

Frames of Knowledge: The Player and Playable Figure

Author 1
Information withheld

The playable figure is a determining factor in the player's comprehension about the game world. This figure can be understood in terms of its capabilities in relation to the game world (Newman 2002; Vella 2014), in terms of the embodiment of the player in the game world as an avatar (Carter, Gibbs, and Arnold 2012; Klevjer 2006; Linderoth 2005), or having a dual identity by being the player and a distinct character simultaneously (Vella 2013, 2016).

As players become integrated in the playable figure, they are granted a spatial standpoint, a point of origin that determines what they can see and cannot see, and what she can and cannot do (Vella 2016). However, this concept suggests that the playable figure always has to be present for the player to experience stories that games, such as role-playing games, visual novels, or some adventure games, present. In that case, players and playable figures cannot not be separated as two different entities in the game, since the approach does not take into account story events that players can perceive without the presence of the playable figure, such as specific scenes of which the playable figure is not a part. Most importantly, this approach implies that the player and the playable figure share the same knowledge about the game world, and that they derive the similar kind of meaning from story events that occur.

Through a textual analysis of the *Eiyuu Densetsu: Kiseki* series (2004 – present) as a case study, this paper will discuss the concept that players and playable figures have a different frames of knowledge through which each entity extracts a different meaning of story events that occur in games. The idea is based on the phenomenon of *closed awareness* as described by Gary Alan Fine (1983). As the *Kiseki* series often shows players story scenes or refers to events from previous games in which the playable figure has not been present and/or has no knowledge of, the series create separate frames of knowledge between how players understands the specific game world and how the character makes sense of his or her world. Players obtains more knowledge about events than the playable figure has, but are nevertheless constrained to adopt the playable figure's frame of knowledge when they incorporate the character. In other words, the playable figure regulates the extent players can immerse into the game. As I will argue, while the player-character in the *Kiseki* series can be seen as consisting of a dual identity between player and diegetic figure, player and character derive a different meaning from certain events in the story due to the separate frames of knowledge and thereby understand the game world in a different way.

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Ludography

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