity of the term increased significantly in the 18th and 19th century. Thinkers of the Enlightenment and early Romanticism began to use 'authenticity' to describe untouched nature and the genuine, unaltered mannerisms of every human being.[4] Susanne Knaller describes this as a merging of terms from philosophical and aesthetical theories of the 18th and 19th century, "sincerité, naivité, vrai etc." with the terms 'authentic' and 'authenticity'.[5] From this point onward, authenticity no longer solely refers to the authenticity of an object but also of a person, a subject, hence the dichotomy of object and subject authenticity was established.

---

1   Cf. Saupe, Achim: "Authenticity", in: *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte* 2016; http://doc-upedia.de/zg/Saupe_authentizitaet_v3_en_2016; Knaller, Susanne: "Genealogie des ästhetischen Authentizitätsbegriffs", in: Susanne Knaller / Harro Müller (eds.), *Authentizität. Diskussion eines ästhetischen Begriffs*, München: Wilhelm Fink 2006, pp. 17–35, here p. 18.

2   As Susanne Knaller points out, 'authentic' originates from the Greek term 'authentikós' which referred to both something warranted and to holders of power; Ibid., p. 19.

3   Cf. Ibid., p. 18; Pirker, Eva Ulrike / Rüdiger, Mark: "Authentizitätsfiktionen in populären Geschichtskulturen: Annäherungen.", in: Eva Ulrike Pirker (ed.), *Echte Geschichte. Authentizitätsfiktionen in populären Geschichtskulturen*, Bielefeld: transcript 2010, pp. 11–30, here p. 15.

4   Cf. Rehling, Andrea / Paulmann, Johannes: "Historische Authentizität jenseits von 'Original' und 'Fälschung'. Ästhetische Wahrnehmung – gespeicherte Erfahrung – gegenwärtige Performanz", in: Martin Sabrow / Achim Saupe (eds.), *Historische Authentizität*, Göttingen: Wallstein 2016, pp. 91–125, here pp. 109-110; A. Saupe, *Authenticity*.

5   S. Knaller: *Genealogie*, p. 25.

However, authenticity only turned into a "catchword"[6] in the second half of the 20th century, still carrying this semantic burden, making it impossible to define authenticity without acknowledging that at least two and not always compatible levels of meaning are embedded in the term. To add another layer of complexity, the term is also cited by different actors with different intentions at different times. By now, 'authenticity' is ever-present and has therefore been called a "key term of modernity"[7] or a "myth of modernity."[8] I, however, prefer a different denomination.

AUTHENTICITY AS AILMENT AND CURE

Authenticity is a "term of crisis".[9] In this, it is as much indicative of a contemporary longing for the real and unmediated as it points towards practices which aim to satisfy this longing. In his theory on "aesthetic capitalism", Gernot Böhme differentiates between "Bedürfnis" and "Begehrnis" which may be translated into "need" and "desire".[10] While the former—elemental needs like food or water—can indeed be satisfied, the latter is perpetually intensified in the attempt to satisfy it. In these terms, authenticity can be understood as a desire, pointing to the next, even more authentic experience, to the ever more real, i.e. the seemingly unfiltered contact with the world. It is an ailment turned cure turned ailment, always promising to be an endpoint of the search for the individual of late modernity which so eagerly wants to repress "feelings of lack"[11]—but is only able to do so for a short moment. Jean Baudrillard's emphatic pessimism outlines what is meant when I

---

6   Knaller, Susanne, / Müller, Harro: "Einleitung.", in: Susanne Knaller / Harro Müller (eds.), *Authentizität. Diskussion eines ästhetischen Begriffs*, München: Wilhelm Fink 2006, pp. 7–16, here p. 7.

7   Translation by the author, orig.: „Schlüsselbegriff der Moderne"; A. Rehling / J. Paulmann: *Historische Authentizität*, p. 91.

8   Translation by the author, orig.: „Mythos der Moderne"; Sabrow, Martin: "Die Aura des Authentischen in historischer Perspektive", in: Martin Sabrow / Achim Saupe (eds.), *Historische Authentizität.* Göttingen: Wallstein 2016, pp. 29–43, here p. 30.

9   Translation by the author, orig.: „Krisenbegriff"; S. Knaller / H. Müller: *Einleitung*, p. 11.

10   Böhme, Gernot: *Ästhetischer Kapitalismus* (3rd ed.), Berlin: Suhrkamp 2018, p. 101.

11   Vidon, Elizabeth S. / Rickly, Jillian M. / Knudsen, Daniel C.: "Wilderness state of mind: Expanding authenticity", in: *Annals of Tourism Research* 73 (2018), pp. 62–70, here p. 63.

relate authenticity to these "feelings of lack". Baudrillard claims that we have entered a "hyperreal nebula"[12] which is characterized by an „implosion of the medium and of the real."[13] Following this train of thought I want to assume that the individual of late modernity is surrounded by medial representations of unclear origin and truth value. In this, these representations are hyperreal, meaning „a real without origin or reality."[14]

I am by no means claiming here that there is no such thing as truth anymore or that everyday life has left the realms of reality. This chapter is not aimed at engaging with the philosophical discourse that such a claim would demand. Rather, I am claiming that our day and age is a time of an acutely felt uncertainty. It is my opinion that this uncertainty can be in part traced back to the role of medial representations as being one of the most important ways for the individual to connect to the world. This 'window to the world' is today tainted by fake news and social bots, to just name two of the most prominent examples. What we see, what we hear and even who we talk to often needs to be taken with a grain of salt. As Ian Bogost astutely notes:

"The crowd isn't made up of people anymore, but of pictures that might be people, of corporate brands impersonating them, of young people dancing politically in TikToks, of tweets about youths in TikToks, of disputes absent referents, of bots shouting into the void."[15]

I would argue, then, that it is one of the most natural courses of action to dream of a time of certainty, a time of the real and unmediated and therefore, finally, the authentic.

This time might be gone, but it might not be lost. As Zygmunt Bauman has argued, "Retrotopia" appears to be in reach.[16] And in her famous discussion of nostalgia, Svetlana Boym unearths a notion of the past as being a "perfect

---

12 Baudrillard, Jean: *Simulacra and Simulation*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press 1994, p. 82.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., p. 1.

15 Bogost, Ian: "It Doesn't Matter If Anyone Exists or Not. What a website that generates infinite fake humans tells us about modern life", in: *The Atlantic*, February 24, 2020; https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2020/02/how-generate-infinite-fake-humans/606943/

16 Bauman, Zygmunt: *Retrotopia*, Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press 2017.

snapshot",[17] just waiting to be reconstructed. Thinking of the past as an idealized space-time and some trying to bring back what has never even existed entails a plethora of messy implications which I will not discuss here in detail. Following Eva Illouz, I want to employ a "post-normative critique"[18] as I see this turning to the past in search of the authentic as a practice which warrants research and cannot be dismissed as being a delusion of people idealizing the past. This leads me to the conclusion that authenticity is indicative for a crisis of certainty and that the search for authenticity can consequently be seen as a search for a cure—the real, the unmediated—for a contemporary ailment—the hyperreal, the mediated, in short: the unauthentic. As a practice, authenticity is linked to the time-space in which the authentic is hoped to be found: The Past—with a capital P as suggested by Sharon Macdonald to signify the transformation of "something that is simply there, or has merely happened, into an arena from which selections can be made and values derived".[19]

I am intentionally not talking about history but about the Past. I want to stress that history, as a scientific but also pop-cultural or societal narration about past time-spaces, has a complicated relationship to authenticity. People turn to the Past to find what they think they are lacking in their everyday lives. But does that mean they also turn to history? Or are they creating their own histories in their search for authenticity? Of what kind are these histories?

HISTORICAL GAME STUDIES AND AUTHENTICITY

It is the aim of this collection of essays to untangle this complicated relationship between history and authenticity. The object of study for all the chapters in this collection is the digital game, an object which I would claim is a product of a "global authenticity industry"[20] which aims to deliver authentic experiences to

---

17 Boym, Svetlana: *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books 2001, p. 49.

18 Illouz, Eva: "Toward a post-normative critique of emotional authenticity: conclusion", in: Eva Illouz (ed.), *Emotions as Commodities. Capitalism, Consumption and Authenticity*, New York, London: Bloomsbury 2018, pp. 197–213.

19 Macdonald, Sharon: *Memorylands. Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*, London: Routledge 2013, p. 18.

20 Translation by the author, orig.: „global betriebene Authentizitätsindustrie"; S. Knaller / H. Müller: *Einleitung*, p. 8.

their consumers. In this, digital games are also part of "the emerging experience economy" identified by Joseph Pine and James Gilmore as early as 1998.[21]

There are numerous ways to offer authentic experiences but referring to the Past appears to be one of the most successful if the rise of heritage experiences like living history museums[22], heritage tourism[23] or historical reenactment[24] is any indication. As Adam Chapman has argued, digital games can also be understood as affording heritage experiences.[25] What all of these practices offer or claim to be offering are authentic experiences of the Past. Again, the question remains: As the Past is the time-space forever lost to human intervention, what are people really interacting with when they make use of the offers of the authenticity industry? If it is history, is this history revealed as being history—a mere approximation of what is past—or is the illusion of a direct access to the Past maintained?

Especially digital games appear to allow for unhindered travel into this enchanted time-space where authenticity should be waiting—they feel like time-travel machines. It does not come as a surprise, then, that authenticity is a term so common in popular as well as scientific discussions surrounding historical digital games. It is a marketing buzzword deployed by developers and publishers who try to position their games as being close to the reality of the Past. It is demanded by consumers who expect the historical games they play to be authentic and by this—I would argue—to offer authentic experiences. And, finally, it is a controversial subject for scholars who are tasked with untangling the semantic contents of the term. Interestingly enough, researcher in the field of "historical game studies"[26]

---

21 Pine, B. Joseph / Gilmore, James H.: "Welcome to the Experience Economy", in: *Harvard Business Review* 76:4 (1998), pp. 97–105, here p. 97.

22 Kerz, Christina: "Atmospheres and Authenticity. The Example of Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia (USA)", in: Rémy, Nicolas / Tixier, Nicolas (eds.), *Ambiances, tomorrow. Proceedings of 3rd International Congress on Ambiances*, September 2016, pp. 915–920; https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01409728

23 Chhabra, Deepak / Healy, Robert / Sills, Erin: "Staged Authenticity and Heritage Tourism.", in: *Annals of Tourism Research* 30:3 (2003), pp. 702–719.

24 Daugbjerg, Mads: "'As Real as it Gets': Vicarious Experience and the Power of Things in Historical Reenactment", in: Willner, Sarah / Koch, Georg / Samida, Stefanie (eds.), *Doing History. Performative Praktiken in der Geschichtskultur*, Münster: Waxman 2016, pp. 151–171.

25 Cf. Chapman, Adam: *Digital games as history. How videogames represent the past and offer access to historical practice*, New York: Routledge 2016, pp. 173-230.

26 Chapman, Adam / Foka, Anna / Westin, Jonathan: "Introduction: what is historical game studies?", in: *Rethinking History* 21:3 (2017), pp. 358–371.

only recently started to consider 'authenticity' in its full breadth as a term with at least two, possibly conflicting semantic levels (object and subject authenticity)—granted, historical game studies is still an emerging field in and of itself. As James Sweeting puts it: "[T]he videogames medium increasingly considers authenticity and accuracy to be separate designations rather than two sides of the same coin",[27] although the generalization of video games as a whole should be regarded carefully. Misconceptions about accuracy and authenticity are still seen far and wide in the industry and in discussions by players. This is only changing selectively and primarily in academic contexts. A clear distinction between authenticity and accuracy has only been formulated in recent years and what this means for how we, as researchers, should assess historical digital games and what they offer to players is still not clear. For me, it becomes more and more evident that we are dealing with a clash of object and subject authenticity here. Heavily discussed concepts like realism, historicity and accuracy lie more on the side of object authenticity. They point towards verification—of dates, of historical agents, of semi-automatic rifles—but also make abundantly clear that the digital game and its virtual worlds cannot be verified in the same way a historical source could be. Digital game worlds are not real,[28] and they never will be, but that does not mean that they cannot be authentic, or rather afford authentic experiences. This is the paradoxical quality of authenticity in media settings, signifying immediacy and a direct

---

27 Sweeting, James: "Authenticity: Depicting the Past in Historical Videogames", In: Michael Punt / Hannah Drayson (eds.), *Transtechnology Research Reader 2018*, pp. 62-38, here p. 65; http://www.trans-techresearch.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/TTReader2018_WebVersion.pdf

28 In the words of Gernot Böhme, digital games do not operate in the realms of reality but of „actuality", implying a potent ‚now-ness'. Virtual worlds are perceived as fact and in that they are actual. However, these virtual worlds do not correspond to a material reality. Following this phenomenological train of thought, games are – as I mentioned – not real but in their actuality they have real effects, making them a part of our reality. Therefore, as I am claiming that games are not real, I am by no means making a normative judgement diminishing the role of digital games in our reality. On the contrary, I think that a clear division between the actuality of games and our reality is not viable. Rather, I would argue that it is fruitful to examine the relationship between actuality and reality; Böhme, Gernot: „Wirklichkeiten. Über die Hybdridisierung von Räumen und die Erfahrung von Immersion", In: Institut für Immersive Medien (ed.), *Atmosphären: Gestimmte Räume und sinnliche Wahrnehmung*, Marburg: Schüren 2013, pp. 17-22, here p. 19.

contact—for example to the Past—while being evidently mediated.[29] The emphasis on accuracy by developers, publishers as well as players (and sometimes scholars) can be seen as an overcompensation for what the medium lacks in terms of its reality status. But rather than following these parties down the rabbit hole of accurate depiction and engaging in the ensuing, endless discussion about the 'realness' of a weapon's sound or of a knight's helmet, I see the future of authenticity research in historical game studies in the realm of subject or rather subjective authenticity.

Recent publications[30] point in this direction. To my knowledge, the first full-blown authenticity theory on digital games has been brought forth by Andrew J. Salvati and Jonathan M. Bullinger with their idea of "selective authenticity" and a "BrandWW2".[31] However, as Michał Mochoki has recently pointed out,[32] with their identified elements "technology fetishism, cinematic conventions, and documentary authority"[33] they still remain somewhat grounded in the realm of object authenticity and its kindred concepts, namely accuracy and realism. Groundbreaking but only barely adopted by researchers is Tobias Winnerling's work on "affective historicity" which he defines "as the attempt to create representations that convey the feeling of (representations of) the past."[34] He was the first to point towards authenticity as a feeling in the context of digital games and urges us to

---

29 Cf. S. Knaller / H. Müller: *Einleitung*, p. 10.

30 See for example: Salvati, Andrew J. / Bullinger, Jonathan M.: "Selective Authenticity and the Playable Past." in: Matthew Wilhelm Kapell / Andrew B. R. Elliott (eds.), *Playing with the past. Digital games and the simulation of history*, New York, London: Bloomsbury, pp. 153–168; Winnerling, Tobias: "The Eternal Recurrence of All Bits: How Historicizing Video Game Series Transform Factual History into Affective Historicity", in: *Eludamos. Journal for Computer Game Culture* 8:1 (2014), pp. 151–170; Copplestone, Tara Jane: "But that's not accurate: the differing perceptions of accuracy in cultural-heritage videogames between creators, consumers and critics.", in: *Rethinking History* 21:3 (2017), pp. 415–438; J. Sweeting: *Authenticity*; Mochoki, Michał: "Historical Simulation in Video Games and Real-World Heritage Sites: Questions of Authenticity and Immersion.", Unpublished Conference Paper, *International Simulation and Gaming Association Conference 2019*; Alvestad, Karl / Houghton, Robert (eds.), *The Middle Ages in Modern Culture. History and Authenticity in Contemporary Medievalism*, London: Bloomsbury 2021.

31 A. J. Salvati / J. M. Bullinger: *Selective Authenticity*, p. 154.

32 Cf. M. Mochoki: *Historical Simulation*, p. 10.

33 A. J. Salvati / J. M. Bullinger: *Selective Authenticity*, p. 154.

34 T. Winnerling: *The Eternal Recurrence of All Bits*, p. 152.

think about the processes that allow for these feelings to arise. Also, he makes the important distinction between history and affective historicity by claiming that "[h]istory works towards the rational, utilizing reasons, while affective historicity tends towards the emotional, utilizing feelings."[35] As I said, the relationship between authenticity and history is complicated. I would argue that future research can heavily benefit from rethinking what it is that these historical digital games offer and if and to what degree they are even historical. Authenticity and especially authentic experiences might be a different beast, more prone to the Past rather than history—as for example Andrew Elliott and Matthew Wilhelm Kapell have implied in their pioneering collection "Playing with the Past."[36] I for one see great value in turning to fields like tourism studies that have developed highly productive theories on authenticity in terms of a subjective, felt authenticity[37] and to phenomenology which allows for an understanding of authenticity as the result of convincing atmospheres—not of history but of the Past.[38] In this, we might even be dealing with three semantic levels of the term authenticity: authenticity of verification (object authenticity), authenticity of the self (subject authenticity) and felt authenticity (subjective authenticity).

ABOUT THIS BOOK

As I have presented, authenticity is a highly complex term, the potential of which we are merely beginning to grasp in historical game studies. Understanding it as a process, as an endless struggle between object authenticity, subject authenticity and even subjec*tive* authenticity, as an arena in which questions of power, staging, relationality and processuality are being debated, in which arguments and intentions of different social groups need to be considered, makes it a valuable ally

---

35 Ibid.

36 Elliott, Andrew B. R. / Kapell, Matthew Wilhelm: "Introduction: To Build a Past That Will 'Stand the Test of Time' – Discovering Historical Facts, Assembling Historical Narratives", in: Matthew Wilhelm Kapell / Andrew B. R. Elliott (eds.), *Playing with the past. Digital games and the simulation of history*, New York, London: Bloomsbury, pp. 1–29, here p.3.

37 See for example E. S. Vidon / J. M. Rickly / D. C. Knudsen: *Wilderness state of mind*.

38 Zimmermann, Felix: "Historical Digital Games as Experiences – How Atmospheres of the Past Satisfy Needs of Authenticity", in: Bonner, Marc (ed.), *Game | World | Architectonics – Transdisciplinary Approaches on Structures and Mechanics, Levels and Spaces, Aesthetics and Perception*, forthcoming.

when trying to find out what makes historical digital games so successful and fascinating for so many players. It would be wise to look at how other fields are dealing with this volatile composition and to thereby realize that authenticity is a phenomenon much broader than what is often called a historical authenticity. Consequently, the authors in this collection approach authenticity from numerous different angles and thereby contribute to the vibrant field sketched above.

The first section of this volume, "History as told by the Game" is concerned with how history and the past are appropriated in and through digital games. The essays grouped in this section make far-reaching arguments about the relationship between games and history/the past. *Angela Schwarz* offers a broad system to categorize historical digital games in terms of their integration of gameplay and historical information. The spectrum ranges from "Quarry" to "Brand" with the "Playground" in between. Additionally, she proposes 12 categories in which historical digital games might be sorted, ranging from "the first games with historical settings" to "the renaissance of well-known game brands with historical setting" and thereby contributes a short chronology of historical digital games to this volume. *Eugen Pfister* questions the ongoing demand for historical content. He argues that history in digital games is a place where identities are reaffirmed, ideologies discussed, and myths are naturalized. He aims to make these processes visible and therefore subject them to critical scrutiny. *Nico Nolden* argues for an understanding of games in terms of historical possibility spaces, especially when considering multiplayer online role-playing games. Possibility spaces like THE SECRET WORLD (2012) are presented as a technical form of collective historical memory which is performatively created in activities inside the game and surrounding the game. These activities are connected to notions of history with what Nolden calls authenticity anchors. *Rüdiger Brandis* deploys the concept of "procedural rhetoric" introduced by Ian Bogost and thereby identifies historism as the driving force behind many historical digital games. Consequently, he argues to assess digital games less in terms of the authenticity of their depictions but of the authenticity of the procedures they deploy and invite players to engage with.

The second section of this volume, "Authenticity in and of History", engages with the numerous manifestations of authenticity in the context of (not only) historical games. It presents theoretical concepts and category systems as well as engaging case studies in an attempt to trace the janus-faced term. *Angela Schwarz* proposes a systematic approach to techniques of authentication deployed in historical digital games. These techniques comprise "authentication through images and/or sounds", "through facts and data", "through players' contemporaries" and "through fictitious characters." *Andrew B. R. Elliot* and *Mike Horswell* deal with the depiction of the crusades in digital games based on the notion that

understanding authenticity in this context means building on memory studies and its methods. They identify "crusading icons" which can be traced through different popular formats and frequently re-appear in digital games. *Andra Ivănescu* turns to METAL GEAR SOLID V: THE PHANTOM PAIN (2015) to offer a ludomusicologist take on authenticity in digital games. She connects auteur and nostalgia theory to authenticity and explains how the game and its creator Hideo Kojima create different kinds of authenticity, for example an authentic feeling of the 1980s created by means of audio mixtapes. Finally, *Lara Keilbart* contributes to a history of queer representation by presenting examples of queerness in games from the 1980s till today. She aims to define queer authenticity and thus to encourage new perspectives on existing game material.

The third section of this volume, "The Politics of Authenticity", illustrates the oftentimes heated discussion surrounding the concept, and its implications for broader societal processes and debates. *Aurelia Brandenburg* engages with the highly successful THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT (2015) and thereby enters the realm of medievalism and neomedievalism where history and fantasy collide. She identifies overlapping arguments in debates of advocates and adversaries of historical authenticity surrounding this game and concludes that both parties adhere to a distinct notion of the Middle Ages as being the 'dark ages'. *Tobias Winnerling* analyses debates surrounding one of the most prominent strategy games from Austria and Germany: the ANNO series (since 1998). He focuses on how colonialism has been depicted in the series and identifies a systematic blanking of the colonialist implications of the games' settings and mechanics. *Angus Mol* outlines processes of playful interaction with authenticity. He demonstrates that the young participants of the 'RoMeincraft' project counterplayed the past and thereby interacted with expert authorities organizing and supervising the project. By doing this, Mol unearths the oftentimes implicit relationship of authenticity with questions of power and authority. *Jörg Friedrich* gives insight in the development of the critically acclaimed THROUGH THE DARKEST OF TIMES (2020), which thematizes the resistance in Germany under Nazi rule. He claims that to authentically and responsibly engage with problematic pasts, developers have to rethink what is deemed authentic and find their own access to the respective Past by not reproducing the aesthetic of the perpetrators but of those who stood against them.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alvestad, Karl / Houghton, Robert (eds.), *The Middle Ages in Modern Culture. History and Authenticity in Contemporary* Medievalism, London: Bloomsbury 2021.

Baudrillard, Jean: *Simulacra and Simulation*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press 1994.

Bauman, Zygmunt: *Retrotopia*, Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press 2017.

Bogost, Ian: "It Doesn't Matter If Anyone Exists or Not. What a website that generates infinite fake humans tells us about modern life", in: *The Atlantic*, February 24, 2020; https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2020/02/how-generate-infinite-fake-humans/606943/

Boym, Svetlana: *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books 2001.

Böhme, Gernot: „Wirklichkeiten. Über die Hybdridisierung von Räumen und die Erfahrung von Immersion", in: Institut für Immersive Medien (ed.), *Atmosphären: Gestimmte Räume und sinnliche Wahrnehmung*, Marburg: Schüren 2013, pp. 17-22

Böhme, Gernot: *Ästhetischer Kapitalismus* (3rd ed.), Berlin: Suhrkamp 2018

Chapman, Adam: *Digital games as history. How videogames represent the past and offer access to historical practice*, New York: Routledge 2016.

Chapman, Adam / Foka, Anna / Westin, Jonathan: "Introduction: what is historical game studies?", in: *Rethinking History* 21:3 (2017), pp. 358–371.

Chhabra, Deepak / Healy, Robert / Sills, Erin: "Staged Authenticity and Heritage Tourism.", in*: Annals of Tourism Research* 30:3 (2003), pp. 702–719.

Copplestone, Tara Jane: "But that's not accurate: the differing perceptions of accuracy in cultural-heritage videogames between creators, consumers and critics.", in: *Rethinking History* 21:3 (2017), pp. 415–438.

Daugbjerg, Mads: "'As Real as it Gets': Vicarious Experience and the Power of Things in Historical Reenactment", in: Willner, Sarah / Koch, Georg / Samida, Stefanie (eds.), *Doing History. Performative Praktiken in der Geschichtskultur*, Münster: Waxman 2016, pp. 151–171.

Elliott, Andrew B. R. / Kapell, Matthew Wilhelm: "Introduction: To Build a Past That Will 'Stand the Test of Time' – Discovering Historical Facts, Assembling Historical Narratives", in: Matthew Wilhelm Kapell / Andrew B. R. Elliott (eds.), *Playing with the past. Digital games and the simulation of history*, New York, London: Bloomsbury, pp. 1–29.

Illouz, Eva: "Toward a post-normative critique of emotional authenticity: conclusion", in: Eva Illouz (ed.), *Emotions as Commodities. Capitalism, Consumption and Authenticity*, New York, London: Bloomsbury 2018, pp. 197–213.

Knaller, Susanne: "Genealogie des ästhetischen Authentizitätsbegriffs", in: Susanne Knaller / Harro Müller (eds.), *Authentizität. Diskussion eines ästhetischen Begriffs*, München: Wilhelm Fink 2006, pp. 17–35.

Knaller, Susanne, / Müller, Harro: "Einleitung.", in: Susanne Knaller / Harro Müller (eds.), *Authentizität. Diskussion eines ästhetischen Begriffs*, München: Wilhelm Fink 2006, pp. 7–16

Kerz, Christina: "Atmospheres and Authenticity. The Example of Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia (USA)", in: Rémy, Nicolas / Tixier, Nicolas (eds.), *Ambiances, tomorrow. Proceedings of 3rd International Congress on Ambiances*, September 2016, pp. 915–920; https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01409728

Macdonald, Sharon: *Memorylands. Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*, London: Routledge 2013.

Mochoki, Michał: "Historical Simulation in Video Games and Real-World Heritage Sites: Questions of Authenticity and Immersion.", Unpublished Conference Paper, *International Simulation and Gaming Association Conference 2019*.

Pine, B. Joseph / Gilmore, James H.: "Welcome to the Experience Economy", in: *Harvard Business Review* 76:4 (1998), pp. 97–105.

Pirker, Eva Ulrike / Rüdiger, Mark: "Authentizitätsfiktionen in populären Geschichtskulturen: Annäherungen.", in: Eva Ulrike Pirker (ed.), *Echte Geschichte. Authentizitätsfiktionen in populären Geschichtskulturen*, Bielefeld: transcript 2010, pp. 11–30.

Rehling, Andrea / Paulmann, Johannes: "Historische Authentizität jenseits von 'Original' und 'Fälschung'. Ästhetische Wahrnehmung – gespeicherte Erfahrung – gegenwärtige Performanz", in: Martin Sabrow / Achim Saupe (eds.), *Historische Authentizität*, Göttingen: Wallstein 2016, pp. 91–125.

Sabrow, Martin: "Die Aura des Authentischen in historischer Perspektive", in: Martin Sabrow / Achim Saupe (eds.), *Historische Authentizität*. Göttingen: Wallstein 2016, pp. 29–43.

Salvati, Andrew J. / Bullinger, Jonathan M.: "Selective Authenticity and the Playable Past.", in: Matthew Wilhelm Kapell / Andrew B. R. Elliott (eds.), *Playing with the past. Digital games and the simulation of history*, New York, London: Bloomsbury, pp. 153–168.

Saupe, Achim. "Authenticity", in: *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte* 2016; http://docupedia.de/zg/Saupe_authentizitaet_v3_en_2016.

Sweeting, James: "Authenticity: Depicting the Past in Historical Videogames", in: Michael Punt / Hannah Drayson (eds.), *Transtechnology Research Reader 2018*, pp. 62-38; http://www.trans-techresearch.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/TTReader2018_WebVersion.pdf

Vidon, Elizabeth S. / Rickly, Jillian M. / Knudsen, Daniel C.: "Wilderness state of mind: Expanding authenticity", in: *Annals of Tourism Research* 73 (2018), pp. 62–70.

Winnerling, Tobias: "The Eternal Recurrence of All Bits: How Historicizing Video Game Series Transform Factual History into Affective Historicity", in: *Eludamos. Journal for Computer Game Culture* 8:1 (2014), pp. 151–170.

Zimmermann, Felix: "Historical Digital Games as Experiences – How Atmospheres of the Past Satisfy Needs of Authenticity", in: Bonner, Marc (ed.), *Game | World | Architectonics – Transdisciplinary Approaches on Structures and Mechanics, Levels and Spaces, Aesthetics and Perception*, forthcoming.

LUDOGRAPHY

ANNO [series] (Sunflowers/Ubisoft 1998-2019, O: Max Design/Related Designs/Blue Byte).

METAL GEAR SOLID V: THE PHANTOM PAIN (Konami 2015, O: Kojima Productions).

THE SECRET WORLD (FunCom 2012, O: FunCom).

THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT (Warner Bros. Interactive 2015, O: CD Projekt RED).

THROUGH THE DARKEST OF TIMES (HandyGames 2020, O: Paintbucket Games).