5

Alien Aesthetics

Videogames target our aesthetic experience in many ways. As mentioned earlier, Kirkpatrick claims that games are primarily about performance and experience, and not about content and its intellectual processing.[1] Against this background, the question I would like to address in this chapter is whether videogames offer conflicts on the level of aesthetic experience. This question is more relevant to the aim of this book than it may appear at first. Theories of the aesthetic experience frequently refer to its significance with regards to the possibility of change: the possibility of radical change, in turn, is linked to the possibility of experiencing something "new," something not already known. Such an experience might allow us to develop a new perspective on the world or alter our thinking about it. One question for my project, then, is, whether the aesthetic experience of videogame spaces can be an experience of conflicts powerful enough to unsettle our perspective on the world, thus stimulating our imagination of alternatives. In raising this question, I am not asking whether videogames are "beautiful" or whether they can be regarded as art. This question has been addressed by several recent inquiries.[2] Rather, the analysis focuses primarily on the sensorial experience of gameplay and the player's interaction with videogame worlds and their inhabitants. What conflicts arise from it and how might such conflicts impact our political ideas, thoughts and visions?

The aesthetic experience is characterized by a paradoxical relationship between immediate sensual perception and mediate aesthetic judgment about what is perceived. Thomas Munro and Roger Scruton summarize this paradox in an entry on "Aesthetics" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* as follows:

> [T]he expression aesthetic judgment seems to be a contradiction in terms, denying in the first term precisely that reference to rational considerations that it affirms in the second. […] On the one hand, aesthetic experience is rooted in the immediate sensory enjoyment

> of its object through an act of perception. On the other, it seems to reach beyond enjoyment toward a meaning that is addressed to our reasoning powers and that seeks judgment from them.[3]

Inverted, one might say that conflicts in videogame space, on the aesthetic plane, involve some degree of difficulty in making sense of the experience. Videogame play is always accompanied by some degree of understanding of what is going on in the game world. At the same time, the aesthetic experience of gameplay, at times, seems to exceed our cognitive comprehension of a situation. Is there any conflict potential in this difference? To be blunt, if videogames are capable of generating novel aesthetic experiences that exceed our cognitive judgment, they might as well bring about a radical change in our perspective. It remains questionable whether an absolute aesthetic other is possible and what it would be like. Aware of the paradoxical quality of this question, Jameson remains skeptical of the possibility of such genuine otherness, concluding that even the most radical attempts at imagining otherness in sf are nothing but mirrors of the self and projections of our own situation. At the same time, he emphasizes that the possibility of imagining a radical other, like a new color, "is allegorical of the possibility of imagining a whole new social world."[4]

Jameson already hints at the political dimension of the aesthetic experience, which Rancière elaborates on in his writing. He points out that aesthetics is a direct condition and limitation for political action. Rancière regards politics as a conflict about the nature and demarcation of a common space, about defining common objects and identifying those who possess the ability to a common language, in a general sense of the word.[5] He calls this division of space "distribution of the sensible," meaning "the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it." In his view, our concept of aesthetics is such a distribution, "a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise that simultaneously determines the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience. Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time."[6]

For Rancière, both politics and art aim to (re)define the boundaries of this common space. "Politics and art, like forms of knowledge, construct 'fictions', that is to say *material* rearrangements of signs and images, relationships between what is seen and what is said, between what is done and what can be done."[7]

In plain terms, the distribution of the sensible influences the common space we perceive as field of political action, as well as the action we perceive as possible in this space. Political action and aesthetic experience, in turn, have an effect on this distribution and may shift it towards formerly politically irrelevant or even unknown realms. In a sense, the recent attention to the affective dimension of politics is a reaction to the dominance of the cognitively, intellectually driven model of discourse and an attempt at overcoming the limits of the intellect with regards to human capacity in general. Such attempts often question the superiority of "rationality" over other capacities human beings have.

With regards to the political dimension, the question for this chapter is, whether videogames may offer conflicts that potentially contribute to shifts in the boundaries of what is perceived as common, what can be said, what is doable. Such "redistribution" of the sensible, even if only experienced for a moment, might serve as a basis for imagining novel, radical alternatives to the status quo. It should be clear by now that imagining or even perceiving something new against the gravitation of the known is not a trivial task. In the context of the evolving information universe and computers, Muroi and Yoshioka claim that the absolute other can never be accepted peacefully. Instead, they speak of a "war" between multiple intersecting realities.[8]

What better place to start looking for such conflict than the ways in which videogame spaces confront us with the aesthetic experience of the alien, which, according to Chris Goto-Jones, remains one of the most radical and literal encounters with the other.[9] How is this encounter with the radical and unknowable other possible aesthetically? Jameson maintains that even the most successful attempts ultimately can be folded back into the known in the analysis. The only successful strategy against the impossibility of knowing and representing the alien he refers to explicitly, is a consequently partial representation, as found in the film *Alien*, in which the audience never sees more than parts of the creature.[10] Adam Roberts does not reject the possibility of radical otherness as vehemently as Jameson and at the same time puts a stronger emphasis on the emotional quality of the alien. Discussing the film *Blade Runner*, he claims that the "combination of human, childlike innocence and ingenuousness with a machine-like strength and ruthlessness […] provides the replicants with their uncanny metaphoric potency," Roberts identifies a more extreme example in the Borg of the *Star Trek* universe, which "represent everything the Federation is not, focusing our attention on the way their mode of being is literally beyond our ability to comprehend." For him, the Borg

represent "the true nature of 'otherness'; an alien […] radically and totally unlike you or me or anything we can conceive. […] It is impossible for us to enter imaginatively into the world of the Borg because certain key values we hold, values like individuality, life/death and so on, are too centrally part of us, whereas for the Borg they are neither good nor bad but simply irrelevant."[11]

Both authors thus express the idea that the alien as a radical other is only possible in the impossibility of representation, intelligibility or imagination. This negative existence of the alien points to a central tension in the idea of disruptive conflicts. Videogames are equipped with particularly interesting features in this regard. As I have already discussed, their representation as such is subject to several translations: from code to running software, and from complex, multidimensional and multi-layered worlds to a relatively minimalistic, often partial audio-visual representation. With regards to the latter, Manovich points out that the computer-based transformation maps source phenomena that are beyond the limits of human senses and reasoning onto a representation "whose scale is comparable to the scales of human perception and cognition."[12] Does this potential for partial or non-representation have similar effects to the partial representation in *Alien* referred to by Jameson? Or, does that which is beyond our senses "leak" into the representation? It seems at least theoretically possible that the alien is comprised of complex data beyond our comprehension of life, only pointed to vaguely by its representation. More so, since I have argued that videogame worlds and their representations are also partly unimagined, i.e. not predicted by the designers in every detail in advance. They are instantiated and performed by the computer based on a more or less open code, in which the designers often merely specify a certain range or spectrum.

On a second plane, the enacted objects function as generic containers and blur familiar differences between objects and living things: a formal distinction between a door and an attacking enemy can be quite difficult only based on the structural elements of their code. At the same time, living things are a particular focus of videogame design. Designers have been widely concerned with the responsiveness of the videogame world and its inhabitants. Whether based on rigid routines and algorithms, or on an ever more complex and sophisticated artificial intelligence, designers often attempt to simulate life in games.[13] Real-time strategy games and first-person shooters show the evolution of variable and procedural elements in videogames most explicitly, confronting the player with seemingly intelligent, human-like opponents and realistic environments.[14]

With regards to my interest in conflicts with regards to the alien, the question is, what kind of life is instantiated here?

On a third plane, I would like to keep an eye on the relation between the computer-generated world and its life and the player. Frequently, gameplay is described with reference to cybernetics and Donna Haraway's influential *Cyborg Manifesto*, in which she develops the idea of the hybrid "cyborg as a fiction mapping our social and bodily reality and as an imaginative resource suggesting some very fruitful couplings."[15] Jon Dovey and Helen Kennedy, for example, go as far as to claim that "[i]n the lived enactment of gameplay, there is no player separate to the interface and game world; there is a fusion of the two into a cyborigan subjectivity—composed of wires, machines, code and flesh." In their view, the avatar is a cyborgian representation of the player character and the player actions, the sonic, haptic and visual experience that is communicated to the player.[16]

This claim has to be re-examined carefully. Firstly, because it presupposes the empirical validity of Haraway's cyborg—a claim Haraway does not make about her self-declared "ironic dream" or "ironic political myth." Secondly, because it could imply that the player is not aware of his or her separation from videogame space. While this might be true at times, such generalization remains problematic and questionable both theoretically and based on my own experience as a player. Games can certainly offer an intense experience that makes the player forget his or her surroundings.[17] However, this focus on the events in the game does not necessarily imply that the player (subjectivity) has merged with the avatar in any psychological or emotional way, let alone physically. This book is not the right forum to discuss these issues in depth, because their empirical analysis would require a decisively different methodology. What seems crucial, though, is that, as players, we relate to the events and objects in the game world in one way or other, and this relation might be host to a series of aesthetic or sensual conflicts.

With these initial considerations in mind, I would like to turn to the games *Rez* (2001), *The Chikyūbōeigun* [*The Earth Defense Force*] (2003) and *Shinseiki Evangelion 2* [*Neon Genesis Evangelion 2*] (2003), which confront us with various kinds of disruptive and even alienating life.

Indifference and Pure Play

A particularly unsettling aesthetic conflict can be experienced when

confronting the alien in the low-budget production *The Earth Defense Force* (hereafter *EDF*).[18] As Inoue points out, the game is a masterpiece of game design because it is easy to learn due to its simple rules, involves an impressive enemy and offers a rewarding experience.

> Shortly after starting up *EDF*, the player character is attacked by a herd of giant ants which cover the screen completely. This in itself already makes the game a masterpiece, but in addition, the confused player can easily succeed in fighting off the enemies by pressing random buttons, and is commended to do this via radio. Before knowing what is going on, the player starts to feel like the protagonist in a monster movie. […] In the first five minutes, one learns how to play and gets a taste of the core attractiveness of the game.[19]

As **Example 5.1** shows, *EDF* is a minimalist game that confronts the player with an uncanny enemy invader and requires scarcely more than to move and pull the trigger. The uncanny effect of the ants is firstly created by their size and number, by which they literally penetrate our sight, sometimes covering all the world from the player's eyes. Compared to the properly UFO-like space ships the game features, the ants are by far the most alien objects present, although they are modeled after a well-known life form in our environment. This is not only a result of the appearance, but to a greater extent stems from their seemingly uncoordinated, insect-like movement and their unintelligible mind set, which, despite their invasive intentions, seems to be programmed for random aggression, as **Example 5.2** shows.

The ants are an invading force that cannot be reasoned with. At the same time, these creatures appear strangely disoriented and disinterested and may attack the player from far away, run him over or simply pass him by. This internal contradiction in the artificial alien intelligence between the signaled and perceived intension of invading earth and the disinterested, seemingly random movement is the main source of much of the disruption experienced in the gameplay. It is emphasized by the lack of choice on the side of the player, for whom effective extinction is the only meaningful action in the game. In order to proceed to the next stage, the player has to eradicate the enemy to the last ant—while the invading insects sometimes seem quite content with aimlessly crawling through the empty streets of Tokyo.[20] In addition, due to their agility, size and numbers, they move more freely through the environment than the

player and occupy it more totally. The destruction to man-made architecture is mostly caused by the player and the collateral or intentional damage he or she inflicts. By confronting us with this kind of imbalance, *EDF* not only amplifies the uncanny experience of the alien, but also disrupts the player, who is—deprived of any alternatives to shooting—alienated from the openness and emergent quality of human life in an entertaining way.

The frightening experience of *EDF* does not stem from the invading enemies, but rather from the fact that this lack of options in the face of an aesthetically overwhelming enemy is actually not just entertaining, but liberating. For the player, the minimalist setting and destructive quality of one's actions is profoundly enjoyable. Whereas Jameson cautions us against the possibility that "the alien, fully assimilated, its Difference transmuted into Identity, will simply become a capitalist like the rest of us," the experience of *EDF* does suggest that we might be capable of escaping our non-game experience for a brief moment.[21] At the same time, the lack of destructiveness and hostility on the part of the invader highlights our actions, pointing us toward the conflict created by inverting the roles of both sides.

A similar minimalist tendency is deployed in a different, arguably more radical way in *Rez*.[22] The on-rail shooter charges the player with hacking the cyberbrain space [*dennō kūkan*] of a futuristic computer system called "Project-K," in order to re-active its A.I. "eden." According to the designer's description, eden went to sleep to escape from the overwhelming information in the overpopulated and uncontrollable size of the network society the management of which it was created for.[23] A critically acclaimed game on the border with responsive videogame art, the music-infused shooter "blurs the line between user input and audio/visual feedback, creating a unique sensory experience."[24] *Rez* features a distinctive artistic style based on responsive polygon and wireframe representations and sound effects triggered by the player's actions, along with a trance soundtrack that grows more complex with each new "layer" the player accesses in an area. "All of the environments move and fluctuate with the beat, adding to the synaesthesic effect of the game."[25] The game manual itself advertises this experience as follows:

> Gentlemen, open your senses. Go to Synaesthesia. You can transform the world into your original Sounds, Lights and Vibrations just by locking and shooting the enemies. You will discover the [*sic*] brand new time full of rhythm as well as ecstasy. The instinct "Rez" is now

> finally being released. Can you really tear yourself from this sense of trance?[26]

Example 5.3 shows that *Rez* goes beyond deploying abstract, minimalist art in order to represent the computer network.[27] This alone would hardly be innovative in times where, as Manovich puts it, the fact that in computer media anything can be mapped to anything makes specific choices appear arbitrary.[28] Rather, despite its rigid patterns and on-rails character, *Rez* is emergent in its responsiveness to player input, which is mapped dynamically onto the sensual expression of the game world. This is a distinct feature widely acclaimed. "[W]hat sets this game apart from all others of its ilk is that with every lock on, every shot fired, and every missile deployed, a sound is made that is tonally aligned with the music and synched up with the beat. In addition to the enemies all having these attributes, this creates the effect of the user essentially improvising the song as they play."[29] In other words, the synaesthetic quality of *Rez* is derived from its dynamic representation of contingent player input. The game world unfolds aesthetically in response to the combined effort of player and computer.

In addition, the game features a numerical element based on a hidden rule-set. Contrary to the initial impression, the game world is vast and offers long-time engagement, if the player is willing to play repetitively.[30] It includes several hidden stages and modes, which are only accessible after outstanding performances in other areas (see Appendix B and C). Such achievement becomes increasingly difficult and requires training and concentration. Thus, it is in stark contrast to the experience of effortless action or "flow" the game offers in an early stage. However, this oscillation between a rigorous regime of numerical data, calculation and precision, and a playfulness of sensual aesthetics is a powerful and arguably unmatched representation of the videogame space and its mechanic otherness.

In the gameplay, "analysis" is not only a part of the score displayed after each level, but literally the way the player approaches the sensual explosion on the screen: one permanently tries to distinguish threat levels and to identify power-up items on time. In Chapter 3, I referred to this kind of analytic but strangely unfocused gameplay as intense reception in distraction. However, by generating a tension between the analytic gameplay and the synaesthetic pleasures of its responsive environment, *Rez* offers a direct opposition between the two elements of aesthetic experience and generates a distinct representation of the unknowable inside of a computer network. This tension is amplified and

at the same time resolved—one is tempted to say synthesizes—in the so-called Trance Mission, which has to be unlocked with considerable effort.

As **Example 5.4** shows, the Trance Mission abandons the game itself, confronting the player with a never-ending cyberspace in which neither goal, nor death exists. Deprived of the avatar, the player plays without aim, at risk of being trapped in the experience, as Axem Rangers remarks in his review of the game:

> Quite possibly the coolest, most original of these unlockables is the hidden area Trance Mission. It's an endless, repeating mode where the enemies fly in very simple patterns and don't attack. It sounds boring, and it is for a few minutes. But after a few repeats of all the enemy patters, you literally begin to fall into a trance. You zone out. You play without thinking. Your eyelids become heavy. Play Trance Mission for too long, and it's hard to stop…[31]

In a leap into the strange otherness of aimless play, both the player and the usually threatening enemies abandon any intentionality and engage in a synaesthetic dance in a space beyond. In experimenting with the boundary between games and art, *Rez* offers an enclave for the experience of play as "to-and-fro movement without aim" in Gadamer's sense. For Adorno, the "uselessness" of art is in itself already a political critique in a world defined by functional purpose.[32] In the context of this chapter, I propose to refine this general statement by arguing that the uselessness of this experience is only meaningful in the context of the tense experience of the earlier stages of the game, in which it is situated. This impression is amplified not only by the general tension between experience and analysis, but also by the vocabulary of nature and evolution deployed in other areas and particularly in area 5, in which not only the sound becomes more complex, but also the landscape grows, as Figure 17 shows.

Here, the game comes close to "Artificial Life art," which is marked by "[a] general desire […] to capture, harness or simulate the generative and 'emergent' qualities of 'nature'—of evolution, co-evolution and adaptation."[33] Against the background of these references to biological life and the hostile nature of the computer network in most areas, the Trance Mission disrupts our sense of purpose usually applied to most of our actions. Presenting its players with a disinterested, rigid, non-responsive alien life, it also alienates them from the game itself, at risk of boring them immediately with its playfulness. Instead of

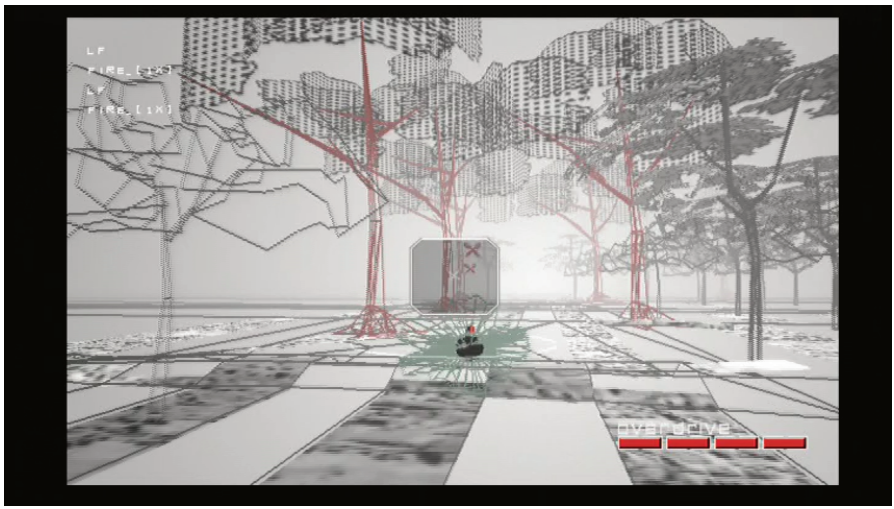

Figure 17. Emergent nature in Rez area 5.

being pressured to react quickly to the events on the screen, the player becomes a kind of detached, aimless—but, nonetheless, involved—contributor to a series of non-teleological events and their aesthetic experience.

Contrary to this risk, Axem Rangers' description of the experience points to the fact that this space can successfully invite the player to become part of it. As with *EDF*, it is not the absolute other the game highlights, but rather the momentary transformation of the player-self into something else. This transformative moment is only available due to the internal tension or conflict that *Rez* generates between two of its worlds and the two modes of engagement these worlds call for. In turn, this conflict also pushes the player towards imagining life in these two extreme modes of engagement, one focused on analytic engagement, both cognitively and physically intense, the other revolving around aimless, but arguably no less sensually intense play. At the same time, the Trance Mission may also alert us to the boredom of life devoid of purpose.

Absolute Terror and Uncanny Love

The two types of aesthetic conflict, one caused by the experience of different modes of engagement, and one caused by the confrontation with aesthetic others, are also at the center of the game *Shinseiki Evangelion 2* (hereafter *Eva2*).[34] Roughly adapting the hybridity of its source anime, the game offers

a total of 11 scenarios, most of which explore perspectives not focused on in the anime, or that expand on it, as well as several endings depending on the player's actions. Most scenarios consist of multiple chapters, each of which is divided into a "combat turn" and a "free turn." The combat turn features the fights between the huge, manned "artificial human Evangelion" (hereafter Eva) and the attacking "angels" that threaten to extinguish humanity.[35]

Whereas the combat turn offers a rather conventional gameplay experience, the free turn allows the player to navigate the scenario's protagonist in third-person perspective through the space of the futuristic stronghold city Tokyo-3. *Eva2* features a variety of places familiar from the anime, such as NERV officer Katsuragi Misato's mansion, pilot Ayanami Rei's apartment, the school all pilots attend, a convenience store and several rooms within the NERV headquarters.[36] The player can explore and use these facilities in order to satisfy basic needs like food and an occasional bath, purchase various items in the convenience store, study for school or hack the computers of the NERV military headquarters in a search for confidential data. More than anything, the environment is a social space, populated by human-like npc. Interactions with and among these characters range from looking at someone and small talk to hugging and kissing.

Contrary to the initial expectation, the alien in *Eva2* is not encountered in the fights against the angels, but in the uncanny interactions with non-player characters, in which the player is confronted with a tension between the characters' human-like appearance and their abstracted numerical character. This tension is present in many games, but in *Eva2* it appears particularly uncanny and alienating. In order to explain the disruptive quality of these interactions, I would like to give a brief overview of their most important elements. A first of these elements is that the characters feature numerical variables, which represent their momentary emotional state, their feelings toward and their evaluation of other characters. The most important of these variables is the "Absolute Terror" (hereafter A.T.) value, which, in contrast to the anime and manga, is described as a kind of tension barometer by the game.[37]

The A.T. is an important factor in the combat turn, where it influences the Eva's fighting strength, but also in the free turn, where it affects the interaction with other characters. Generally speaking, the A.T. changes with the character's well-being (hunger, thirst, sleepiness, toilet and shower), the course and outcome of the fights and, most importantly, the social interactions. For easier

understanding, **Example 5.5** presents some general interactions. Over time, it tends toward a neutral value, which decreases with passivity and increases if the A.T. is kept high over longer periods. In other words, in order to raise the A.T., the player has to fulfil his or her character's needs and participate in social life continuously. Such participation provides opportunities to raise the npcs' A.T. as well. Interestingly, the lead designer of the game, Shibamura Yūri, has pointed out that, while portraying this way of playing the game in the game guide and online, he did not expect the players to follow this guideline for more than a few minutes. Instead, he had hoped that players would start exploring and challenging the space of Eva2 more extensively than they actually turned out to do.[38]

Nonetheless, players apparently took the A.T. seriously. This and many other numerical variables attached to each character in the game world are directly linked to a second central feature of the game, namely the multiple-choice system called "Intelligent Material" (hereafter I.M.), which serves as the basis for the interactions with npcs (but also between them). *Neon Genesis Evangelions: The Complete Guide* lists 732 distinct I.M. commands, including anything from "look at X" and "kiss X" to "go to the toilet," "hack the computer," or "stop being a pilot."[39] Interaction with or between npcs is generally conducted in an oscillating fashion, each character having a choice of up to four commands per turn. This choice is made by the game system based on several factors. Firstly, the distance between the characters influences the range of possible interactions. As I have visualized in Figure 18,[40] this distance is divided into far, middle and close range, delimited against anything out of range (like very far, not in sight or busy characters).

The shorter the distance, the more "physical" the interaction can become. Secondly, the numerous variables the characters are equipped with, such as the A.T. and npcs' opinion of the protagonist [*jinbutsuhyōka*], which consist of the three variables friendship [*yūjō*], love [*aijō*] and affection [*shin'ai*], have a major influence on the I.M. Another influential element is the respective characters' bodily condition. In the case of the protagonist, unfulfilled basic needs might limit the interaction possibilities and, in extreme cases, lead to a complete inability to do anything but eat, drink, go to the toilet or shower. Npcs tend toward more grumpy moods when they are interrupted in fulfilling their own basic needs. Fourthly, the "emotional state" of the player character has an influence on the interaction possibilities. In contrast to the evaluation of the protagonist by other characters, which can be accessed from the I.M. menu, his

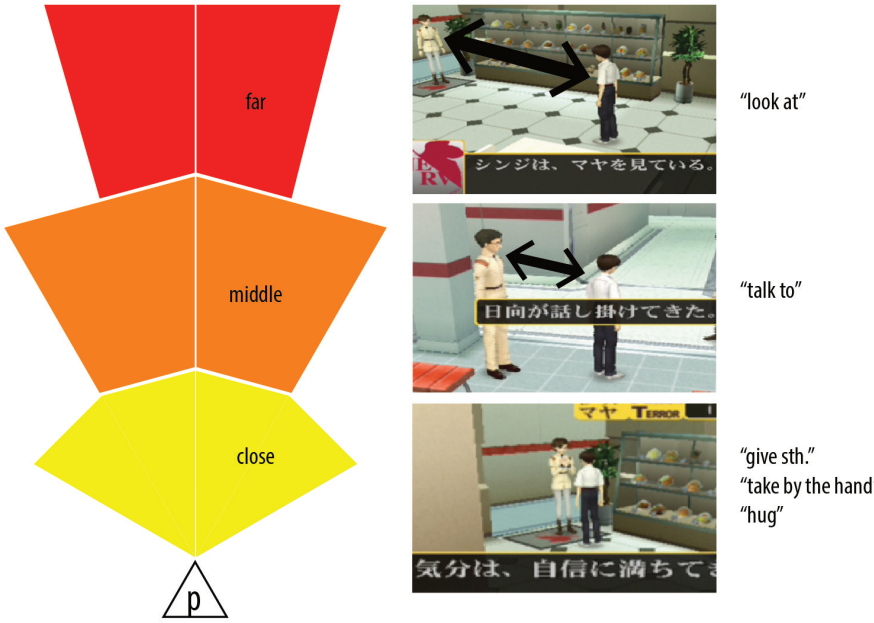

Figure 18. Distances in Eva2. Adapted from the Complete Guide.

or her own emotional state is not visible to the player and can only be guessed from earlier interactions.

Likewise, the npc responses to the player character's actions or communication depend on their set of conditions, variables and evaluations, including all of the above, but also a short- and long-term memory of earlier encounters. The quality of the interaction is dynamically reflected in the variables. Roughly speaking, one might say that dislike of the player character or an npc's bad emotional state lower the chance of "successful" interactions—success meaning either a raise in the A.T. or a strengthening of the personal relationship with an npc.[41] Although the general evaluation of the player character varies among the npcs and depends on the scenario selected, all npcs can be potential targets to both aims.[42] In either case, these various factors, which influence the success and progression of an interaction, hint at the difficulty of choosing action and reaction, which have to be carefully weighed against the known and suspected condition of the npc, the momentary situation and their potential reaction to certain approaches. The numerous, partially hidden variables and the computer-controlled I.M. turn the space of *Eva2* into a playing field for calculated, but never fully predictable social interactions.[43]

In their numerical, calculated way, these interactions are an uncanny experience. In her analysis of Yumeno Kyūsaku's novel *Dogura magura* from 1935, Nakamura argues that, in problematizing the question whether human beings can be reduced to "statistical beings," Yumeno confronts the reader with a "mechanical uncanny," or "a mode of fear that stems from the mechanization of the human body." The existence of such beings "threatens what we perceive to be 'natural,' including personal memories and personal identities as a whole. The idea of a coherent self comes under attack, as bodies become both divisible and mechanical, and as characters are duplicated and become reduced to statistical beings."[44] Nakamura's terminology is likely inspired by Mori Masahiro's essay on the uncanny valley, in which he examines the tipping point at which human-like robots reveal their "alienness," and at which they suddenly become uncanny.[45] This sense of uncanniness in the face of the mechanical is strikingly present in the experience of playing *Eva2*. Where Adam Roberts identifies the uncanny of the replicants in *Blade Runner* as a result of the combination of machine-like strength and ruthlessness and childlike innocence, part of the uncanny valley in *Eva2* results from the conflict between the attempt of creating human-like characters engaging in emotional, affective interactions, and their existence as combinations of numerical variables. Moreover, after playing *Eva2* for a while, the player learns to predict some of the tendencies in these interactions and develops a "feel" for the situation and the most promising course of action. Guidebooks and websites provide hints or "recipes" that are likely to lead to an increase of the A.T. or other expected outcomes, like the one I have translated in Figure 19.[46]

Shinji (S): Look at	→	Rei (R): Return look	→	S: Blush
S: Look at	→	R: Return look	→	S: Blush
S: Look at	→	R: Smile	→	S: Blush
S: Look at	→	R: Smile	→	S: Draw closer
...				

Figure 19. Dating tactics in Eva2.

This tension is not new in science fiction and can hardly be regarded as radical in the context of videogames, which necessarily reduce any kind of complexity to numerical, functional and winnable scenarios. However, the

uncanny experience in *Eva2* is amplified beyond literary or filmic practice, because the game makes it accessible to a playful exploration during which the player experiences his or her own gradual shift towards numerical and functional emotions. Furthermore, as opposed to most videogames, *Eva2* is particularly alienating because it defies our expectations about the numerical as a realm that can be mastered and controlled by the player. Its complexity creates alien characters neither fully compatible with human emotions, nor numerically transparent enough to be fully intelligible from a gamer perspective. Although some guiding principles for the interaction can be established, precise predictions of the outcome is impossible in most cases. This unpredictability is elevated by the third, arguably most radical element of the game, namely the npc A.I., which I examine in the next section.

Unreasonable Intelligence

According to the game's creator AlfaSystem, the A.I. "Kareru3," which controls the npcs in *Eva2*, is the rebuilt and enhanced successor to the AI system "Kareru2," which was used in their earlier game *Gunparade March*. AlfaSystem describes the game system as an attempt to facilitate a non-contradictory depiction of the game world and to leave most of the responsiveness to flexible algorithms rather than to determine it by a pre-scripted scenario. In addition to the features already familiar from Kareru2, the new system is designed to allow for "natural depiction (representation) of behaviour" [*shizen na kōdōbyōshanōryoku*] by focusing on "flow" [*nagare*] rather than on "momentary depiction (representation)" [*isshun no byōsha*]. Kareru3 allegedly allows the npcs to move through the game world independently and pursue their own respective interests and interactions with other characters.[47] The *Complete Guide* reveals that the npc A.I. is a complex system in which determining the course of action is influenced by a three-layered memory (short-, middle-, long-term) and a total of 16 different desires based on this memory or on bodily needs. These factors are, in turn, influenced by the npcs' other variable values (condition, mood, A.T., momentary feeling, evaluation of other characters), but also by time and place.[48] The lead designer responsible for Eva2 and its A.I., Shibamura, betrays the complexity of these factors and their interrelation. While aiming for human-like behavior when modeling the A.I., he admits, many of the actual behavioral patterns the npcs display in the game world could not be predicted during the original modeling phase.[49] This reveals his willingness to leave certain aspects of the game world uncontrolled, or, as I have previously called it, unimagined. In the context of this chapter, the question is whether

the encounter with these unimagined npcs offers a disruptive or conflict-laden experience.

The disruptive effect of the A.I. can mainly be traced to the ways in which it deviates from our expectation of human-like or, in the terms of the developers, natural behavior. **Example 5.6** shows that the npcs are strangely unintelligible in their actions and interactions, often appearing repetitive, aimless and counterintuitive. Whether it is nightly visits to the (sleeping) player character's home without purpose, or the frequent instances of sitting down only to get up again repeatedly or entering a room and leaving it again immediately, the npcs seem unimpressed with day and night rhythms, with their own public appearance, their A.T. values or even with the enemy threat in general. Frequently, the player character's existence is plainly ignored, even if he or she is the only one present in a given space.

These traits of the npc A.I. contribute to a profoundly uncanny, alienating scenery, in which the protagonist is at times degraded to an observing background actor or even treated as an obstacle in the environment. Rather than offering human-like, "natural" behavior, Kareru3 confronts the player with something that at least approaches the unknowable. As complex, non-transparent numerical beings in human appearance, the npcs are subject to the player's experiments, calculations and playful engagements, similar to the way that Penny describes his robotic art *Petit Mal: An Autonomous Robotic Artwork*:

> The primary goal of *Petit Mal* was to build a behaving machine that while entirely non-anthropomorphic and nonzoomorphic, elicits play behavior among people. Interaction is driven by curiosity and seemingly, a desire to pretend that the thing is more clever than it is. People willingly and quickly adjust their behavior and pacing to extract as much action from the device as possible, motivated entirely by pleasure and curiosity. (Interestingly, the only demographic who were unwilling to interact were adolescents). I saw the device, technically, as a demonstration of the viability of a reactive robotics strategy.[50]

A similarly playful approach characterizes the interaction with the npcs in *Eva2*.[51] Yet, at the same time, the uncanny of the non-transparent numerical processes, which escape calculated dominance and are sometimes the basis for behavior beyond reason, turn the npcs into a radical alien almost comparable to the Borg. In my opinion, the disinterested, seemingly aimless and unemphatic

movement of the npcs is reminiscent of the scenes on Borg spaceships and might even prompt a similar emotional response. The uncanny valley in the last section was a result of striving towards human-like appearance and interaction. The analysis of the A.I. suggests that this valley is deepened by the failed attempt at simulating human-like behavior and movement—it is no coincidence that Mori emphasized movement in his discussion, arguing that "[t]he presence of movement steepens the slopes of the uncanny valley."[52]

In addition, the already "other" space of the free turn appears to demand some, at least temporary intentionality of the player in order to last, regardless of its freedom and the more sandbox-like intentions of the designers mentioned above. This is the way that I experienced the game. Even in the most playful engagement, I had to maintain a certain level of A.T. in order to proceed in the story—the next, stronger enemy is always waiting to attack. Thus, the pressure of acting "effectively" in the social environment, despite the lack of definite knowledge of its mechanics, is considerable. Against this background, the experienced lack of any consistency or intention on the part of the npcs adds powerfully to the alienating effect of the game. Similar to that created by the indifference of the aliens in *EDF*, this effect stems both from the uncanniness of the opponents and from the gradually growing awareness of one's own uncanniness. *Eva2* further highlights this effect in a similar way to *Rez*. In the scenario "Another World," Tokyo-3 is a utopic enclave. Neither NERV, nor the angels exist, and the free turn lasts for as long as we choose, focusing on protagonist Shinji's home and the school all children attend.[53] Here, the uncanny social interaction with the alien is the only occupation, and while the state of trance might not be reached, the player is finally invited to become part of its alien, unreasonable sociality. As such, it deploys a mechanism of pure play already identified in *Rez* even more radically, in order to assimilate the player to the uncanny, alien sociality of the *Eva2* npcs. In acting in the game world, the player creates a conflict with the prior, goal-oriented experience—once more, at the risk of absolute boredom.

Confronting the Unimagined

In this chapter, I have analyzed the conflicts arising in the aesthetic experience of a variety of videogame spaces themed around the alien other. As shown, such conflicts emerge mainly in two intersecting ways. On the one hand, *Rez* and *Eva2* playfully explore a contrast between different modes of engaging the alien world, oscillating between regular gameplay and its abandonment, or between judgment (analysis) and enjoyment (sensual experience). I would add that *EDF*

reverses this relation, presenting the player with a brutal task that is nonetheless enjoyed as a performance rather than for its content, causing a conflict between what the player sees and might judge based on common sense (destruction) and what he or she experiences (fun). That said, all cases show that these two sides of gameplay are, arguably, almost inseparable in the experience, neither existing exclusively. And yet, juxtaposing the two modes as two extremes, both games manage to establish a distance from the regular way of playing, which, in turn, helps the player question his or her teleological mind.

Abstractly, the analysis suggests that some of the most alienating experiences are afforded by the tension or conflict between intentional gaming and playfulness. In *Rez*, the tension between synaesthetic experience and analytic play reaches its climax in the Trance Mission, which lures the player into abandoning the task-structure of the game entirely. In "Another World," the player of *Eva2* finds little to do. In these cases, the player could experience a kind of self-alienation specific to play. As already mentioned, Gadamer argues that human play always requires a task it can be directed towards.[54] In both games, then, the player cannot make sense of the aimless npcs—unless he or she stops playing humanly all together, abandons the game goal and becomes one of them. I doubt that this brings us closer to the inhabitants of videogame space. However, it achieves a kind of aesthetic autonomy that frees us from our common experiences and affords aesthetic novelty. What would a state of pure play look like, one might wonder after this experience, and start imagining such a radical alternative.

In this sense, all three games prove Rancière's claim that autonomous aesthetic experience can be the beginning of a new humanity, of a new individual and collective form of life. Experiencing something new might translate into imagining a new alternative. This is not entirely surprising, given that Rancière develops his understanding of aesthetic autonomy by discussing Schiller's concept of "free play," which he regards as a suspension of common experience.[55] However, the extent to which videogames like *Eva2* and *Rez* approximate ideal play is as intriguing as the way in which they do so. Both games offer aesthetic novelty or free play in their abandonment of the conventional, goal-directed game. Yet, they never abandon the link to human play completely. Their free play experience is only meaningful in the context of the overarching task structure of the games, which turns even these spaces into potential training grounds for the analytically minded player. At this risk, however, they not only present us with a space of radical otherness but—almost

in a reversal of Jameson's fear expressed in the initial quote—equip us with the skills to experience it and let us enter. In this space, the hand-eye coordination crucial in *Rez* is solely deployed synaesthetically, and the social skills in *Eva2* are not directed towards anything but interaction.

On a different plane, *EDF* and *Eva2* confront the player with decisively uncanny, alien life. Its uncanniness is not a function of the appearance alone, but emerges from an interplay of visuals, action and, most importantly, vis-à-vis the player's own engagement with the game worlds. The ants in *EDF* are not only uncanny in their appearance and indifference, but also in tension with the player's lack of choice in the game. In *Eva2*, the tension between numerical, calculated play and emotional content on the one side, and the uncanny, alienating disinterestedness of the unintelligible npcs in contrast to the intentional behavior of the player on the other, is the source of the disruptive conflict.

An immediate question might be whether some of these disruptions are caused by a weakness in the software or are a result of intentional design, and whether this has an impact on the player's evaluation of the experience. After all, my alienation in the above-mentioned games could simply stem from faulty design—at least, the designer's claims about "natural behaviour" in *Eva2*, compared to the alienating results, may suggest such objection. Yet, I would like to oppose this view for two reasons. First, the designer's comments on the game suggest that this alienness of the A.I. was willingly accepted. In other words, the designers created the unimagined space of the npc A.I. intentionally, surrendering its actual arrangement and performance to the computer. On a certain level, this "will to chaos" may also be conceded to the designers of *EDF*, although I am unable to verify this. Second, such argument would imply that our judgment of any aesthetic experience depends entirely on our expectations. If the unexpected and alien is immediately understood as failure, then the idea of aesthetic conflicts makes no sense, because it would mean that we are incapable of experiencing novelty and are reduced to judging our experience based on pre-defined categories. The examples above, by contrast, show that aesthetic conflicts arise from a tension between the known and the radically other in the experience itself, in moments when our expectations are disappointed.

In sum, aesthetic conflicts and their experience as such require a certain amount of hospitality to otherness, as Adam Roberts calls it, on the part of the designers and the player. On the part of the designers, this submission to the unimagined appears to be a necessary condition for the alien. On the part of the player,

without such hospitality, without an interest in being disrupted aesthetically, the otherness of videogame spaces runs the risk of boring the player. Or, it might simply be regarded as "bad" game design, based on its entertainment value.

If their alienness is not dismissed from the start, the games analyzed above arguably add something to our aesthetic experience and potentially have an effect on what Rancière calls aesthetic distribution of the sensible. By confronting us with uncanny, unintelligible others, which require a different mode of perception, communication and judgment, the videogame spaces touched upon above point to novel concepts of community and "social" interaction, posing a question about how a different sociality or community could look and feel. Among them, *Eva2* is arguably the most concrete stimulus. Given recent developments toward biometric passports and databasified administration, *Eva2*'s relatively concrete sense of alternative community based on numerical quantification of all humanly characteristics and interactions appears as a radicalization and potential critique of the status quo, rather than a potential alternative to it. However, framing this social space as a human space, and juxtaposing it with the alienness of the npc A.I., it also creates a tension between the known and the other, pointing to a new terrain of aesthetic experience and thus a potential redistribution of the sensible.

Jameson concludes his inquiry of science fictional aliens with a question: "What […] if the alien body were little more than a distorted expression of Utopian possibilities? If its otherness were unknowable because it signified a radical otherness latent in human history and human praxis, rather than the not-I of a physical nature?"[56] In both abstract and immediate conflicts, the analyzed games shift our attention toward such latent utopian possibilities by expanding our sense of what is perceived and experienced as common, what can be said and done. As such, they are aesthetic interventions in the political sphere.

Notes

1. Kirkpatrick, *Computer Games and the Social Imaginary*, 164.

2. For a general discussion of videogames as art, see Tavinor, *The Art of Videogames*. For other approaches on videogame aesthetics, see for example Deen, "Interactivity, Inhabitation and Pragmatist Aesthetics," who applies John Dewey's aesthetics to videogame play, or Burden and Gouglas, "The Algorithmic Experience: Portal as Art," which examines the aesthetics of algorithmic play in the game *Portal*.

3. Munro and Scruton, "Aesthetics (Philosophy)."

4. Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*, 111, 120, 211.

5. Rancière, *Das Unbehagen in der Ästhetik*, 34.

6. Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 12–13.

7. Ibid., 39.

8. Muroi [室井] and Yoshioka [吉岡], *Jōhō to Seimei*, 110–11.

9. Goto-Jones, "Alien Autopsy," 22.

10. Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*, 113–15, 140.

11. Roberts, *Science Fiction*, 118–23.

12. Manovich, "Data Visualisation as New Abstraction and Anti-Sublime." Manovich's reference to life may not be a coincidence. In his conclusion, he claims that "the real challenge of data art is not about how to map some abstract and impersonal data into something meaningful and beautiful—economists, graphic designers, and scientists are already doing this quite well. The more interesting and at the end maybe more important challenge is how to represent the personal subjective experience of a person living in a data society."

13. For Japan, Tane Kiyoshi observes how otherness [*tashasei*] and its representation was already an important aspect of games at an early stage. He traces its first evolution to the transition between *Breakout* and *Space Invader*, showing how the latter turned the fix block obstacles of the former into an "actively" attacking [*nōdōteki ni kōgeki shite kuru*] enemy who thinks for itself (Tane [多根], *Kyōyō toshite no Gēmushi*, 23–24.) A similar evolution can probably be observed in the history of videogame design elsewhere as well. This desire for intelligent otherness later focused much attention on the growing field of artificial intelligence.

14. In a talk about "The Future of Game, AI, and Computer Graphics" at the annual meeting of the Digital Games Research Association Japan (DIGRA Japan) in Kyōto on February 25, 2012, Square Enix's lead A.I. researcher Miyake Yōichiro (三宅陽一郎) discussed recent trends in game A.I., pointing out that in the pursuit of realism that characterizes a share of the contemporary first-person shooters, artificial intelligence is increasingly 'humanized' by adding accidental mistake routines. At the same time, he showed how the environment is increasingly enhanced by intelligent behavior of animals and plants.

15. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," 149–51. For Haraway, the cybernetic organism is a symbol for the hybridity of human being and technology in fiction and lived experience "that changes what counts as women's experience in the late twentieth century." Its hybridity stems from its resolute commitment to "partiality, irony, intimacy, and perversity. It is oppositional, utopian, and completely without innocence. No longer structured by the polarity of public and private, the cyborg defines a technological polis based partly on a revolution of social relations in the *oikos*, the household."

16. Dovey and Kennedy, *Game Cultures: Computer Games as New Media*, 109, 112.

17. This is generally discussed by terms like immersion and "flow." According to the influential work of psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, flow refers to an "optimal experience" in an "almost automatic, effortless, yet highly focused state of consciousness," which is experienced by a wide range of people in diverse activities such as sports, art or work. Games and videogames appear highly compatible with flow, because they share many of its core conditions or elements listed by Csikszentmihalyi, for example: clear goals, immediate feedback, a balance between challenges and skills, a merging of action and awareness, the exclusion of distractions from consciousness, no worry of failure, the disappearance of self-consciousness, a distortion of the sense of time and that the activity becomes autotelic

(Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity*, 110–13). Since the first conceptualization, a broad variety of research in game studies and beyond has refined and adapted the concept.

18. *EDF* is a low-budget sf game developed by SANDLOT and published by D3 Publisher as volume 31 of its "Simple 2000 Series" for the PS2. According to its Nico Nico Pedia entry, the game had sold more than 100,000 copies by 2013.

19. Inoue [井上], *Gēmifikēshon*, 160, my translation.

20. *EDF* shows how the implicit or explicit nationalism in many videogames—which is not limited to Japanese productions—takes on a rather parodist notion. Such (possibly unintended) effect is even stronger in other titles of the Simple2000 Series, such as *THE Saigo no Nihonhei: Utsukushiki Kokudo Dakkan Sakusen [The Last Japanese Soldier: Taking Back the Beautiful Home Land]*, in which the player has to reclaim the Japanese prefectures one by one against an overwhelming number of enemy soldiers, with each prefecture offering regional food specialties to collect along the way to victory.

21. Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*, 141.

22. *Rez* was developed by SEGA's United Game Artists and released by SEGA for the Dreamcast and the PS2. In 2008, lead producer Mizuguchi Tetsuya released an HD version for the XBOX 360.

23. Game manual for *Rez*, 2–3.

24. Giant Bomb Wiki, "Rez (Game) – Giant Bomb Wiki."

25. Ibid.; see also Wark, *Gamer Theory*.

26. Game manual for *Rez*, cover page.

27. The game's designers acknowledge the influence of Wassily Kandinsky (see Sotenga et al. 2012), who is known for his experiments with synaesthetic art.

28. Manovich, "Data Visualisation as New Abstraction and Anti-Sublime." The world in *Rez* does not at all appear arbitrary. Rather, the "synaesthetic" is a result of a conscious combination of highly compatible styles (trance music, abstract polygon visuals, wireframe environments).

29. Giant Bomb Wiki, "Rez (Game) – Giant Bomb Wiki."

30. Wark claims that "[t]he only real problem with *Rez* is that it does not have enough levels. Victory is temporary, or rather temporal. You can defeat time in the game, but only for a time. And having won all there is to win, boredom looms…" (*Gamer Theory*, 138). After several hours of intense play, which brought me nowhere near mastery, I have to admit that I do not share this experience yet.

31. Axem Rangers, "Rez Review for Dreamcast: No Matter How Hard You Try You Will Still Lie Trapped within the System."

32. Adorno, "Culture and Administration," 116; see also Geuss, "Art and Criticism in Adorno's Aesthetics," 302.

33. Penny, "Twenty Years of Artificial Life Art," 197.

34. *Eva2* is a PS2 adaptation of the successful anime *Shinseiki Evangelion* [*Neon Genesis Evangelion*] directed by Anno Hidaki (庵野 秀明), which aired between 1995 and 1996 in Japan. The game is produced by AlfaSystem, BANDAI and GAINAX, in collaboration with the anime's director Anno Hideaki. According to Anno, the game allows each player "to create his or her own, individual *Evangelion 2*" (Funatsu [船津], "Bandai, PS2 'Shinseiki Evangerion2' Kansei Kishakaiken Kaisai," my translation). By granting a large variety of choices the social interactions in the free turn, the game's "sandbox-like" system allegedly

allows the players to fulfill their desire and to set their own goal freely or alternately to abandon the notion of a specific goal overall (Shibamura [芝村], "Shinseiki Evangerion 2: About"; AlfaSystem, "Shinseiki Evangerion 2 Seihin Shōkai"). A fan site describes the game as being "much more a simulation than a game. You cannot only play Shinji, but also side characters (even Aoba! [A minor "computer technician" character in the franchise; mer]). 2000 hours of play guaranteed. The speed is awful, but at the same time, it features a high degree of freedom. You can for example fight Angels in Eva, run berserk, assassinate whomever you despise, stalk or be stalked, create a harem, get cheated on, go fishing with dad, etc." (suba, "Eva2 Sūpā Kōryaku: Hajime ni," my translation).

35. Depending on the scenario's protagonist, the role the player takes during the combat turn varies. As one of the pilots, he or she is directly responsible for piloting the Eva. In most other roles, the player is restricted to tactical support or spectatorship.

36. NERV is a paramilitary organization entrusted with the research on and the deployment of the Eva against the attacking angels.

37. Game manual for *Shinseiki Evangerion 2*, 6. In other guidebooks it is also referred to as an indicator for the character's general attitude and behavior, ranging roughly between passive and active (Nakajima [中島], Kariya [刈屋], and Miyazaki [宮崎], *Neon Genesis Evangelions: The Complete Guide*, 26–27) or "something like the confidence for leading a life in society" (Katō [加藤] and Tamura [田村], *Shinseiki Evangerion 2 Kōryaku Gaido*, 30, my translation.).

38. Takenami [竹並], *The Answer of Evangelions*, 16.

39. Nakajima [中島], Kariya [刈屋], and Miyazaki [宮崎], *Neon Genesis Evangelions: The Complete Guide*, 188–251, my translation.

40. Ibid., 16.

41. The A.T. value influences the overall chances to win against the invading angels. Even non-pilots have direct or indirect influence on the battle. Katsuragi Misato, for example is responsible for strategic and tactical decisions. Akagi Ritsuko develops new weapon systems and other helpful technologies if her A.T. stays above a certain limit. However, fan-based discussions of the game reveal that raising the A.T. in preparation for battle is only one possible approach to the free turn. Engaging in romantic relationships with npcs is arguably an equally if not more popular aim among players (suba, "Eva2 Sūpā Kōryaku: Hajime ni").

42. Notably, some factors diversify the characters with regards to their "numerical behavior." For example, it is more difficult to influence the A.T. and other variables of older characters like Ikari Gendō and Fuyutsuki Kōzō. The same goes for the start values of the "desires" of the npcs, some of which vary (Nakajima [中島], Kariya [刈屋], and Miyazaki [宮崎], *Neon Genesis Evangelions: The Complete Guide*, 37, 178).

43. This is a stark contrast to the anime, of which Japanese feminist science fiction writer and critic Kotani Mari (*Seibo Evangerion – A New Millennialist Perspective on the Daughters of Eve*, 28–29) argues that the characters carefully play or enact a paternalistic family in what she calls a "family game." In the free turn, the videogame employs central elements of dating simulation games. The free turn (more or less) abandons gender boundaries, leaving only some difference between same-gender and cross-gender opposites in the factor that influences the npcs' behavior (Nakajima [中島], Kariya [刈屋], and Miyazaki [宮崎], *Neon Genesis Evangelions: The Complete Guide*, 43). When compared to the anime, the game also serves as a parody, replacing the seemingly inescapable psychological struggle and tensions between the characters with a set of numerical values at mercy of the player.

44. Nakamura, "Horror and Machines in Prewar Japan" 369, 377.

45. Mori, "The Uncanny Valley."

46. suba, "Eva2 Sūpā Kōryaku, Furī tān," my translation.

47. AlfaSystem, "Shinseiki Evangerion 2 Kaihatsu Nikki, dai 1wa."

48. Nakajima [中島], Kariya [刈屋], and Miyazaki [宮崎], *Neon Genesis Evangelions: The Complete Guide*, 34–45.

49. Takenami [竹並], *The Answer of Evangelions*, 40–42.

50. Penny, "Art and Robotics: Sixty Years of Situated Machines," 152.

51. This playfulness is also described in player guides. Beyond the "conventional" approaches to the freedom of the game world suggested in the *Complete Guide* (Nakajima [中島], Kariya [刈屋], and Miyazaki [宮崎], *Neon Genesis Evangelions: The Complete Guide*, 164–79), which include raising or lowering the A.T. as far as possible, enjoying school life, or aiming for a romantic relationship with a senior staff member of NERV, such gameplay includes "do not talk to anybody/only talk to PenPen" (a penguin Katsuragi Misato keeps as a pet) "create a harem," "homosexual pairing," "how many people can I assassinate," "refuse to work when playing Misato," "move in with Rei as Shinji," etc. (suba, "Eva2 Sūpā Kōryaku: Hajime ni," my translation).

52. Mori, "The Uncanny Valley," 99.

53. The complete guide recommends using this scenario for experimenting with how to increase the A.T. most effectively (Nakajima [中島], Kariya [刈屋], and Miyazaki [宮崎], *Neon Genesis Evangelions: The Complete Guide*, 143.).

54. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 107.

55. Rancière, *Das Unbehagen in der Ästhetik*, 40–43.

56. Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*.