Intertextuality is present in all types of media, from serial literature to television series, from comics to cinema. It accounts for a significant proportion of the enjoyment experienced by the reader/viewer in the consumption of these media, but also for the richness of textual productions of the latter, which extends into a vast network of quotations, open or covert references, influences and parodies.

The notion of intertextuality has changed considerably through its 80-year history. As part of a process of socio-historical definition of the poetics of the novel through dialogism (Bakhtin, 1978), or a semanalysis approach (Kristeva, 1969, 1970) and, more broadly, poststructuralism (Barthes, 1974; Sollers, 1968), pointing alternately to hermeneutical (Riffaterre, 1979, 1982) (Barthes, 1973), poetic (Genette, 1979, 1982), genetic (Le Calvez, 1997; Pickering, 1997; Rastier, 1997), sociodiscursive (An-genot, 1989), and sociocritical (Duchet & Maurus, 2011) phenomena or, more recently, to adaptation (Hutcheon 2013), transmediality (Jenkins 2006), and transfictionalization (Saint-Gelais 2011), this notion is somewhat polysemic and polemic. A vast collective assembly of specification and deconstruction of the terms “intertextuality” and “intertext” has taken place during this long history, and today, they refer to a constellation of textual relations and various texts known as co-texts (Duchet & Maurus, 2011), metafictions (Hutcheon, 1984), transfigurations (Saint-Gelais, 2011), transmedia storytelling (Jenkins, 2006), adaptations (Hutcheon, 2013) autotextuality (Dällenbach, 1976) intertextual irony (Eco, 2003), general or limited intertextuality (Ricardou, 1986/1974), external or internal intertextuality (Ricardou, 1971), allusion, plagiarism, pastiche, charge, forgery and parody (Genette, 1982), quotation (Compagnon, 1979), interimage (Duffy, 1997), prescriptive intertextuality (Vetters, 2011) and doctrinal intertextuality (Suleiman, 1983), metatextuality and hypertextuality (Genette, 1982), architextuality (Genette, 1979), paratextuality (Genette, 1987), and so on. In practice, intertextuality has become functional, saved from the danger that awaited it of becoming a catch-all concept that could fit everything and its opposite.

Despite the pervasiveness of the concept of intertextuality in digital games and a longstanding tradition associated to it, only a handful of game scholars have used it or one of its derivative terms in their research (see Bonk, 2014; Consalvo, 2003; Dormans, 2006; Duret, 2015; Egliston, 2015; Jones, 2008; Krzywinska, 2006, 2008; Krzywinska, MacCallum-Stewart & Parsler, 2011; Love, 2010; Poor, 2012; Schrader, Lawless & McCreery, 2009, Scodari, 1993; Weise, 2009) and this book is the first to be entirely dedicated to it.

What might explain the absence of this concept in the game studies field? Since the early 2000s, there has been a shift from intertextuality (or, more broadly, of transtextuality, a near-synonym of the term for some authors) to transfictionality and transmediality in the study of fictional works (novels, comics, digital games, films, graphic novels, etc.), with the researches of Jens Bonk (2014), Kristy Dena (2009), Henry Jenkins (2003; 2006), Marsha Kinder (1991), Lisbeth Klastrup and Susana Tosca (2013),
Marie-Laure Ryan (2008; 2013), Richard Saint-Gelais (2000; 2011), Carlos Alberto Scolari (2009), and Jan-Noël Thon (2009), among others. This shift implies a change in object of study and, consequently, the level of analysis: after the text, the attention of researchers focuses more readily on the spatiotemporal universes of the works (known as the cosmos, diegesis, fictional world, storyworld, heterocosm, trans-fictional world, and so forth), the plots that occur within these universes and the characters inhabiting them. In other words, the focus is on the fiction rather than the texts that convey it.

In digital games, transfictionality is a widespread phenomenon and justifies the growing number of researchers interested in it. But this interest for transfictionality should not be allowed to obscure the intertextual/transtextual nature of the digital games, the contribution of exogenous texts (pastiches, parodies, quotations, allusions, metatexts, hypertexts, paratexts, and so forth) strongly contributing to their depth. In other words, the concepts of transfictionality and transmediality do not call into question the relevance of intertextuality. On the contrary, some of the collaborations in this book illustrate the relevance of addressing the digital game object by combining the two perspectives, especially when it comes to analyzing its procedural dimension.

More broadly, the richness and scope of the contributions presented here attest to the topicality of intertextuality and its usefulness with regard to the field of game studies. This research will allow us to better map the vast textual ecosystems that feed digital games and which are fed back from them.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK**

This book is organized around five topics: transmediality and intermediality (chapters 1 to 4); intertextuality *stricto sensu* (chapters 5 to 10), with the first three chapters focusing on the role played by gamers in the intertextual process: hypertextuality in the Genettian sense, in reference to reboots and adaptations (chapters 11 & 12); architextuality (chapters 13 & 14); and finally, paratextuality (chapters 15 & 16).

A brief description of each chapter follows.

**Transmediality/Intermediality**

**Chapter 1**

In “Arkham Epic: *Batman* Video Games as Totalizing Texts”, Luke Arnott describes the *Arkham* series of Batman video games as an epic narrative. Four levels of analysis are proposed (the textual, paratextual/intertextual, symbolic, and socio-historical levels, respectively) in order to illustrate how the series can be critiqued as a cohesive epic within the Batman franchise, with which it shares a relationship of both continuity and competition. The chapter concludes by demonstrating how, as totalizing texts, the *Arkham* games are a representation of the postmodern space.

**Chapter 2**

In “The Inescapable Intertextuality of *Blade Runner - The Video Game*”, Clara Fernández-Vara examines how *Blade Runner - The Video Game* is part of a larger transmedial narrative, including Philip K. Dick’s novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and Ridley Scott’s film, *Blade Runner*, as it utilizes the properties of interactive environments in order to create an interactive world that the player is invited
to explore. *Blade Runner - The Video Game* retains the themes and the fictional world of the novel, as well as the conventions of *noir* detective stories, which are adapted in accordance with the procedural, participatory, spatial, and encyclopedic characteristics of the digital game medium. By doing so, the game presents itself as “inescapably intertextual.”

**Chapter 3**

Many critics contend that the narrative complexity of *Alan Wake*, a game that boasts a profusion of storyworlds-within-storyworlds, comes at the expense of its gameplay, which some consider simplistic and repetitive. In “A Different Kind of Monster: Uncanny Media and *Alan Wake*’s Textual Monstrosity”, Michael Fuchs argues, however, that this alleged weakness with regard to gameplay, as well as the confusion between and conflation of different storyworlds, reinforces the game text’s meaning in accordance with its self-reflexivity toward the Gothic tradition and its meta-reflexivity concerning the relationship between video games and other media. The author suggests that the uncanny effects produced by *Alan Wake*’s Gothic narrative are more likely attributable to the elements of intermediality and remediation that are found in the game rather than the monsters that the players are pitted against. *Alan Wake* is thus seen as a monstrous text that cannibalizes other media.

**Chapter 4**

In “Intermediality and Video Games: Analysis of *Silent Hill 2*”, Mehdi Debbabi Zourgani, Julien Lalu, and Matthieu Weisser analyze the *Silent Hill 2* video game from an intermedial perspective and, more specifically, the relationship that unites two of the main protagonists of the game. To this end, three levels of intermediality are used: co-presence, transfer, and emergence.

**Intertextuality**

**Chapter 5**

In “Gamers (Don’t) Fear the Reaper: Musical Intertextuality and Interference in Video Games”, Andréane Morin-Simard examines the intertextual relationship that links video games together when they share the same song. The media trajectory of the song *Don’t Fear the Reaper* is then mapped in order to understand how its recontextualization in the *Ripper, Roadkill* and *Prey* video games impacts the gamer’s experience. In doing so, the author shows how the association of the Blue Öyster Cult’s song with previous works interferes with its functions regarding the gameplay and the narrative of the games.

**Chapter 6**

In “*BioShock* and the Ghost of Ayn Rand: Universal Learning and Tacit Knowledge in Contemporary Video Games”, Chris Richardson and Mike Elrod examine the *BioShock* video game and its relation to the work of the Russian-born American philosopher Ayn Rand. More specifically, the authors put Jacques Rancière’s model of emancipatory learning and Michael Polanyi’s concept of tacit knowledge in dialogue with the concept of intertextuality in order to show how the players benefit from transferable skills and knowledge by forming connections to other media without receiving explanations from within the game.
Chapter 7

In “Exploring Complex Intertextual Interactions in Video Games: Connecting Informal and Formal Education for Youth”, Kathy Sanford, Timothy Frank Hopper, and Jamie Burren use a complexity theory framework and propose the concept of complex intertextual literacy in order to explain how adolescents are provided incentives through video games like BioShock Infinite, Gone Home, L.A. Noire, and The Stanley Parable to make connections to a wide array of texts. The authors consider the potential of these games to form a critical space to engage students in meaning-making.

Chapter 8

In “‘You can’t mess with the program, Ralph’: Intertextuality of Player-Agency in Filmic Virtual Worlds”, Theo Plothe examines the representation of player-agency control in films that focus on action within digital games. This representation relies on three essential elements: a separation between the virtual and the real; a written code underlying the virtual world that the player can manipulate, but not effectively change; a relationship based on subservience or conflict between the player and the player-agent. The films analyzed in this chapter are Tron, Tron: Legacy, The Matrix, The Matrix Reloaded, The Matrix Revolutions, The Lawnmower Man, eXistenZ, Avalon, Spy Kids 3-D: Game Over, and Wreck-it Ralph.

Chapter 9

In “Cultural Transduction and Intertextuality in Video Games: An Analysis of Three International Case Studies”, Enrique Uribe-Jongbloed, Hernán David Espinosa-Medina, and James Biddle address the question of video game localization through the convergence of the concepts of intertextuality and cultural transduction. To this end, three case studies are presented, namely El Chavo Kart, South Park: The Stick of Truth, and the Kingdom Rush series.

Chapter 10

In “Moving Forward by Looking Back: Using Art and Architectural History to Make and Understand Games”, Christopher Totten demonstrates how the field of game art could benefit from the history of art and architecture and finds new opportunities for game production. As an alternative to the most popular ways of analyzing game art, which are based on the history of game graphics and technology, artistic intertextuality and architextuality are useful tools for researchers and developers to understand and make new game types. The author analyzes various indie games such as Dys4ia, Dominique Pamplemousse, A Duck Has an Adventure, and Lissitzky’s Revenge.

Hypertextuality

Chapter 11

In “Artifacts of Empire: Orientalism and Inner-Texts in Tomb Raider (2013)”, Kristin M.S. Bezio examines Crystal Dynamics’ 2013 Tomb Raider, the reboot of the original Core Design Tomb Raider from
1996. She draws on Edward Said’s concept of Orientalism, Julia Kristeva’s constraints of the symbolic order, as well as Nick Dyer-Witheford and Greig de Peuter’s conception of video games as “games of empire,” to demonstrate how the Tomb Raider reboot, constrained by both its inter- and inner-texts, failed to escape the constraints of imperial procedural semiotics.

Chapter 12

In “Weaving Nature Mage: Multi-layered Intertextuality in a book-to-game adaptation”, Claudio Pires Franco analyzes, from the point of view of a researcher and creator, a case of cross-media adaptations, namely the book-to-game adaptation of a teen fantasy series called Nature Mage, by Duncan Pile. The study examines three layers of cross-media intertextuality: the level of specific texts, medium conventions, and genre conventions. In addition, the author describes the use of readers’ involvement and co-creation implied in the adaptation process as a form of collective intertextuality “through which the intertextual repertoires of individuals meet to weave a final text.”

Architextuality

Chapter 13

In “Interprocedurality: Procedural Intertextuality in Digital Games”, Marcelo Simão de Vasconcellos, Flávia Garcia de Carvalho, and Inesita Soares de Araujo prefer the procedural dimension of intertextuality (i.e. rules, mechanics) to the representational one (e.g.: text, images, audio). When used jointly with Ian Bogost’s procedural rhetoric, the concept of intertextuality becomes “interprocedurality,” which is defined as “the explicit or implicit inclusion of other games’ rules and mechanics in a given game.” The authors illustrate their concept by analyzing the Deus Ex: Human Revolution video game.

Chapter 14

In “Architextuality and Video Games, a Semiotic Approach”, drawing on Algirdas Greimas’ schema of actantial and thematic roles and Yuri Lotman’s theory of the semiosphere, Mattia Thibault and Maria Katsaridou study the horror and high fantasy genres by making use of a semiotic methodology oriented toward the analysis of the architextual aspects of video games. The authors use a broad definition of architextuality that implies intertextuality and hypertextuality in order to take into account the notion of genre in complex phenomena such as transmedia storytelling. They defend their argument by analyzing the tabletop role-playing game Dungeons & Dragons and the Warcraft, Silent Hill, and Resident Evil video game series.

Paratextuality

Chapter 15

In “Paratext: The In-Between of Structure and Play”, Daniel Dunne notes the lack of attention concerning the Genettian concept of peritext in the game studies field, when compared with that of epitext.
After discussing prior works on the topic by game scholars such as Mia Consalvo, Peter Lunenfeld, and David Jara, he remedies the situation by offering a new definition of paratext that focuses on peritextual analysis with the help of a model considering three levels of video games where paratext can be found: in-game, in-system, and in-world.

Chapter 16

In “‘Footage Not Representative’: Redefining Paratextuality for the Analysis of Official Communication of Video Games”, Jan Švelch draws on Alexander R. Galloway’s work on interfaces in order to put forward a revised definition of paratextuality. This redefinition takes into account the relationship between a text and its socio-historical reality and its links to wider textual ecologies. The author then examines paratextuality in four sample genres of official video game communication: trailers, infographics, official websites, and patch notes.

Christophe Duret
Université de Sherbrooke, Canada

Christian-Marie Pons
Université de Sherbrooke, Canada

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