ENCYCLOPEDIA OF

VIDEO GAMES

The Culture, Technology, and Art of Gaming

SECOND EDITION

Mark J. P. Wolf, Editor

Encyclopedia of Video Games

Encyclopedia of Video Games

THE CULTURE, TECHNOLOGY, AND ART OF GAMING

SECOND EDITION

VOLUME I: A–F

Mark J. P. Wolf, Editor

Contents

v

system's library was *Drag Strip* (1977), a racing game making use of the unique controller design to simulate a gear stick and throttle (with an eight-way joystick and rotary knob, respectively).

The system was discontinued in 1984 when Zircon withdrew from the video game business in the wake of the industry crash of 1983. In 2004, the system's demo videocart, from 1976, was discovered to have one of the earliest Easter eggs (Whalen 2012, 70).

P. Konrad Budziszewski

See also: Cartridges; Easter Eggs; Generations of Technology

Further Reading

Dyer, Clinton R., and Chris Webb. "Fairchild Channel F FAQ." *Digital Press*, May 25, 1997. Available at http://www.digitpress.com/faq/channelf.htm.

Edwards, Benj. "Interview with Jerry Lawson." *Vintage Computing and Gaming*, February 28, 2009. Available at http://www.vintagecomputing.com/index.php/archives/545.

Whalen, Zach. "Channel F for Forgotten: The Fairchild Video Entertainment System." In *Before the Crash: Early Video Game History*, edited by Mark J. P. Wolf, 60–80. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2012.

Fallout Series

The *Fallout* games have always thematized humankind's inability to evolve past vital shortcomings in human nature and the never-ending strife for power and dominance. As science fiction dystopias, they involve players in desolate wastelands in which nuclear fallout has given way to unfamiliar and hostile ecosystems, where ideologies aim to realize their own, often blind and miscarried, dreams of Utopia. It is this mixture of visualizing the "imagination of disaster" (Sontag 1961) and "the potentially destructive and dystopian nature of human agency" (Domsch 2015, 407) that makes the *Fallout* games an ideal playground to explore "the deepest anxieties about contemporary existence" (Sontag 1961, 220). This traumatic experience—caused by the fear of the bomb in the aftermath of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings in 1945 (Sontag 1961)—is wrapped into a playful trial action that satirically comments on empirical world issues, to not only exorcise these inner demons but also help players cope with them.

To outline this message, the *Fallout* games draw inspiration from the Cold War fears of the 1950s onward and extrapolate these into retrofuturistic scenarios where the bombs have fallen (Schulzke 2014, 10). They thus grant players an anarchical escape from their contemporary social order but also immerse them in strange yet somehow familiar worlds that induce players to critically rethink the relation between the fictional game world and their empirical surroundings. Set in a postapocalyptic United States, the games span over the years 2102 to 2287 and involve players in the roles of avatars (player characters) to explore a world without rules and to act out their unconscious desires. The main *Fallout* games are thereby set within open worlds and pertain to the role-playing genre (RPG): *Fallout: A Post Nuclear Role Playing Game* (Interplay Productions, 1997), *Fallout 2: A Post Nuclear Role Playing Game* (Black Isle Studios, 1998), *Fallout 3* (Bethesda Game Studios,

2008), and *Fallout 4* (Bethesda Game Studies, 2015). In addition, several spin-offs complement the series: the turn-based real-time RPG *Fallout Tactics: Brotherhood of Steel* (Micro Forté, 2001), the linear action game *Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel* (Interplay Entertainment, 2004), the open-world RPG *Fallout: New Vegas* (Obsidian Entertainment, 2010), the free-to-play (F2P) Vault simulation *Fallout: Shelter* (Bethesda Game Studios, 2015), and the online RPG *Fallout 76* (Bethesda Game Studies, 2018). Moreover, there are some analog games worth mentioning, such as the board game Monopoly: Fallout Collector's Edition (Winning Moves, 2015), Fallout: Pinball (Zen Studios, 2016), and the tabletop game Fallout: Wasteland Warfare (Modiphius Entertainment, 2017).

FALLOUT AND FALLOUT 2

The beginning of the series has its roots on the PC with the first two *Fallout* games from Interplay Productions (1997) and Black Isle Studios (1998). Inspired by games such as Interplay Productions' *Wasteland* (1988), *Fallout 1* and *2* are presented from an isometric point of view and pertain to the role-playing genre. Although they offer players an open world to discover at their leisure, movement is reduced to a point-and-click mechanic, and combat is turn based. In addition, the games introduce elements that will shape the series, such as branching dialogs, player choices that move the story in different directions, and the Pip-Boy 2000: a mechanical display strapped around the main character's arm to grant him (and players) access to world maps, objectives, game states, and so on. What is more, the S.P.E.C.I.A.L system

allows players to distribute perks to individual points (strength, perception, endurance, charisma, intelligence, agility, and luck) to create the character of their choosing.

The plot of *Fallout* begins in 2161 and places players in the role of the Vault Dweller whose mission is to restore Vault 13's water purification system. However, additional threats soon emerge, including the Super Mutants, who are genetically modified beings that resemble Frankenstein's monster. Players dealing with the threat will be aided by the Brotherhood of Steel, a faction that is eager to accumulate technology and cleanse the wasteland of hostile creatures. As such, the game introduces a fundamental (ecological) theme to the series: the purification of nuclear pollution but also of humankind's unconscious urge to violence and the fear of the Other (with the Super Mutants representing the Brotherhood's darkest selves).

Fallout 2 proceeds in a similar manner. Set in 2241, the game has players obtain the Garden of Eden Creation Kit (GECK), a terraforming device to restore withered parts of the wasteland. The Enclave are the major faction here. They claim to be the members of the former U.S. government and aim to restore order in a desolate world. In addition, they are involved in the Vault-Tec experiments; the vaults were not created to provide survivors with safe havens but to conduct social experiments on them: to design intentional flaws (e.g., having radiation leak in, which led to the society of Ghouls in Vault 12), to examine the effects of isolation or mixed-race tensions, and so on. Moreover, with *Fallout 2*, the series begins to ingrain culture

references into the game world (such as allusions to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eight-Four* [1949] or Robert Wise's film *The Day the Earth Stood Still* [1951]) and steadily sets its satirical tone.

FALLOUT 3 AND FALLOUT: NEW VEGAS

With Bethesda Game Studios acquiring the *Fallout* trademark, the transition to the third dimension was a natural step for the series (employing the Gamebryo Engine, which was used for Bethesda Game Studios' *The Elders Scrolls: Oblivion* [2006]). *Fallout 3* (2008), released for PC and on Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3, still belongs to the genre of open-world RPGs, but it is shown from a first-person or third-person point of view. In addition, turn-based combat has given way to real-time shooting mechanics—although with the Vault-Tec Assisted Targeting System (V.A.T.S.), the original mechanics are retained but in adjusted form. Activated time slows down so that players can target individual body parts of opponents.

Notwithstanding these changes, *Fallout 3* confronts players with themes similar to those of its predecessors. Set in 2277, the main plot revolves around the Lone Wanderer who becomes involved in his father's work on water purification in the Washington, DC, area. The Enclave follow a different agenda with Project Purity, however. To cleanse the wasteland of mutated life-forms, they aim to poison its water reserves so that they may take power. Again, the fear of Otherness and the desire for dominance and power are foregrounded, which is complemented by a satirical tone that familiarizes players with nuclear fears.

In fact, *Fallout 3*'s central ethical problem revolves around an undetonated nuclear warhead situated in the midst of one of its major cities, Megaton. Opinions on the bomb differ, and one faction—called the Children of the Atom—even builds a religious cult around it. *Fallout 3* thus stands in the tradition of science fiction, such as Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964), which comments on Cold War anxieties by satirizing the treatment of the bomb: why fear it, when you can worship it. In contrast to the movie, players of *Fallout 3* may choose for themselves how to deal with the bomb (and other issues) and explore the gray moral outcomes of their choices.

It is easy to discern that player agency is of great importance to the *Fallout* games, and *Fallout 3* is probably the series' darkest game in this respect because players can freely determine their characters' ethical inclination. Similarly, Obsidian Entertainment's *Fallout: New Vegas* (2010), released on PC, Xbox 360, and PlayStation 3, is set in 2281 in the Mojave Desert and confronts players with four factions: the New California Republic, Caesar's Legion, Robert House, and Yes Man. Each of these groups pursues its own agenda, and players may choose with whom to side, whom to play, or whom to simply ignore all along. As a consequence, player choices move the story in ethically gray directions, with no good ending to the game. *Fallout: New Vegas* thus paints an utterly bleak and pessimistic picture of human nature by involving players in a game world that is governed by the survival of the fittest, thus foregrounding our

selfishness, natural greed, and desire for power.

FALLOUT 4

Given the dystopian nature of its predecessors, it may come as a surprise that *Fallout 4* (Bethesda Game Studios, 2015) embarks on a more utopian route. The game was released on PC, Xbox One, and PlayStation 4 and is set in the Boston metropolitan area and surrounding Massachusetts, referred to as the Commonwealth. The game world is densely polluted, and vibrant colors and weather phenomena (such as radiations storms or deep mist) depict the Commonwealth as a destroyed yet picturesque environment where a fresh start seems imaginable. This regenerative appeal was never realized in previous games (probably intentionally) and transforms *Fallout 4* not simply into a warning of nuclear disaster but also into an experience that suggests ways to cope with it and move forward in different directions.

The game is set in 2287 (210 years after the Great War) and involves players in the role of the Sole Survivor, who embarks on a mission to search for his lost son. Players may choose a female or male character (mother or father), but the main focus soon shifts from the private sphere of the family to a societal struggle for Utopia. On their journey through the Commonwealth, players encounter memorable locations such as Diamond City (where people have found refuge form the surrounding dystopia), Abernathy Farm (a small, peaceful agricultural society), and Goodneighbor (a community of ghouls and criminals exiled from Diamond City). All of these seek help in different ways, and players may choose to

intervene. In Diamond City, for example, a strange paranoia infests people's mind, making them believe they are being swapped by identical-looking Synths (artificial beings that are created by the ominous Institute). This thematic links *Fallout 4* to American science fiction films such as Don Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) and foregrounds the game's satirical tone in conveying Cold War anxieties (particularly the fear of a hidden Communist invasion).

The Synth issue and fear of the Institute are widespread in the Commonwealth, and several factions have their own ideas of how to deal with the supposed threat and chart ways into the future. Whereas the nationalist Brotherhood of Steel regard them as dangerous (as things that do not deserve to live), the Railroad functions as the humanitarian opposite. In their attempt to save the Synths and hide them in safe houses until they are integrated into society, a clear connection to the real-world Underground Railroad (that helped African American slaves to escape to the North) from the mid-nineteenth century can be established. The Institute, on the other hand, pursues a different agenda. They are the underground boogeyman of the Commonwealth and aim to replace the anarchical filth from above with artificial beings so that they can establish a society of scientists. Lastly, there are the Minutemen, a faction with clear references to the independently formed, eponymous militia in the American Revolutionary War. Their agenda is to restore order to the Commonwealth by establishing a network of egalitarian communities and dealing with the Raider threat.

All of these factions take inspiration from American history (but also create

allusions to contemporary trends, such as the refugee crises in Europe) and urge players to create imaginative connections between both worlds. This also manifests itself in how players may deal with the factions, for whom they will conduct missions, with whom they will side, and eventually how they will decide which of these ideologies they deem best to control the Commonwealth. A particular utopian (or dystopian) energy is thereby placed on the creational aspects of the game. Players may choose to build a network of egalitarian settlements dispersed throughout the Commonwealth where people of all races and ethnicities are welcome. However, they may also choose to do nothing or spend the resources they encounter to create phallic symbols of power to fuel their selfish desires.

Gerald Farca

See also: apocalypse

Further Reading

Domsch, Sebastian. "Dystopian Video Games: Fallout in Utopia." In *Dystopia, Science Fiction, Post-Apocalypse: Classics—New Tendencies—Model Interpretations*, edited by Eckart Voigts and Alessandra Boller, 395–410. Trier, Germany: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2015.

Farca, Gerald. *Playing Dystopia: Nightmarish Worlds in Video Games and the Player's Aesthetic Response.* Vol. 8. Bielefeld, Germany: Transcript, 2018.

Schulzke, Marcus. "The Critical Power of Virtual Dystopias." *Games and Culture* 9, no. 5 (July 2014): 315–334. Available at http://gac.sagepub.com/content/9/5/315.

Schulzke, Marcus. "Moral Decision Making in *Fallout.*" *Game Studies* 9, no. 2 (November 2009). Available at http://gamestudies.org/0902/articles/schulzke.

Sontag, Susan. *Against Interpretation and Other Essays.* New York: Picador, 1961.

Famicom. *See* **Nintendo Entertainment System/Nintendo Famicom**

Fandom

As an analytical term, *fandom* refers to the cultural domain of audiences that actively group around certain fiction, such as a game, novel, television series, or popular music and the products derived from them. Fandom based on such sources consists of various online and off-line communities, which have three defining features. First, fandom involves a highly interpretive community in which media products are analyzed and discussed. Second, these communities are also social communities in which individuals can establish relations with other aficionados. And third, fandom often involves a considerable creative function. Within fan communities, it is quite common for individuals to create their own stories (fan fiction) and artwork based on the sources they love. Other fans, in turn, read and evaluate these fan products.

The origin of the term *fandom* is rather unclear. Its earliest media citing appears in a sports column of the *Washington Post* on October 10, 1896. The word *fan*, in turn, is an abbreviation of *fanaticus* or *fanatic*, which has connotations of *fancy*, religious zeal, and overactive engagement. The popular imagery surrounding fans tends to depict the fan as deviant, tragic, narrow-minded, or violent (Bailey 2005; Jenkins 2006). Such negative images of fans have been circulating for

book, *One Switch 100*, is in the works. [barrie.ellis@oneswitch.org.uk]

Graciela Alicia Esnaola has a PhD in pedagogy and an MA in educational research and teaching quality from the University of Valencia, Spain. She graduated as a specialist in e-learning from the University of Venetto, Italy. She has been a research manager in educative technology and video games and is currently exploring the One Laptop per Child pedagogical model. She has been invited by international universities as an expert in research on video games and learning, and is a professor in the doctoral program at the University of Salamanca and in e-learning courses at the University of Valencia. She coordinates high studies in psychopedagogy and is the author of the book *The Construction of Knowledge in Today's Culture: What Do Videogames Tell Us?* and many scientific publications. Her website is https://sites.google.com/site/dragracielasnaola/. [graesnaola@gmail.com]

Anna Everett is a professor of film, television, and new media studies and former chair of the Department of Film and Media Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). From 2002 to 2005, she was director of the UCSB Center for Black Studies. She has published numerous books and articles, including *Returning the Gaze: A Genealogy of Black Film Criticism, 1909–1949* (2001); *The Revolution Will Be Digitized: Afrocentricity and the Digital Public Sphere* (2001), *New Media: Theories and Practices of Digitextuality* (2003; with John T. Caldwell), *AfroGEEKS: Beyond the Digital Divide* (2006; with Amber T. Wallace), and *Learning Race and Ethnicity: Youth and Digital Media* (2007) for the MacArthur Foundation's new series on Digital Media, Youth, and Learning. Her

monograph *Digital Diaspora: A Race for Cyberspace* won a 2009 Choice Award for Outstanding Academic Book. Among her articles are "The Other Pleasures: The Narrative Function of Race in the Cinema," "The Black Press in the Age of Digital Reproduction: Two Exemplars," "P.C. Youth Violence: 'What's the Internet or Video Gaming Got to Do with It?,'" "Trading Private and Public Spaces @ HGTV and TLS: On New Genre Formations in Transformation TV," and "Serious Play: Playing with Race in Computer Games." Dr. Everett is founding editor of the journal *Screening Noir: A Journal of Film, Video and New Media Culture.* [everett@filmandmedia.ucsb.edu]

Gerald Farca is a professor in game studies and narrative design at the Macromedia University of Applied Sciences in Leipzig. He obtained his PhD in the English Literature department at Augsburg University in 2017, where he is now a member of the Cultural Ecology Research Group (Environmental Humanities). Gerald has published research on game studies, narrative in games, ecocriticism, utopia, dystopia, and science fiction, and he is the author of *Playing Dystopia: Nightmarish Worlds in Video Games and the Player's Aesthetic Response* (2018). In addition, he was a visiting lecturer and researcher at the Center for Computer Games Research at the IT University of Copenhagen in 2016 and the CESAG of the Universidad Pontificia Comillas in Palma in 2018. His research now focuses on ecological science fiction in digital games and the regenerative aspects of play. [gerald.farca@gmail.com]

Febrian was born in Jakarta, February 18, 1986, and has a master's degree in communication science. He graduated in 2014 from Universitas Indonesia. He works for the

Citations

MLA

Wolf, Mark, editor. *Encyclopedia of Video Games: The Culture, Technology, and Art of Gaming, 2nd Edition [3 volumes].* 2, Greenwood, 2021. *ABC-CLIO,* publisher.abc-clio.com/9781440870200.

Chicago Manual of Style

Wolf, Mark, ed. *Encyclopedia of Video Games: The Culture, Technology, and Art of Gaming, 2nd Edition [3 volumes],* 2. Greenwood, 2021. http://publisher.abc-clio.com/9781440870200

APA

Wolf, M. (Ed.). (2021). *Encyclopedia of Video Games: The Culture, Technology, and Art of Gaming, 2nd Edition [3 volumes].* Retrieved from http://publisher.abc-clio.com/9781440870200