Herlander Elias

First Person Shooter
The Subjective Cyberspace

University of Beira Interior
Covilhã, Portugal
LabCom
2009
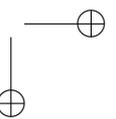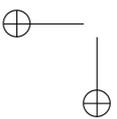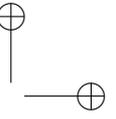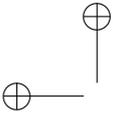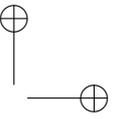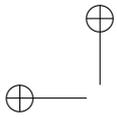
Herlander Elias

First Person Shooter

The Subjective Cyberspace

LabCom Books 2009

Title: First Person Shooter: The Subjective Cyberspace

Dedicated to...
Júlio Semião Elias,
My father

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Contents

"Virtual reality enacts a subjective, point-of-view aesthetic that our
culture has come to associate with new media in general".
Bolter, Jay David & Gruisin, Richard,
Remediation: Understanding New Media

"Videogames weren't just iconic bits of plastic. They were more like
music. They were a mental state".
Herz, J.C.,
Joystick Nation
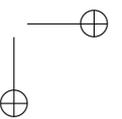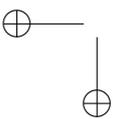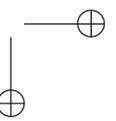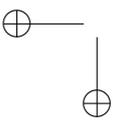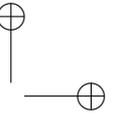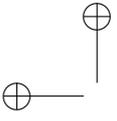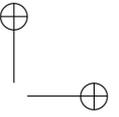
FOREWORD

In the still scarce essayistic literature on videogames, the current study by Herlander Elias cannot be otherwise than an unavoidable reference in the Portuguese background. This importance is due to this study's subject being a specific sub genre in videogames – the First Person Shooter – about which, as far as one knows, this endeavor is unprecedented. If the field of Ludology is still taking its first steps, Herlander Elias has gained a foothold in it, with a career that, although commenced by collaborating on publications directed to videogames, is being consolidated by merging with higher scientific research.

In a theoretically well informed fashion, where names such as Marshall McLuhan, Jean Baudrillard, Paul Virilio, Lev Manovich, Espen Aarseth, David Bolter and Ricard Gruisin, Howard Rheingold, Mark Dery, Claudia Gianetti, Katherine Hayles, Derrick de Kerckhove, Michael Heim, Nicholas Negroponte and Sherry Turkle echo, the author provides us with a very intuitive summary of the critical reflections on technological devices and the research on the changes performed on subjectivity by communication technologies.

However, this work does not display the features usually related to the results of academic research. Nevertheless, *First Person Shooter – The Subjective Cyberspace* fits in a more vast process of opening of the Portuguese University to the contemporary world, where the creation of tools to understand reality and the action within it is at stake. This will mean appropriating and incorporating, as cognitive sources, languages and images belonging to contexts strange to the academic framework, having those at least – besides being a means of performing empirical questioning – the merit of dusting and airing the ponderous academic jargon. On the other hand, this book plays a valuable role on making publicly available and shedding some light on a language still significantly cryptic for not only the public in general, but also
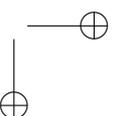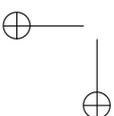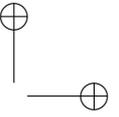
for academic readers, to whom it is as unfamiliar as swift is the inexorable evolution of computer technologies and the cyberculture coupled with them.

It is not accidental that Communication Sciences, under whose wing Herlander Elias' work is taken, constitute an epistemological culture set apart from Humanities and play an eminent role on mediating the latter and technological sciences. One has to comprehend this study within the scope of reflecting upon modern techniques and, particularly, communication sciences. It must be pointed out that these reflections have been undertaken in the sphere of Communication Sciences, achieving patterns of excellence unparalleled in any other field of knowledge. It may be said that they are in a privileged position in order to do so thanks to their being close to communication technologies, which would, in this situation, constitute a challenge not to be left unanswered. Although true, this assertion's being taken into consideration without further views would only lessen Communication Sciences. In their aforementioned reflection, they resort, indeed, to conceptual instruments frequently drawn from many other fields, although providing them with unprecedented developments along with the original theoretical tools, which will, in turn, stimulate the thought on modern technoscience, as well as the research on socio-techniques that have been developed, respectively in Philosophy and Sociology.

Whatever is to be written in the field of Ludology will also have to come through here.

António Fernando Cascais, Ph.D.
Professor of the Communication Sciences Department of FCSH-UNL
Lisbon, Portugal
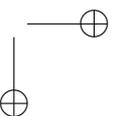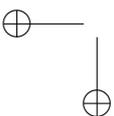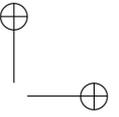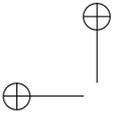
INTRODUCTION

The present goal in the making of this essay is to explain the First Person Shooter concept in the frame of an image theory. By beginning to assume that Virtual Reality failed as a project mostly related to the HMD (Head-Mounted Display) and the DataGlove, but not just like that, I try to make clear how the First Person Shooter is the kind of videogame that rescues the project of the Virtual with a dynamic of its own, even though it is usually experienced through screens.

Crossing science-fiction and electronic image theory, as well as the critique on the language of new media, in this essay I explain the foundation of the project of the Virtual that has as its aegis the FPS. As a consequence of this conceptual part I carry on to relate it to questions associated with technological change and subjectivity. The first chapter is focused on the First Person Shooter concept, as the second chapter requires revealing how the science-fiction project surrounding the "cyberspace" is mirrored in the creation of the First Person Shooter. In the third chapter, at last, the objective is to show the implications on subjectivity for real; to expose what is implicit in the way the subject is related to these subjective images of the FPS cyberspace.

The path explored in this essay is the one of making the reader familiar with terms as "cyberspace", "virtual reality" and the "trajective subject", among others. Present in this entire monograph is a certain critique to the *graphical reformation* that the FPS is able to implement in the electronic ludic image. In order to elucidate the reader in the best way I explain the military origin and the warfare nature of the FPS images, as well as its relation with typography (in the form of text) and topography, film and sculpture. Understanding the First Person Shooter is to experience in a certain way its subjective cyberspace, it is to accept the entrance in the trap of the virtual, that au-

3
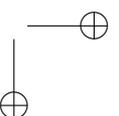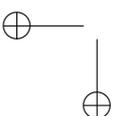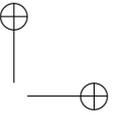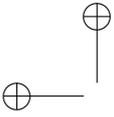
thors like Atkins (2003) mention as being an "entrapment" phenomenon. One attends to a programmed ambush inside the subjective cyberspace of the FPS, designed to test the skills of the *user-player*; the game has challenges, dilemmas and demands an exploration and evasive behavior; a "flânerie" rethinked by the next-generation graphic system. Though I must underline that, besides gaming consoles, FPS games are always executed in the computer through an installer setup file. It never ceased to be odd that this installer setup file conceals the game which is revealed in the gameplay precisely as a "set up". It is unquestionable that the provocative imagery of the FPS are amazing us, otherwise this would not be only just the most revolutionary and emblematic videogame genre of the global electronic entertainment new industry of our time.

Herlander Elias

www.labcom.pt
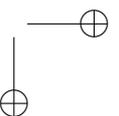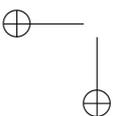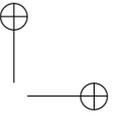
AUTHOR'S NOTE: MIRROR'S EDGE

Recent developments in the First Person Shooter genre have improved pretty much its standards and more enhanced graphic technologies keep pushing the limits upwards. Next-generation high-definition videogames, Japanese CGI anime, special effects films and more demanding audiences have provided better and more realistic electronic gaming. Therefore, First Person Shooters have benefits coming from this equation, where the previously released games looked artificial, now they look real, where the older cartoonish sprites of characters looked computerized, now they look cinematic. Above all, the newest FPS videogames became so incredibly realistic that users think they're playing films. One of the most astonishing FPS, *Crysis* (2007), placed the player in a tropical environment, among other sets, in such a realistic way that players could see vegetation changing, light effects across leaves, explosion whirls dismantling to pieces every military barrack. Along with *Crysis*, *Bioshock* (2007) is also already a new landmark in the genre, as a New Year's Eve goes wrong and all the citizens are slaughtered in a once prosperous and shiny underwater retro-city called Rapture. The player must escape from Rapture and get a substance called Adam from creatures called "Little Sisters" protected by heavy metal monsters known as "Big Daddies". As long as FPS are being designed, virtual worlds will be less worthy of "virtual" labels, because all that can be imagined, it might just become "playable".

Videogames using more famous labels, such as *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare* (2007), happens to be just like as if the player is in the war, experiencing sniper tasks in the Balkans or aboard a cargo ship under hazardous weather conditions. The watermark of *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare* is this
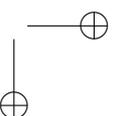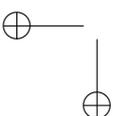
part: the player steps into a dangerous battleground in Iraq, trying to get inside Iraqi TV station, as he returns, the helicopter where is in takes off, not much later it has an engine failure due to a nuclear blast triggered in the vicinity. As amazing as shocking the player sees all the action, the atomic mushroom unfolding in a subjective perspective, as if he is really there, seeing people using rockets on the rooftops of Iraqi buildings and begging to land down and get out of the helicopter alive.

Much before this audiovisual breakthrough led by the FPS genre in the electronic gaming industry, video clips such as The Prodigy's *Smack My Bitch Up* (1997), has shown how it would be like to see films in a subjective perspective. Instead of seeing the actors from the outside (third person perspective), we would see them from their point of view; we would become "them". Such a promise is being charged and fully-developed by new graphic technologies. Videoclips and advertising are just beginning to drink from the creative pool of the FPS. In the TV spot "Take It To The Next Level" (2008) Nike's "FPS Soccer" extravaganza is basically homage to the subjective perspective, so the audience sees how a soccer player sees the action on the field, and also how he trains before the game. Fast-paced advertising is the audiovisual equivalent to The Prodigy's *Smack My Bitch Up*, though the question is that here is too much noise, graphical noise, I mean, a sort of graphical pollution. Excessive rhythm, compressed imagery and music rocking on the background make it a "blitzkrieg" media by-product.

It's in this trend that follows *Mirror's Edge* (2008), a First Person Shooter that is not exactly a FPS, even if it is also that, because the core of the game rules is based on running, not on shooting. Unlike common FPS games, in *Mirror's Edge* the player controls Faith, a runner in an over-controlled world by cops using surveillance gear to catch every message across the public space of a shiny, glossy cityscape. The objective of the game is to escape the law enforcement squads and to do so the player merely runs, jumps, swings across platforms or fights soldiers with her own fists and feet. Faith may use weapons, but it is wiser to disarm soldiers or runaway from their shots than stepping into gun fights that compromise the game body motion system, since as she carries a weapon, she becomes heavier. The path opened by *Mirror's Edge*, once it looks a "parkour" simulator, means that the subjective cyberspace is far from being finished, it does not have to be just about shooting things, it looks that it has just started right now. The subjective cy-

berspace is an interface model for a new world of applications. *Mirror's Edge* is a cutting-edge videogame that restyles the FPS genre by introducing a full body virtualization, the dream of all players, turned into a videogame. In a certain moment we are told by Faith, game's main character that:
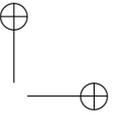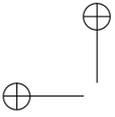
"Here on the edge of the city...
Things have changed. Something is happening.
They have taken my sister.
Framed her for a crime she did not commit.
And now they are hunting me.
But just because I don't have a weapon does not mean I can't fightback.
So now I am coming back after whoever is behind this.
On the Edge of the city you find out who you really are."

LabCom Books
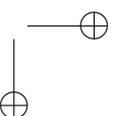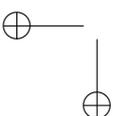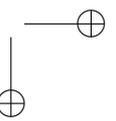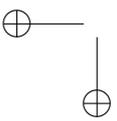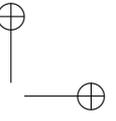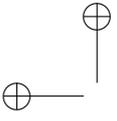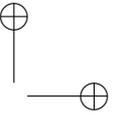
Chapter 1

THE CONCEPT OF FPS

1.1   WHAT IS A FPS?

T HE FPS (First Person Shooter) is a more specific videogame sub-genre that came after the "shooters" genre. Shooters are games where the player controls a character or a vehicle to shoot at adversaries, usually they're known as "shoot'em-ups". However it is the focus on the first person perspective that underlines the FPS in relation to normal shooters. This way the FPS, as shooting videogames, are characterized by a first person perspective dependent gameplay. That is to say that whenever the player interacts with the FPS virtual environment he observes all the action (*ergon*) as if he was contemplating all things through the character's eyes. Images are seen through that point of view because there is simulation work which tries to be the most realistic as possible. For it to be in this manner all the virtual environment generated for the game is programmed so that the player can have the feeling to wander in an environment with characteristics closer to real's, in most of its aspects of scale and proportion of objects and spaces. Let's say that there is a "player-character" relationship, as Geoff King & Tanya Krzywinska (2006) say on this regard, for which required characters are designed to be easily admired, in its turn by players easily identified with these characters themselves.

Besides that, the FPS player always bases its action according to a set of weapons, which can be obtained all along the game or may be supplied at the
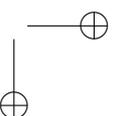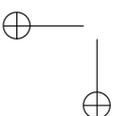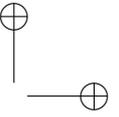
beginning of it to allow him to play a more convincing shooter role. Realism is important in the FPS. Cause all action is being seen through the character's eyes, so the architecture is what makes such realism to be possible. Authors like Atkins (2003) refer the existence of a "gritty realism", especially in FPS games like *Half-Life* (1998). In the last 20 years the, FPS evolution has been so notorious that each game integrating the First Person Shooter genre which implements in a more clear way the theoretical paradigm of Virtual Reality. When one began to imagine what would be like to experience a computer generated "artificial reality", researchers thought that Virtual Reality would be something to try out. Users can experience this mostly through a helmet with a build-in mini-screens and an attached DataGlove – the HMD (Head-Mounted Display)[1] system.

The helmet would be, obviously, to put on the user's head. So user could see the stereoscopic images on screens next to the eyes. Sound would come from the helmet's built-in headphones which covering the ears. The revolutionary side of this device was that, despite it was plugged in to a computer, where those images were generated; the user could move his face in every direction and even still computer images would follow the face motion in the reverse direction in order to address realism in terms of perception to the simulation. One of the greatest theoreticians of this VR (Virtual Reality) golden age is Howard Rheingold that in *Realidade Virtual* [*Virtual Reality*] explains this process:

> "When a cybernaut moves his eye sight or his hand, the *reality engine* feeds the data flux of both sensors of the cybernaut with updated representations of the digital virtual world in all its web of three-dimensional simulation" (1997: p.150)[2].

One understands, according to Rheingold's words, that the only way the VR system is possible because there is a programming engine, that is, a

---

[1] At first, the HMD was conceived by Ivan Sutherland, who inspired himself on scuba dive masks, and that is curious, because VR (Virtual Reality) relies a lot on the "immersion" concept, on architecture of volumes, lines, points and textures. The VR's *user-player* condition is to solve the labyrinth, that most of the times produce further mazes. In case the "immersion" is empowering and convincing, it increases the feeling of existing a world "Out There".

[2] N.A.: This translation from the Portuguese edition is mine.
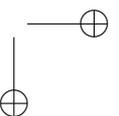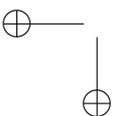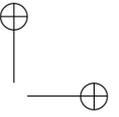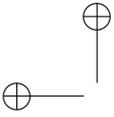
"graphic engine"[3] he prefers to call of "reality engine", responsible for updating images. Only this way immersion would be possible in 3D environments.

Yet the biggest legacy for the FPS left by first simulations with helmet and DataGlove was the chance for us (players) to be allowed to see "our" hand in the virtual, something only possible thanks to the Glove's sensors capturing device that are able to capture the hand. In the computerized image we could see our gestures, but gestures aside, the quality of images two decades ago and the subject locomotion interface raised severe problems. Subject locomotion in the virtual environment, the space's realism, the programming/*mise-en-scène* of other elements and health problems derived from the player bearing the weight of the VR helmet and its screens close to the eyes, didn't helped much.

Circa one decade ago 3D technology started to get released in the personal computer market, console videogames began to process easily 3D environments, and the advent of new recording medium, like the CD-ROM, made easier the resurrection of a virtual promised by science-fiction. With the possibility of recording large amounts of data in more compact medium Virtual Reality looked possible again, yet with a slight change; what was initially designed to be experienced mostly through headphones and stereoscopic screens becomes, paradoxically, more interesting to explore with screens. The projection system evolved. Behind this change the main reason was that hardware evolved in a different rhythm from software. And because software, at the time, did not needed to dependently consider graphic cards like today, programming was more unrestrained. It happens that every technology initially thought for the man-machine interaction in ludic environments suffer some changes. Once that images were experienced through the helmet and were mediated by graphic cards, the developers (researchers, programmers, concept artists and designers) concluded that the HMD elimination would be advantageous. And the outcome is that the FPS comes out full-strength, when videogames migrate into the personal computers, move out from arcade parlors and discard the use of HMD[4] helmets. In short, the complexity was no

---

[3]Today "graphic engine" is not a buzzword anymore, even if it still is a valid concept; since there are already several specific engines throughout the game, as it runs in real-time; such as Physics engine, sound engine, lightning engine and Artificial Intelligence, for instance.

[4]It matters to refer here that in spite of the HMD helmet fell in disuse the multimedia art projection systems evolved in order to provide immersion through 360 degrees giant screens.
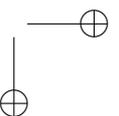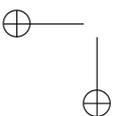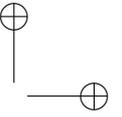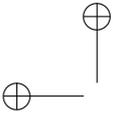
more in the gear and slowly transferred itself to the programming, to the *mise-en-scène* of the virtual environment of the FPS: the graphic engine. There was this relevant change that Frank Lantz & Eric Zimmerman (1999) refer on closer inspection this way:

> "*Quake* and games like it have succeeded in creating meaningful spaces for play where the extravagant promises of virtual reality have failed. They have focused design on what participants are actually doing from moment to moment in the game, rather than on just the visual and kinetic sensations of moving through an immersive space" (Cit. in Simon Penny, 2004: p.76).

Focus on videogame design brings up virtual space experimentation with a never technically achieved before quality, unless in science-fiction cinema. It is not in any way by chance that Lev Manovich, in *The Language of New Media* (2001), confesses that "we still have not left the era of the screen" (p.115). It means that the screen border between the world of image and this side of ours, the real world, has not been blurred; like the defenders of the virtual would appreciate. In the making of FPS games, with a screen-based interface, it is at stake that the image of this kind of games becomes itself a target in sight of a complexity more previously identified in hardware. With the FPS, gaming becomes so much complicated and perfect in terms of realism that software is in fact the treasure[5].

In the beginning, FPS games were very simple and as time went by they became more complex, captivating and creative. Therefore, this videogame genre has been immune to time and has revealed itself as the only type of videogame that keeps in its roots, which is: Virtual Reality's conceptual prototype. The whole thing is about experiencing a virtual environment through the eyes of a simulated character (us players), which implies motion in terms of body motion (walking or running subject) and concerning observation (looking in at any angle). Besides these facts I mentioned above, a virtual environment left to be explored must have what it is called of "map" or "level", that in fact is its 3D architecture discovered by the *user-player* when he immerges

---

[5]In the course of the last decade the development of graphic cards conceived for high-resolution graphics processing brought a little more balance to this stand. In our time, software along its generation considers hardware, in the same way hardware is built and designed to allow certain abilities and programming options.
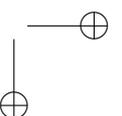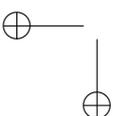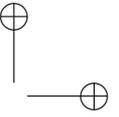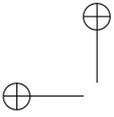
himself in such environment. On this process Michael Heim says that first person perspective really stimulates immersion:

> "The first-person perspective enhances the psychological immersion. Classic adventure games (. . .) use first-person movement to draw the user into a psychological tunnel that combines narrow interactivity (shoot'em-up) with a highly linear geography (castles and labyrinths)" (1998: p.30).

True it is that in games where the player sees all the action in first person style become enhanced in psychological immersion, with or without Data-Glove and HMD, but as FPS are extremely convincing, when experienced in a regular computer monitor, the DataGlove and the helmet gear question is unasked. On the other side, the major development in 3D graphics has been underlining such immersion by a "tunnel effect" (suggested by Heim); it is so much that this innumerous videogames have been using the same FPS code to simulate bullet trajectories, with virtual cameras, to have an effect in several racing simulators. It is also known that the immersion sensation was basic in the first games, the player got perplexed with the not much complexity of the geometric shapes that filled the game map. Undoubtedly these first games had above all a simple interactivity and a very linear geography, as Heim underlines. Today that old core of the FPS remains thanks to the *perspective device* (which in its turn makes the First Person Shooter into a "rail-shooter", a term coined and used by Geoff King & Tanya Krzywinska [2006: p.78]).

Concerning the programmer side, one knows that they have to explore theme epochs, design captivating and more realistic environments, where architecture is not much linear and even accidents may happen, the catastrophes, the unforeseen; as one may find out in videogames like *Half-Life*, *Black* (2006) or *Doom III* (2005). If we analyze *Doom III* or *Half-Life* we get the impression that there is a demoniac, restless, technology that provokes a malfunction or an accident from which it is advised to escape from. Ever since the first chapter of the series *Doom* (1993) transmits that a demonized, scary technology exists. So many years after the appearance of the first FPS videogames, the fundamental strategy, in most of them, still is the "run and gun" based gameplay. And to sum up it is the technique that can be the solution rather than just problem in the labyrinth where the human got lost to reach out to himself again.

LabCom Books
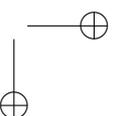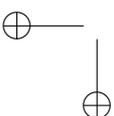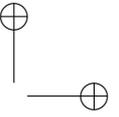
In this type of videogames the player contemplates the scenery, the three-dimensional architecture, face to face with other human players, if he plays online in a network, and/or with other computer-controlled characters, the so-called NPCs. NPCs is the acronym of "Non-Playing Characters", and they're non-playable by us, the main player. On this kind of artificial entities Carrie Heeter states that:

> "A sense of presence in a virtual world derives from feeling like you exist within but as a separate entity from a virtual world that also exists. The differentiation and experience of self may be enhanced if other beings exist in the virtual world and if they appear to recognize that you exist. It may be enhanced if the virtual environment itself seems to acknowledge your existence" (1992).

Therefore, the sensation of presence in the virtual world consists in how credible the entities, and the virtual world itself, looks like in the computerized space. The important brand of realism is about the awareness of these characters; how they notice us, our presence, helping to dissolve the notion of telepresence, in other words, erasing the distance track. In the major part of FPS games, those virtual entities recognize the player-controlled character, the one that, being manipulated, provides action seen in the first person point of view. Also the FPS allows the player to be able to see himself, as a character, mirrored in any reflexive surface of the scenery, as it happens in *Doom III*, for instance. The idea behind this is to let the player get in more confrontation with his digital double, with the character that plays the 3D action-adventure, in order to cause more sensation of realism. An author that somehow focus on this question of "re-cognition" of the Other (*allos*) is Barry Atkins (2003), who refers that in modern videogames "the process of othering" is what it is at stake, that is to say, the process that drives to the institution, acknowledgement and recognition of the Other in the game space, whether this one is a computerized being or a player-controlled character. It makes sense to say inclusive that First Person Shooters require obligatorily that process of "otherness", because without the Other, cyberspace would be nothing more but space.

Moreover, the gesture residue of the unarmed hand that aims, or of the hand that squeezes the trigger in game, the player is contended with his virtual self in the game in every area where reflex surfaces, glazed zones, mantras,
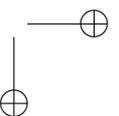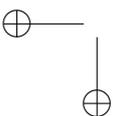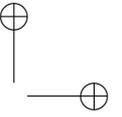
bathroom mirrors or any other kind of ornamental window panes are. As FPS players we are always accused by a mirror. It happens like this because there is this disembodied look in this type of games, all that we may see and that it is left for us to explore is transmitted by subjective images, by the very same images that simulate a subject which sees them; when in fact its only images triggered by *user-player* commands. One may say that these are images which simulate subjectivity, able to represent a type of presence in three dimensions. Hence, the body motion and the eyes movements are considered.

It is quite interesting to notice the behavior of First Person Shooters characters that interact with us along the game, because practically every time they're determinant to help solving puzzles (*ludus*) and riddles that we come across with. The whole architecture of the game genre requires a player to explore space, a player that must have a great sense of opportunity to deal with adversaries, acting with a strategic behavior and that never looses the sense of guidance. Thanks to today's hardware capabilities and software's potentialities, FPS have evolved in a ferocious rhythm, but the increasing quality level owes pretty much to the longer time required to develop them each time required to develop them (between 2 to 4 years of work in progress). For all of this, the environments are so complex and giant that the player has to play by eliminating already seen parts to avoid normally getting lost in space, or being hit and perishing in the virtual. Unlike many other game genres, in FPS, the adversaries are supposed to learn faster in terms of AI (Artificial Intelligence) all that we do in the game space; they look for us, attacking our character in groups or using more lethal devices. The reason behind the ambushes is the true nature of the FPS: an incentive to the virtual survival, which many times are all about setting up counter-ambushes to the AI-controlled characters. A practical example is the way enemies find where we are, go around a block and surprise us, crawling, hiding and making it in small armies in the *Far Cry* (2004) game.

The FPS is essentially a game composed by an environment inhabited by characters that fight back, in terms of the action, each time resembling mimetically more and more the one portrayed by cinema, demands from programmers the construction of an over-complex *mise-en-scène*. As if it would not be enough already, besides graphics, sonorities possess a stunning realism, because one listens to sounds of machines working, footsteps, gunshots, other equipments, dialogues and many other sonorities which make the FPS

LabCom Books
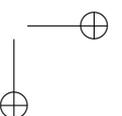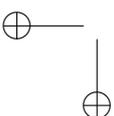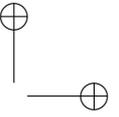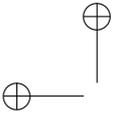
something very realistic (this happens ever since the *Quake* [1996] FPS). the realistic I mentioned above is till the gameplay leaves a records in player's memories, as if he had a real experience (this happens to whoever plays *Half-Life*), that we realize, of this genre, the amount of time the players took to complete (approximately one intensive week in the best case, about three in the worst one). Atkins (2003) uses the expression "gritty engagement" because of this; for he understands that there is a disembodied surrounding of the player in a FPS game, like *Half-Life*. Jesper Juul, a well-known theoretician and videogame designer sustains in his turn that:

> "Some games are more responsive to this kind of free-form action than others, *Half-Life* (1998) being an example of a shooter in which widespread collateral damage can be caused for its own pleasure, as a mark of the player-character's agency in the on-screen environment (. . .)" (2005: p.14).

The absorption that the game exercises in the *user-player* comes from the technical discourse and the simulation quality underlying in the FPS. Juul provides the example of *Half-Life*, which allows even certain degrees of freedom in its cyberspace as a form to justify the presence, the player "agencements"[6], consolidating the relationship between player and screen-character. Destroying parts of the game scenery (a *paidea* category typical exploration, if we recall Roger Caillois [1990] notion of *paidea*), and not just the respect for the game goals (the rules of *ludus*), is what makes the virtual environment of the FPS so much credible.

Truth is that FPS excels by rules and accidents. Because the whole architecture of such kind of videogames implies a character able to explore and complete checkpoints until he reaches the final goal along the many levels. However, despite the fact that the player must play following rules, accidents always occur; Some are predictable, others aren't. Yet about the accidents that happen in the game, and that are expected to happen, these ones provoke on the player an experience of *alea* (latin term for "randomness"), of chance, letting to experience something chaotic in a controlled space as it is the videogame space. In the *Os Jogos e os Homens* (1990), Roger Caillois clearly defines the games of the *alea* genre as being those that, in opposition

---

[6]A term I borrow from French Philosopher Gilles Deleuze that became used by many authors reviewing the electronic image.
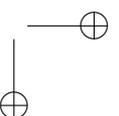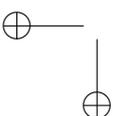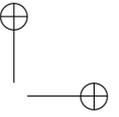
to the games of *agôn* (based in the equal circumstances among players), the "decision (. . .) doesn't depend on the player" (1990: p.36)[7]. In other words, the player is somehow passive, being dependent on the destiny's benevolence. It is comprehensible in this sense that the First Person Shooter not only demands the player to follow the game rules, as it may require as well that the player must get lost amidst the randomness as if such thing would be a major quest.

For the chaos situations to look truthful like those of more normality in the FPS, another extreme important factor is photorealism. Without photorealism everything would be nothing more but a poor digital representation of situations inspired by the real. Though, the realism at a graphic level is much grandiose already, this kind of videogames manages to transport the player to places and situations almost in a cinematic performance. Considering of course the light refraction realism, the atmospheric effects, the textures that weave walls, floors, ceilings and the characters' clothes; not to mention light design, shadows cast, objects physics motion, time, sonorities and the interactive skills of each element on stage. The result of these components on stage is an environment that looks like it has a life of its own, and it is in this exact point that the FPS becomes the favorite game of the virtual, a game that seems to have its own dynamics regardless or our interaction.

Narrative is equally of utmost relevance, an element that obtained a major importance along the years in this type of games, which grants more realism to this type of audiovisual experience in the first person because with the script-narrative project, and the programming (code) in the game design, the outcome is outstanding. With no big difficulty the player feels like he has been teleported into another universe as if almost instinctly, where game characters interact with him and accidents happen, teams gather or break apart in a battlefield according to the game subject and the recreated epoch.

The general rule of First Person Shooters is to make the player experience something that is specifically designed for the cyberspace. Filmmaking aesthetics make the FPS the ideal game for certain representations, awesome *mise-en-scène*. In the programming of a FPS optical and audio details are considered, a kind of register of reality similar to the one existing in cinematography, as *Black* shows very well by copying blockbuster movie se-

---

[7]N.A.: This translation from the Portuguese edition is mine.
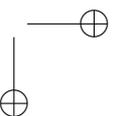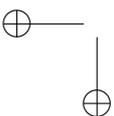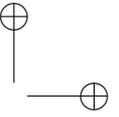
quences, recreating explosions, gunshots and action film circumstance. This game genre is designed from scratch upon a grid, on which the map is build, based on the game scenario. Then in a spherical dome the atmospheric characteristics are inserted around that map to provide the illusion of an existing sky (nowadays already dynamic with moving clouds and sun's changing positions; the day/night cycle); and in the end the spots where characters show up are programmed as well as the "trigger points". Such spots are areas in which every time the player takes his character across them something is activated, like an explosion, a memory or a gunfight. For instance; in the case of the FPS *XIII – Thirteen* (2003) as the player-controlled character explores some areas he remembers previous happenings through flashback processes.

Marshal McLuhan, in the remarkable *Understanding Media*, said that "if the motorist is technologically and economically far superior to the armored knight, it may be that electric changes in technology are about to dismount him and return us to the pedestrian scale" (1994: p.218). Which means that in spite of being in a more evolved time in relation to the armored knight, the driver of the motorized vehicle is not, however, unconditioned by the technological change provoked by electricity. And the technological changes were about to returning the subject back to the "pedestrian scale". If one carefully analyzes the First Person Shooter it is quite easy to understand that McLuhan's statements were correct, because in this kind of videogame, it is through electronic media, henceforth a consequence of electrical technology, that the return to the pedestrian scale is effective. On a closer examination, we found that in the FPS, the player must take advantage of a virtualized body motion. Use his body movements, so he has to run, walk, duck down, climb ladders, slide down steel cables, get into air ducts or escape dangerous zones by driving out of them in many types of vehicles: as it happens in *Halo – Combat Evolved* (2001). The player is also attending to what unfolds in the game, he is an active spectator, someone that experiments; he is a new age user that sees himself as an extension of the trigger, a prolongation of the ludic equipment. By having the body placed in a new form of image that presupposes a new instance of subjectivity, the player gets familiar with a point of view-based narrative. In terms of concept, the importance of the First Person Shooter lies in its almost pure optical situation, because it is basically only through vision that all unfolds before revealing in front of the player. Inside the virtual environment of FPS a transformation of enormous relevance is performed
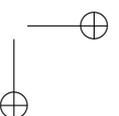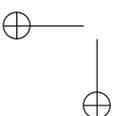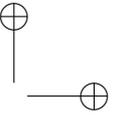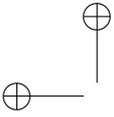
in relation to other action computer games because the "inner perspective" is replacing the "outside perspective"; all this in a model of interaction with virtuality that considers a visionless point of view, an image without photons, in a space without geology, a map without geography and with a subjectivity without subject.

1.2   IN YOUR FACE

A<small>N</small> expression used by the international videogame press to mention the FPS videogame genre is "In Your Face", and it addresses us to Virtual Reality. To see the action "in our face" means to be "in somebody's shoes", in "someone's place", or even in "someone's skin". However, despite such considerations the "In Your Face" expression does not send us right into the videogame and the virtual realms. Thus the expression addresses immediately to the frontality of an individual unable to say something else besides truth. Originally the expression carries the meaning of attitudes of clearness and confrontation, on the other side of evasion and uncertainty attitudes. One may deduce that this press, mostly British and North-American, uses ambiguously this expression, in order to say that whoever plays a FPS is directly contended with the virtual in his face, in his look, in his nose, in an impossible to ignore and tactile point of view.

Authors Geoff King & Tanya Krzywinska affirm in the work *Tomb Raiders And Space Invaders – Videogames, Forms & Contexts*, that some forms of games and spectacular cinematics invite (in effect) the player to sit down comfortably and to admire, contemplating scale, detail, convincing textures or other impressive image attributes. According to them, "others seek to create a more aggressive, explosive and 'in your face' variety of spectacular impact (. . .)" (2006: p.153). And thus here is the answer to the First Person Shooter being the videogame genre known as "In Your Face", because in this genre of games the player sees the action as if he is really inside the character's face[8].

---

[8]Although one must point out that this "In Your Face" scheme has an ancestor in Namco's *Pac-Man*arcade game, because it was the first videogame whose controlled-character had been given a face. When *Pac-Man*was released on the market it used to be said: "you watch him, you become him!"

LabCom Books
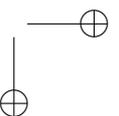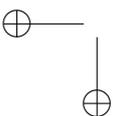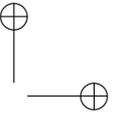
Practically every First Person Shooter is a game in which the happenings are observed as if the player would be in the same place as the game character, the only difference is that there are games which reveal a big effort in simulating many gestures, and the presence of the hand that holds the gun and squeezes the trigger is of utmost relevance even to grab other types of objects or activate mechanisms, as *Half-Life* have instituted. Although, the FPS which underlined the most of the "Virtual Self" gestures was *Breakdown* (2004), for allowing eating, drinking and the fight scenes that reveal to us both hands and legs. While other games only require the action to be seen in the first person without underlining too much of the main character's subjective side, getting back at first person just to make aiming at objects and figures possible, like *Battle Zone* (1980) or *Silent Scope* (2000).

When one plays a FPS the feeling is that there is a strong commitment with the game action. In other words, the player, by accepting the game's rule, he accepts to play a designed experience, the kind of experience for which there is a contract. Under this contract the player does obligatorily something (*ludus*) or he achieves the goals in a random order inside a more relatively broad context (*paidea*). But in the end the primary objectives must have been accomplished, as for the secondary objectives are generally optional (yet this changes according to the difficulty level the player has chosen to play by), like it is in *Black*. What happens when one plays a FPS is that the player establishes an agreement with the virtual, in the sense that one accepts that some details become unavoidably real and others necessarily virtual (the existence of aliens!).

It is the task of the player to understand the computer as a performance space, a cybernetic space, a cyberspace that admits a type of representations (game), but in its core works more like scenery for previously staged action and that presupposes certain (played) freedoms. Of course there is a whole dramatic charge in the situations predicted in these games, because there are moments of salvation, death, team-work, help, despair, among many others. And from the narrative point of view there's clearly a script with beginning, middle and end, which the player gets to unveil step by step, by contemplating all things through the game character's face.

Many times in this game genre the player starts the game after something very important had already happened, so he is caught in the middle of a situations field that he does not control (*alea*), and from which he must getaway
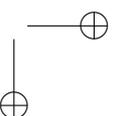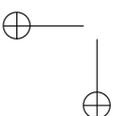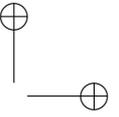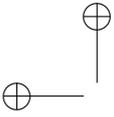
unhurt at all cost, like in *Quake II* (1997) and *Half-Life* (1998). Reaching the end of a FPS game requires a player to collaborate with non-playable characters (as in *Half-Life 2: Episode I* [2006]), to cooperate with human colleagues (as it happens in *Counter-Strike* [2000]), or even to intervene in the modification of the game environment (like in *Quake*, *Unreal* [1998], *Counter-Strike* or *Far Cry*). And in the end the player is co-producing, co-creating something new which is predicted in the game but that still have not happened in terms of experience. In this trend it makes sense to say that the player can co-star with other characters in a "total mise-en-scène"[9], because like Jean Baudrillard argues in *Simulacros e Simulação*, "the opened field is that of simulation in the cybernetic sense, that is to say, the one of manipulation in every sense of these models (sceneries, creation of simulated situations, etc.)" (1994: p.152)[10]; not existing this way any obstacle for the subject, whether in the condition of user, or in the condition of player, to respectively, not enjoy the manipulation and the fruition of the virtual universe of the FPS.

The question is that in order to finish a game like FPS successfully, the player has got to respect the tacit contract, the commitment to act according to the goals and rules of the game. One contemplates a sort of very specific public ritual only due to the existence of gaming, simulation, as McLuhan states: "to simulate one situation by means of another one, to turn the whole working environment into a small model, is a means of perception and control by means of public ritual" (1989: p.168-169). Transforming the working environment into a miniaturized model is to establish a control mechanism. By this logic one understands the needs of implementing the simulation space, a cyberspace common to player and to the computer that holds up the audiovisual experience of playing a FPS.

Well, cyberspace is a representation space in this case, of representations in the sense that, whether for the player, or for the AI entities that co-star on it, that is, interact with us, there is a role to play. The player has to go across spaces, find the exits, conquer trophies or defeat enemies in gunfights, just

---

[9]Let's mention, for example, the *FPS Creator* software, from the *The Game Creators* software house, that permits the *user-player* to build the virtual environment of the FPS and to try it right after, based on theme collections and predetermined sets of visuals. In this case, the starting point is for sure the production of the virtual environment as the experimentation occurs *a posteriori.*

[10]N.A.: This translation from the Portuguese edition is mine.

LabCom Books
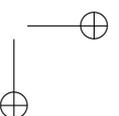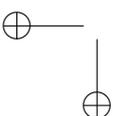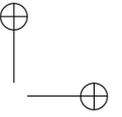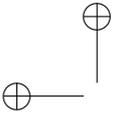
to evolve in terms of ranking points, career status or in game experience, as *Doom*'s hall of fame demonstrates. Though the characters that interact with us along the game from the rogue soldier to the office colleague that gives us a vaccine shot to heal our wounds, have to respect a sort of role-playing game. Every behavior is, within a certain margin left for action, practically programmed to brand that "total mise-en-scène". About all this world of synthesis images, André Parente affirms that: "if the synthesis images does not address a pre-existent reality, meanwhile it reports itself, most of the times, to signification models presupposed in the real" (2004: p.23)[11]. That is to say that if the virtual image does not have the Real as a reference, it as a basis, at least, the signification models imported from reality itself. Hence in the FPS when we find a white box with a red cross painted on it we know it is an energy recovery item, the same way when we are close to a button we know that pressing it will trigger a door to open. In its deep, the virtual world of the First Person Shooter may be very photorealistic and simulate the real in many aspects, but even when it is something made without any reference to real, the fact is that the virtual is inspired at least on details of the real. Examples of this can be found in the cities of *Halo 2* (2004) which were obviously inspired in Manhattan's skyline. With the evolution of photorealism and graphic processors, Cyberspace representations are each time less worthy of the "virtual" designation, so they resemble more and more something shot by a film camera.

Game images are getting closer to the ones shot by film cameras and the amount of autonomous elements moving in the field has increased, from characters to vehicles, reaches easily the innumerous dozens of unities, as it is shown in the revolutionary FPS *Crysis* (2007). Even in what concerns the dimension of the sceneries designed for the FPS, their maps are giant enough to provide a realistic "return to the pedestrian scale" through the videogame. One works with much insistence on what Geoff King & Tanya Krzywinska call of "gamescape" (2006: p.76), which is, the "ludic landscape", the "game landscape". Having in account the dimension of our character in the game and the size of the space, truth is that most FPS are so big in terms of scale that players can spend hours or days to fully explore only one zone. And it never ceases to be curious that in this new dimension of the virtual. Game devel-

---

[11]*Idem.*
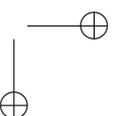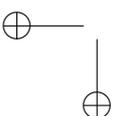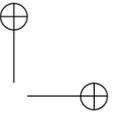
opers managed to conclude that super sized environments required in-game vehicles so that players could travel around more easily and without restrictions. Two cases are enunciated: in *Halo – Combat Evolved* if the player wants to go across one edge of town to another, he must drive the military jeep; and in *Far Cry* if the player must travel to zones considered to be inaccessible even for walk or climb, then he'll have to fly a delta-wing. In both situations, it will take enormous amount of time to perform a virtual version of real world traveling in one area without even think about it. We can see more examples of this happenings in more recent games.

Precisely because the virtual makes possible for the player to acquire more control and freedom than in the real, there have to be some gray areas when one interacts with the virtual. From the beginning to the end, in a First Person Shooter the player has be virtuous, he must penetrate the game to accomplish its objectives (*ludus*), his task is to reach for the fullness, becoming more secure of himself if the game is finished. Climax peaks are for example the "level bosses" that do everything to stop us from passing from one level to the next one. They try to stop us from reaching the end of the game, as we may see in *Doom III*, but there's always a chance to go around this situation because there are many conventions in this videogame genre (therefore characters reveal patterns, weaknesses), like in any other game. The question is that any victory implies that we explore (*paidea*) the game environment and that we take advantage of every resource, even if they are scarce (such as guns, ammunition, vaccines, information, money, tools or codes). Another relevant factor in the FPS cyberspace is how one manages to deal with chaos (*alea*), because in response to the predictable environment full of regular videogame patterns, the FPS introduces unpredictable elements. For example, the player may be walking through a highway and suddenly the ground splits into huge imperfect stone blocks, like we see in *Half-Life*; or we can manage to eliminate every adversary which surrounds us and in the end we're still surprised by a foe coming from behind like in *Killzone* (2004). Playing a FPS is always an interesting experience because it is an experience that has something new, from one game to the next. It is part of the FPS immersion strategy that the player finds out something new within the game, so it is this the argument of Atkins:

"*Half-Life*'s 'deformable environment' (that is, its landscape can be af-

LabCom Books
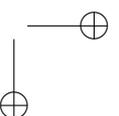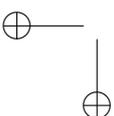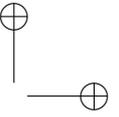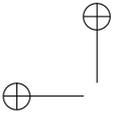
 fected by the actions of the player) is part of a basic strategy of 'immersion'
(...)" (2003: p.66).

In spite of being easily detected some conventions and identified clichés,
the look turned into a camera movement, and the subject turned into vision,
visual space continues to be held hostage of the point of view stigma. What
we see from game to game is all the renewed graphical archive, in order for
player to accept the design of the most mesmerizing subjective experiences
which are based on maps, images and realistic models.

1.3   THE SCREEN AS MASK

T HE screen is seen as a mask when one plays a First Person Shooter
game because between the virtual world and the *user-player* lies a
frontier, each time more blurred due to the increasing quality of the
game's graphical archive. It is the screen that brands that frontier, sign-
ing in the edges, with its cyborg nature, demanding the capture of the *user-
player* gesture with the purpose of augmenting a tactile culture that got under-
developed with the TV-image. A FPS like *Red Steel* (2006), in its turn, shows
clearly that the screen marks that the real is on this side of the mask (here),
and the virtual lies on the other side (there). Because the interface of *Red
Steel* in the Nintendo Wii gaming console provides the possibility of the game
understanding the player's gestures in multiple axis wireless game controller,
and that then are translated into shooting or defensive moves of the player-
controlled character on the screen. This vision of the screen as a mask, at the
game, lets mark the double position of the *user-player*, whether it is in the real
or in the virtual. In fact the screen is no more but a mask, a mutation of the ar-
mored knight's headgear, the soldier's helmet. Therefore, the *military-image*
of the First Person Shooter is a new tactile version of the electronic image
after all, even in the case of the HMD helmet.

To accept the rules of the game means to contemplate the videogame's
Virtual Reality, to wear the controlled character's mask in the illusive world.
Seeing the screen as a mask means the *user-player* understands it as a refuge,
an entry point into the mesh of connections addressing the *art of hunting*,
the predation game that occurs in a three-dimensional world that absorbs the
player who thinks and interacts upon images. The question is the existence
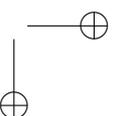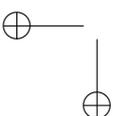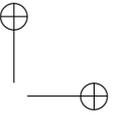
of a process that McLuhan called "Narcissus-Narcosis" flowing in the contemporary captivating images, in this case of the First Person Shooter. In this process the myth of Narcissus makes sense since the narcissistic implication consists on having the screen before us and how we identify ourselves with the reflection, the image standing on the screen. It's a screen that works out like a mask. Just like Narcissus, the *user-player* takes the in-game mistakes for real even if under the understanding of those images are the images of his own reflection.

Narcissus fell in love with his own image, taking as his own identity – an image of the Other (*allos*), an alterity, an other image. McLuhan said that "now the point of this myth is the fact that men at once become fascinated by any extension of themselves in any material other than themselves" (1994: p.41). Hence, summoning the optical myth of Narcissus, in McLuhan, is to claim that the subject feels fascinated by its own mirrored image, its extensions, as long as the existence of these imageries, regardless of the medium. In the case of the First Person Shooter videogames the recording medium is not the important part because one roams toward a dematerialization of media in Virtual Reality. The core of the question is truly how the prosthesis becomes dangerously seductive, designed to includes the subject. The *user-player* of the FPS faces a double fascination, whether or not for the technology (hence the necessity of a technical culture), or for the images (hence the need for a visual culture of perspective images). Besides this, the fascination is felt in the dichotomy of software-hardware, in the border between the real and the virtual, and also in the frontier between body and mind, when the moving images obtain a life of their own leading the *user-player* to be swallowed by the immersive virtuality, even without using the HMD.

The body of the *user-player* finds a way in the First Person Shooter's virtual to compensate the physical inertia and a form to enrich his own social experience, cementing with other players exclusively in the game *unrelated relationships*. It is this the way how the game's virtual environment expands the freedom sensation in cyberspace, as a counterpart to a controlled too in reality by the digital and entirely charted world. Inside cyberspace, the *user-player* enlarges the reach of his "persona", of his mask, dominating what authors like Sherry Turkle and Bragança de Miranda (in *O Controlo do Virtual* [1997]) call the "grammar of the masks" as the major characteristic of cyberspace. One demands the domain of the "grammar of the masks" of the

LabCom Books
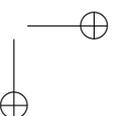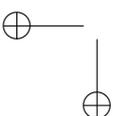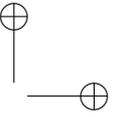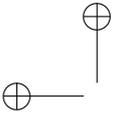
virtual – which is exactly because of obstacles in reality due to social rules mechanics, responsibilities that make hard to *pracitice* the mask on the real, and unveiling of the true face beneath.

For this motive, the *user-player* finds in the First Person Shooter cyberspace a ludic platform which is an exit from the primary reality, and that also performs as a form of self-hypnosis. Relatively to the predominant images of its time, in a prelude style to present time's global virtuality, McLuhan mentioned that the "Narcissus Narcosis" is a "syndrome whereby man remains as unaware of the psychic and social effects of his new technology as a fish of the water it swims in" (1994-98). For us who to try to understand how a man feels in this new stage of aquatic imagery, is to understand before anything else that the immersion of images does not let one notice that, because they are hallucinatory, they disrupt anyone's critical positioning. The narcosis, the vice, the condition of addiction that it is provoked on the *user-player*, makes the artificial environment of images to seem legitimate, accepted and natural, when in fact is just one refined graphic kingdom, a combat imagery archive, an addictive illusion that surrounds us without margin left for criticizing, unless for playing.

1.4   SUBJECTIVE SHOOTER

IT is interesting to notice that some videogame Press refers to First Person Shooter as a genre of "subjective shooters"[12]. By chance a shoot'em up videogame, where all action is observed in the first person perspective, is subjective, as we have seen so far since the previous chapters. To resume the definition of FPS uniquely to the terms of "shooter" and "subjective" means that, firstly, in this genre of videogames, the main element is really the gunfight, and secondly, that the subjective aspect is the great trademark of the genre. This way one realizes that the FPS admits interacting with a virtual reality by placing the player in the condition of *user-player*, yet constantly in the optic of experiencing something full of action and mostly seen in the first person angle. Therefore the "subjective shooter" definition requires only action packed and its contemplation in the angle of the subject who is able to

---

[12]An expression used in Spanish videogame Press, especially in the *Hobby Consolas* Magazine, for instance, which calls First Person Shooters as "Shooters Subjetivos".
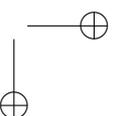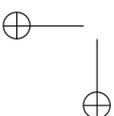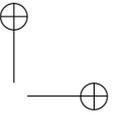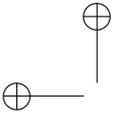
see, react and interact. Until the point that, as Couchot defends well, relatively
to virtual reality, that the "the subject himself balances between the state of
object and the state of image" (1998: p.27)[13]. Halfway between the controlled
image and the situation of the subject separated from that same image is what
we may conclude from Couchot's statement. However, in my perspective, the
subject also finds himself in the position of an implicit witness, somebody
connivent with the substitute reality that the FPS provides in a programmed
manner. What Couchot points out is that in Virtual Reality, in general, the
subject's topology changes because the individual penetrates the image, get-
ting into its interiority (in the same style Manovich mentions). Thus, in the
First Person Shooter, that situation is notorious because its images are not
conceived to be just watched over and over again; they are programmed to
pursue the subject, surrounding him with its own gear of plastic and graphic
discourse. The only alternative left for the subject who tries to play a FPS
is to know how to perform that "flânerie" (wandering), the searching, to do
the detective's job as well as the hunter's, always keeping in mind that he can
track down adversaries the same way they can track him down too, making
him to face the consequences.

Accepting the virtual environment that turns the object into a target in
sight is to understand the FPS as a subjective action game. True it is that
in the spectral kingdom of the FPS, the *user-player* is obliged to know how
to manage the whole military perspective of the image. It happens in the
FPS that the images of the game incorporate the subject, rescuing him into its
interior until the subject finds himself totally mirrored in the images updated
by the graphic engine. The subject's condition is that one letting himself to
be reduced in the objective space, being transformed into a kind of projective
vehicle. Therefore, the weapon defines the balance between inside and outside
the virtual which soaked into a subjectivation process.

In another glance these images do not need light exposure (because their
nature is not photo-logical), are first of all processed, they are "moving-images"
in themselves, in the deleuzian sense, that really move and excel with an at-
tention provocative detail. How the FPS images interact with us (for instance
the character Alyx in *Half-Life 2: Episode I* [2006]) makes them to be subjec-

---

[13]N.A.: This translation from the Portuguese edition is mine.
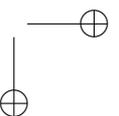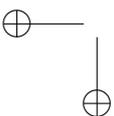
tive, that is, to make them think, interact, accusing our presence in a technical device; a sort of *subjective gear*.

Behind the conception of the FPS there is an enormous study of strategies applied to emulate or include subjectivity in an objective computer image. Lets be aware that in some FPS, it is allowed to climb ladders swinging (*Killzone*), grab objects and using them (*Halo – Combat Evolved*), damaging something in the scenery (*Half-Life*), driving vehicles (*Half-Life 2*), setting up machines (*Quake*) and even to play in multiplayer mode with characters of the game itself (*Halo 2*).

In other FPS games a concern about surveillance and voyeurism is revealed (*Silent Scope*), or to control and track down (*Counter-Strike*), film shooting or taking snapshots in the game (*GoldenEye* [1997]). There are many FPS that let us choose a non-linear story, to try out adrenalyzing sensations (*Black* [2006]) or feel our sight getting blurred (*Battlefield 2* [2005] and *Far Cry*). Some FPS even simulates the lack of attention, changing the perception conditions even in audition (*Crysis*). For the boldest developers supernatural phenomena are simulated too (*Prey* [2006] and *Doom III* [2005]).

First Person Shooters like *Black*, *Crysis*, *Doom III* or *Half-Life 2*, not to mention the groundbreaking *Breakdown*, they're so realistic that they almost want our Self to be borrowed. In their core these FPS perform like collections of subjective representations, being able to generate photorealistic images and situations thanks to the massive rendering performed by cooled graphic cards' processors in computer hardware. The graphic engines they use are so powerful they can set on motion ambitious sceneries, situations too in which dozens or hundreds of non-playable characters and human-controlled characters challenge each other on the battlefield. In sum, what the new generation First Person Shooters create are images that command us to stare at their core, the center where all things are defined, unlike the virtual margins where all things get blurred up. The level of realism reaches such a degree that it is hard to separate if it is subjectivity being contemplated as a representation in the image, or, on the other hand, if it is just representative images of subjectivity.
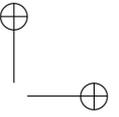
1.5   GRAPHIC ENGINE

VIRTUAL REALITY in the First Person Shooter is a digital environment where sceneries are dynamic (weather, characters and objects). This dynamic in the FPS is derived from the "game engine", the graphic engine; the programming implicit in the game design. In its core the graphic engine presupposes the character's motion within the virtual environment and its ability to move sight (through the player's controller) into any any direction. Keyboard commands make possible to guide the subject in the virtual and the mouse allows to see everything in 360 degrees. For the computer, because in the gaming consoles the interface is based on the handheld controller commands). This conception of the graphic engine corresponds to what Rheingold calls the "reality engine"; the VR encoding that would be inside a specific computer terminal. As for the personal computers and gaming consoles, where the FPS runs on, these systems are per se the "reality engine" of the mass version of VR. The "reality engine" referred by Rheingold may be fed by specific device executing processing tasks related to the generation and updating of VR images. He evens affirms, in relation to the VR prototype display, that:

> "The 'reality engine' updated the way how I see the world when I moved my sight. It was possible to observe the view from behind computer-generated objects, take them and examine them, move myself, and see things in a different angle" (1997: p.18)[14].

It is comprehensible in Rheingold's statements that without graphic engine there would be no VR, because this is the support of virtuality, of its creation and update. So it is in FPS videogames, as the graphic technology is pretty much the same, only hardware has changed, but software remains evolving over the very same initial structure, that is layer after layer.

A graphic engine is the central software in the game, the heart of the ludological structure, the programming that makes everything to be seen the way it is, like a film camera in the first person. Code permits the user to have commands for dislocation of the character in the virtual environment and also for the observation of the set where it stands. Nowadays the quality level in

---

[14]*Idem.*
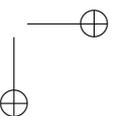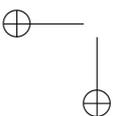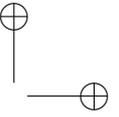
imagery powered by graphic engines achieved a degree that authors like Lev Manovich corroborate too the expression "reality engines" (2001: p.183), due to the fact that the programming, which allows the user to get in the virtual, works out like a real-generating machine. If there was no "engines" like these, the player could not interact with the virtual environment of the FPS in real-time, the way he dislocates himself through the scenery, activates equipment, talks to other characters, and solves riddles and steps into fights. In the end the graphic engine may be considered as what lets a certain architecture, which is the map, the game level, to be passively explored, observed and modified by the player who has a chance to have that kind of experience.

The graphic engine designation has its origin in all that is driving-related, or in what one may see as responsible for the player's motion activity within the virtual space. Movement and action in cyberspace are underlying and permitted by certain rules and exceptions Since the graphic engine's coding allows so much. Basically the graphic engine is the code responsible for the entire game-application to work right, the programming built to get the to player know a ludic cyberspace which simulates some laws of Physics (but not all of them!). According to this programmatic aspect of games, considering the *user-player's* role too, Rogério Luz says that "the event of the body and its perceptive actions and motion are all predicted in the program" (2004: p.49)[15]. It means that the graphic engine of a game, a FPS in this case, is encoded from start to generate the graphic location and to permit a character to interact with every element placed in that cyberspace. Consequently, as a "perceptive action" one understands that the graphic engine sustains the scenery observation, the focus of virtual sight, each place's and each entitie's specific sonorities that stands on it. On the motion action the game is built so that the player may take advantage of the elements lying on the set, like climbing ladders, sliding down on handrails (as in *Doom III*), jumping over boxes or off a building into trash bags, moving from one building rooftop onto another by means of metallic cable cars (like in *007 – Nightfire* [2003]) or getting into a hole on the wall in order to runaway from a threatening hunt down from adversaries (as in *America's Army* [2002]).

In the FPS the key behind it all is the graphic engine, that is to say, all that the FPS is predict in the game in the graphic engine is the FPS, because

---

[15]*Idem.*
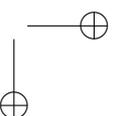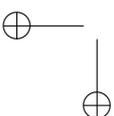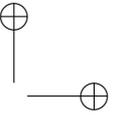
the FPS is nearly based upon the subjective vision of action unfolding in its cyberspace; the outcome is that the better the graphic engine is programmed, the more believable and attractive shall be the FPS, in terms of scenery realism the motion and perceptive skills in such virtual space. In contact with the *user-player* only images and sounds stand, before that there's all this graphic work which transmits to us a certain kind of spatial coordinates. Following this way the *user-player* deals merely with his perceptive center in the FPS, relatively to his virtual Self and the cybernetic landscape. Subject and graphic environment available to explore are predicted in the code of the meta-program that sets up the frame of possibilities inherent to the graphic engine. With reference to this aspect Michael Heim defends in *Virtual Realism* (1998) that: "the graphics invite the eye to come in, and the movements of the hands on the mouse (. . .) affect the action on screen, transporting the player to the world of adventure" (p.30). What Heim adds is that the separation between eye free look and the body motion activity represents an invitation strategy to bring the player further into the virtual universe. For such reason the graphics triggered by the player when he moves the computer mouse simulate his sight, by revealing the look of the virtual subject, are entirely about the field of vision. Whereas the graphics set on going by the player as he walks into that three-dimensional cyberspace have a "vehiculation" function, which is, of an inviting locomotion further into the virtual where body motion is simulated.

What matters is that the graphic engine runs all code instructions to admit the player walking through the cyberspace, therefore it is truly the great machine, let's say, responsible for generating Virtual Reality and without which moving and seeing, the audiovisual perception, would not be as striking as it is. The biggest secret of cyberspace is that as there is a graphic engine working underneath, a mother-code of every image, we, the players, have the chance to choose for seeing cyberspace as if one would move there like a "walker" (machine like) or a vehicle. From the technical point of view it doesn't make any difference since it's nothing else but the same kind of code, its all about simulating a moving camera with good angle capabilities of shooting on the go. The image of the virtual becomes a motorized image, almost liquid due to its plasticity. We are attending to a graphic shed of a new image substance; the kind of malleable image which updates itself wherever the *user-player* moves his face into on the game or whenever he moves around the action zone. Most significant is to be aware the existence of a graphic engine that generates and
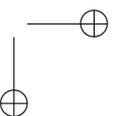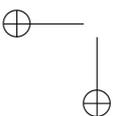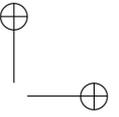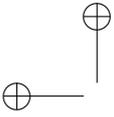
keeps on the run these images flowing, a code-feeded graphic engine, that needs programming, being in charge of creating images upon pre-established image models within the set of possible matrixes.

In these virtual environments we interact with the kind of image that actually is a "machine-image", a program-image which emphasizes linear-perspective and lets us see the three-dimensional cyberspace as a film camera would cinematically record the real world. Such type of perspective in the FPS takes to the top the status of a perfect cyborg vision, where the *user-player* transforms itself into a voyager-voyeur. Following this condition the *user-player* is constantly becoming an observer (voyeur) and, simultaneously, a traveller (voyager); someone that, like Heim mentions, is "transported" into an adventure universe. I shall say too that the big difference in relation to the condition that the *user-player* has in other videogame genres, is that in the case of the FPS the player must use all the time both faculties of motion and perception along the game, most of the times in a fast-paced rhythm, Thus, under this point of view the FPS player's condition is that of panic soldier. Here is why the FPS has characteristics of the games of *ilinx*, which is one of the game types remarkably defended by Roger Caillois (1990), in *Os Jogos e os Homens*, in the sense that in the FPS "the disturbance caused by the vertigo is searched for as an end in itself, very often" (1990: p.43)[16].

Technically the *user-player* performs a sort of inner-driving once the images are highly seductive and capture his attention in a voracious manner given the photorealism and their graphic limpid style. The player-controlled virtual subject in cyberspace is an entity who moves in a new and inebriant *axis-mundi*, as if it was possible to penetrate into a Renaissance painting in a three-dimensional way. A certain technical mutation of the interface is displayed by the FPS since it is based on the linear-perspective in order to promote "seeing through", in this case, the screen. However the factors which contribute for the feelings of presence in the virtual are the showing hands, the possibility to grab objects and / or use tools, activate mechanisms or armed gear. Yet, besides this, the interaction with players or NPCs is of an enormous relevance for the virtual environment to remain convincing and for it to have a more vivid look. Easily recognizable patterns make the virtual world of the FPS getting closer to the real world, though, on the other hand, thanks to the graphic en-

---

[16]*Idem.*
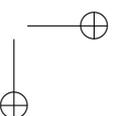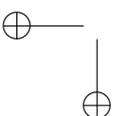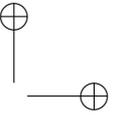
gine, it is also a fact that too much predictability means deception for the *user-player* instead of conviction. Finally, what the best graphic engines manage to highlight is the illusion of hazard, as the dangerousness convinces participants that a certain environment is real if it is menacing, which is exactly what we find out in FPS such as *Crysis*, *Prey* or *Doom III*. It is easy in a First Person Shooter to face pursuits, runaways, entrapments and ambushes. The "return to the pedestrian scale" through the virtual implies dangers themselves to be part of somebody's roaming into an unknown and yet to explore environment.

1.6   A REAL VIRTUALITY

CONSIDERED to be the most realistic videogame, the FPS is Virtual Reality's elected game genre. One may say that it's the kind of best photorealistic virtuality that exists, taking into account that it's all about a subject-centered simulation, for which three major points are fundamental. In first place interactivity is of an extreme importance because the FPS cyberspace only becomes credible if the actions practiced by the *user-player* have feedback, which is, any body motion, look or behavior of the virtual subject, the player-controlled character, has got to have an effect. Within seconds, the sensation of immersion has got to be very clear, and so the graphics must keep up with the player in 360 degrees on the screen. The graphic engine can update virtual images as we interact with the game's cyberspace by using keyboard commands, mouse peripherals or joysticks; a joystick is a game controller, a hardware accessory for videogames, whose origins are military (hence the expression "solid state hardware", namely in the shooting systems' commands). And in the third place the FPS is known by its focused intensity, due to the reason that its images are generally seen as abusive graphic violence, having a load of their own calling for the virtuosity of the *user-player*.

It's up to the player to deal with the virtual environment, to unveil it, exploring it, penetrating in its core and being able to find out an exit, since the game maps, the sceneries usually are labyrinthic. This is why Lev Manovich affirms that "the new media image is something the user actively goes into" (2001: p.183). Because these are not images demanding pure contemplation, for they require participation, absorbing the *user-player* until they engage him with their virtuality. Resuming, this next-generation synthesis images' logic,

LabCom Books
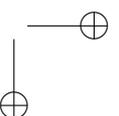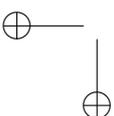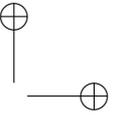
of these new media images, is precisely to compel, force the *user-player* to penetrate them. Also in this sense Rheingold stated that "the Cyberspace surrounded me wherever I looked at–above, below and behind me. I was not just looking at it. I was 'inside' it" (1997: p.152)[17]. In spite of referring himself to the VR interaction through the HMD helmet and the DataGlove interface, what Rheingold says remains valid for the VR available in the home computer or console gaming FPS. Being inside cyberspace is what is at stake now, till the point virtuality seems real.

It is known, in terms of virtuality, The more FPS stop being virtual, the closer it gets to the real. As the present time's computer processors' capabilities, specifically designed to calculate graphics, achieves such a degree that is almost possible to simulate anything at an optical, visual, sound and graphic way. For example, it is quite easy right now to create the graphic conditions that provide us the illusion of cold and fog (like in *Call of Duty* [2003]), heat, wind, trees that move with falling leaves (in *Crysis*); water waves and water ripples with a color of its own according to the deepness and the viewing angle (as in *Far Cry*), as well as sandy terrains full of three-dimensional vegetation (*Halo – Combat Evolved*); rain drops, snow flakes or many other particles like sparks (*Tron 2.0* [2003]), lightning bolts or objects being projected by explosions (*Black*). Nowadays' graphic engines have already taken into consideration the weight of objects (*Killzone*), the reaction of these objects to gravity, air dynamics or the interaction of player with inert or moving objects; even others which are set on fire, or gas particles, water fluids or sediments (*Half-Life 2*).

Images regardless of real reference and which are inspired in real elements to create something new, something more machine-like, is what the FPS images really are. Perhaps for that reason it may be odd to play in the beginning of the kind of games, for interacting with the environment and characters, whether they're human or artificial, obtains now a realism so much borrowed from the real, that the only limits between simulation and real are just noticed as there is a screen separating the virtual world of the first person-centered game. The real world where the *user-player* stands commanding the action, like a demiurgic figure left to his own private controlled world. On this matter, Michael Heim adds that the:

---

[17]*Idem.*
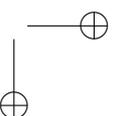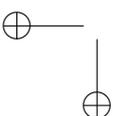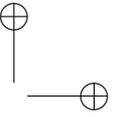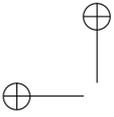
> "VR Immersion gives the feeling of plunging into another world. The graphics presenting the virtual environment are 3D graphics. The computer's calculation run fast enough to show the graphic perspective of any side of the objects that we would like to see. The audio of the virtual instantly repositions the sounds depending on where the user's head is positioned" (1998: p.18).

Yet this immersion principle, which is fundamental, was initially underlying so that Virtual Reality would be experienced primarily with the HMD system. The question is that all that survived after the VR prototypes was not the futuristic hardware, was its code, the graphic engine typical in the virtual survived the hardware designed for graphics and still manages to be the leverage for the development of the finest First Person Shooters. In this fashion all that is left from VR are just a concept, its programmatic, ludological structure, and its program-text capable of generating "machine-images". What makes as a statement about the common VR immersion is that This system provides mostly to the *user-player* the feeling of being connected to "another world".

That is obvious in the FPS as well since each FPS has its own issue, style and aesthetics that address him peculiar characteristics. With this way, the player who interacts with one FPS finds features belonging only to that virtual universe. In case we play another FPS the theme features and the game modes change, suffering a mutation, but players find attractive that genre conventions are respected from game to game and still improve; thus heldind the *user-player* hostage not from just one game but from the genre itself. As a result each *user-player* is so seduced by the First Person Shooters genre that he becomes loyal to the kind of videogame and not to the game platform, which may include gaming consoles, personal computers, handheld gaming devices or exclusively online games.

Another important aspect that Heim stands out is the fact of whether the images, or the sound being repositioned according to the place where the *user-player* stares at with his virtual glance. This detail of graphics becoming a composite that tracks player's movements in cyberspace makes the FPS a game that copies the subject's motion and perceptive abilities in a more perfect and realistic manner. Underlying beneath is the strategy of a technical achievement grounded in the promotion of the 360 degrees immersion, so that the senses are isolated and the audiovisual perception gets emphasized. Hence, the basis of the FPS is the concept of "you-are-there-experience", be-

LabCom Books
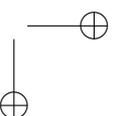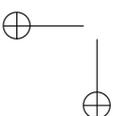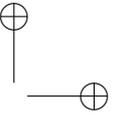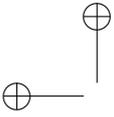
cause the graphic realism joins the intensity of the programming-*mise-en-scène* that turns the *user-player* into an actor performing on stage. On the stage are "scenic points" on stage are pre-understood by the graphic engine while the game is running, in order to make "Z" or "K" happening as the player moves from place "X" to place "Y"; these are the designated "trigger-points". Engaging the *user-player* to a new thrilling experience is the core idea, with this add-on feature, the game could be more involving and hyper-attractive. In this sense, Barry Atkins in *More Than a Game – The Computer Game As Fictional Form* (2003), uses the expression "involved emplotment" (p.56), for he understands that there is the attempt to entangle the player through fiction; the argument is the instrument to do it. Also, the model at stake implies the act of "story telling", which is, the act of telling a story, of diegesis; and in other acception the model requires the act of "showing", of mimesis.

When Jaron Lanier coined the expression "Virtual Reality" in the mid 80s, his purpose was to define audiovisual first person experiences that would be engaging, captivating the player's attention due to their attractiveness and pleasant nature, which then again assured user's involvement in virtual are close to the real. Lanier and Heim are following the idea that Virtual Reality demands the *user-player* to get a certain kind of response from the immersive and seductive environment, otherwise the simulation falls apart. A vivid environment needs a matching response, as always. And it was this "Responsive Environments" vision that Myron Krueger idealized some decades ago.

1.7   THE TARGET-IMAGE

THE biggest feature of the *military image* in First Person Shooter is the fact that its belonging to a regime of images which obviously need the subject, the subjectivity, otherwise those would be no more than static images or falsely autonomous images. Having the U.S. Navy Marine Corps getting back on the special FPS *Doom* (with the so-called *Marine Doom*), as simulator for task force deployment exercise, clearly proves the hypothesis of the nature of the FPS being a military one. We notice that the same thing happened to *Battle Zone* (with the *Military Battle Zone*). There are no doubts about that. It is for this reason that the First Person Shooter make two im-

portant elements compatible. First, it is an image demonstrates how it is able to simulate, recreate, and generate a reality of its own; Second, it is its closeness to targets and crosshairs, since the FPS needs a shooting element to shoot at another targeted element on the field, whether is this one IA-controlled or player-controller in equal access regime.
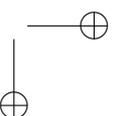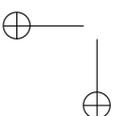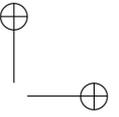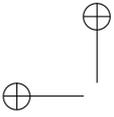
What makes this kind of *target-images* of the FPS to have consistence and acquire credibility is the fact that between the late 80s and the early 90s the graphics representing the "hand" were introduced, two-dimensional at the time, which now are already photorealistic and three-dimensional (*Red Steel* [2006] goes even further ahead and makes possible for players moving the hand and aiming in different angles (thanks to the six axis wireless controller). The inclusion of the "hand" element is very important, because if we analyze the first of all FPS games, *Battle Zone*, We can verify the kind of images generated in the game were assuredly *target-images*, though there was no indication of subjectivity represented by the "hand" element. Therefore there was no concern about the virtual gesture. Under those circumstances, *Battle Zone* was basically a videogame of the military type, which recreated a battlefield on the moon where tanks disputed the territory. In *Battle Zone* the index of "gesture" was unavailable since whenever the player played the game he stood only on this side of the screen.

In our time the presence of the "hand" is not just a convention; it is a must because no FPS is conceived regardless of such subjectivity register which is the "hand" on the screen, on the game images. And which in a certain manner marks that the player is halfway between the real and the virtual. His gesture of articulating joysticks and pushing arcade buttons got into the virtual and became more immediate and intuitive. So the gesture stands in-between, the "hand" icon, and the metaphysical residue of the "being there" presence when in fact we aren't. If the virtual admits the subject to be included in a cyber-spatial dimension it is because it excludes him on the other side, of anything else more tangible. At the same time the image becomes more subjective, it is true that the subject becomes more objective, physically more devoted to tactfulness in the digital. Both poles get mixed up, whether it is the virtual environment of the First Person Shooter or the subject, both sharing the same tacit behavior.

Analyzing the FPS as a *target-images* display requires comprehending that there is a subject who recognizes himself on the images, as well as the

LabCom Books
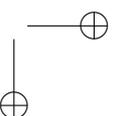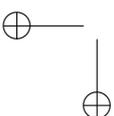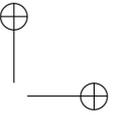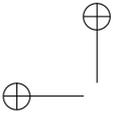
images available are aware of the subject, accusing his demanded presence. In question is the conceptual procedure of the "othering process" (about the "otherness") which Atkins (2003) stands out. In sum, one may say that a "subjectivation" (term coined by Michel Foucault) of image occurs. The existing subjectivity is mediated as there is representation, mediation; *différance* (Derrida, 1967). One wants to possess till the limit the Self in the representation. VR's last purpose was the unification of the subject with the image; the prosthesis logic would be dominant until the expressing subject interiority, his subjective condition. Prosthesis is not supposed to be just prosthesis. Nevertheless the FPS stands for the building of that path until that last objective is achieved, the entrance into the virtual, only that it is a military virtual, of armed features, prone to hunting and combat, duel and gun fighting. As a proof of that trip into it, and also as a proof of that total refusal of the real in which lies the FPS that represented user's hand asking for a shooter, needing a victim, requesting to trigger out the whole virtual violence device. An input is asked for the *user-player*, he is invited to participate, to get in the theatre of war, though skillfully. For instance about the FPS *Quake* Frank Lantz & Eric Zimmerman (1999) mention:

> "In a single player mode, and especially in multiplayer 'deathmatch' mode, *Quake*'s blend of light speed tactics and hand-eye coordination has more in common with the cerebral athletics of tennis than the spectacular violence of Rambo" (Cit. in Simon Penny, 2004: p.76).

Once in the field, the FPS player has gesture and control of the weapon. The player moves to look at things, to observe them, to shoot them and to defend himself. To give a test of this kind of intimate technology that looks more like a ground simulator, a walker or a so-called "personal simulator". Above anything else the hand connects the "here" and "there", proving that the player controls the *target-images*, the military perspective of the First Person Shooter. Without the inclusion of the hand in the images the *user-player* would try out a walkthrough in virtual images, a walk through places resembling more of the type like film shots than the interactive rendering type.

With this system of displaying the player's "hand", the "hands on" system[18], there is no chance to know for sure who is on which side of the screen,

---

[18]The prediction in VR was the "hands on" and the "head in" system, which was the use of gestures and the total psychological immersion through the audiovisual elements.
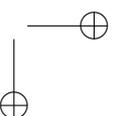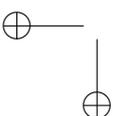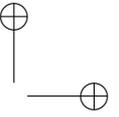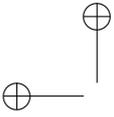
nor how. It matters to say that in the FPS there is above all a *military image* format, the merge of the military perspective with the gun 'crosshair' reveals in fact the existence of an "armed vision" (Jordan Crandall, 1999). *User-player* try out a simulation made possible and sustained by the graphic engine. The border between image and target is indiscernible in this kind of videogames, since all images possess a military aesthetic. Its format is a format that envisions the annihilation of foes by means of weaponry, explosives and other vision machines like sniper rifles with mounted-magnifying scopes (as in *Black*, *Call of Duty*, *Counter-Strike* or *GoldenEye*). It is part of the nature of the image and its relation with the military aesthetic, hence it makes sense that the image is "(...) what drives the glance by building up the target on which it is aimed at (...)" (Cascais, 2004: p.147)[19].

Choices of aiming a weapon, depleting the ammunition and hitting the target, there is something which remains, the predatory strategy of walking through an environment at a pedestrian scale, in real-time, in order to eradicate the menace from the place where we stand. It is plausible to accept that every present image in the FPS is a *target-image*; given the fact that there is no way to see the action in the virtual environment of the FPS that does not implies a predatory relationship between aggressor and victim. Here the prevailing relationship is that of predation, based precisely on the exploration and which makes law out of features such as visibility, voyeurism, sudden dislocation and the stealthy shots (as in *Quake II* and *Unreal*).

Besides, the "being there" experience in the virtual environment of FPS requires the player to take the most out of the military perspective in order to eliminate the threats that might come out of any zone – from below, from upwards, from the sides or from behind. A major change is that where the terrestrial image had an objective, now it has a target. Coordination and movement are required from this point on. Virtual space in the FPS is a policed territory which requires identification and anticipation; hitting, intercepting foes and containing threats. Space is tactical, as we observe in *Counter-Strike*, for besides being team-work-oriented, there is the singular mode component, taking into account that the main character's lifespan lasts one round only; so death is so likely that his backup is only assured by the team members. The entire conflict is a perception-driven field, and that is the reason behind the *user-*

---

[19]N.A.: This translation from the Portuguese edition is mine.
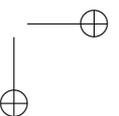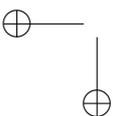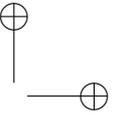
player exploring at its best of the *perspective device* within the graphic engine design, and that also lets us see the action as it is admitted to be seen by the program.

On closer analysis we understand that the image is worth the same as a weapon, since according to the *user-player's* topological positioning of one can make more or less out of the situation of catching the enemy unaware of him. Another relevant point is that despite the first FPS games which were not display the hands on the screen graphically; they were already cyberspaces of pure optical weaponry. With the feature of the represented hand which points the gun, reloads and aims it at the adversary, the FPS becomes a sort of warfare simulator much more simpler, yet its military format remains ever since the initial use of the *perspective device*. As an effect of the FPS is based upon all a set of war images, where in some armed conflict situations the *user-player*, thus turned into a warrior, must know how to deal with armies, perform collective assaults, coordinate team operations, manage resources in real-time, drive vehicles of many types and help other *user-players* on the field (*Battlefield 1942* or *Call of Duty*). Although the opposite is true either, the FPS becomes a graphical warfare, a war of images, a virtual environment hosting a conflict that seems to unfold no matter how we intervene on it, whether it includes our victory or defeat or not, like in *Kuma: War*, for example. We identify, this way, a constellation of warfare imagery, of confrontation, of a return to the hunting that puts us back on the ground, again in touch with the geo (terrain) through the *graphya* (graphics). If McLuhan said that "every new technology necessitates a new war" (1989: p.98), then it is true that the First Person Shooter technology not only requires a war, as it merges up with it, because there is an enormous difficulty in separating the techniques of war on the FPS from the technical warfare on the FPS. First Person Shooters demonstrate that technology created its own war.

A repositioning of the subject is thus seen through the *target-images* on the ground by my means of graphic violence, being imposed an exploration (*paidea*) as a survival condition (like in *Doom III*) in the FPS cyberspace; till the *user-player* changes into a sniper-player, later turned into a stealth-player (*Silent Scope*). It is not by chance that in *The Matrix* (Wachowsky Brothers, 1999) film, when Neo enters the *Matrix* for the final show off, he does it as a stealth-sniper-player. And when Trinity asks him what he needs to get in the *Matrix*'s cyberspace, his response is "guns... lots of guns!" The motive hang-

ing beneath such demand is that the only way to deal with the cyberspace, the graphical warfare world, is following the logic of the "shooter"; it is exactly being supplied with the best gear and ammunition than the adversaries on the game, so that it could be possible to conquer the best performance title on the virtual space. Only by carrying more guns into the virtual space one could outgun the virtual, dismantling the *Matrix*'s predation space by its own *target-images*.
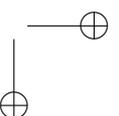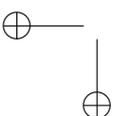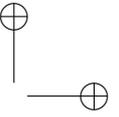
1.8   PERSPECTIVE DEVICE

WITHOUT the *perspective device* the First Person Shooter would be unconceivable, hence this is the reason why videogames such as *Half-Life* and its sequel – *Half-Life 2* – both start respectively inside Black Mesas's military facility, through the mono-rail, or in the train to the suburban ghettos. Here, the *perspective device* is clearly invoked, even in the beginning of the game, which by chance shows the introduction credits of the in-game story. With no inherent conventions to the formal visual reality representation, the FPS could not be the realistic cyberspace that we know nowadays. If the mathmatization behind the spatial coordinates, the study of scale, proportions and linear perspective were disregarded, the molded real of the Virtual Reality would seem impossible to render. And it would also be even less possible without computer's invention, the machine into which every norm converges. In an analyzing manner, what the virtual world gets with these norms is a consistence, a discourse of objectivity's without which the FPS would not be so truthful or realistic for the most common *user-players*. At its audiovisual form of cyberspace inherits the legacy of the *perspective device* at the same time that it provides a new angle to approach reality. Linear perspective creates the impression of orientation towards positions, whether it is the player's, or the game's characters, when both are aligned. In addition, Geoff King & Tanya Krzywinska agree that "what is presented diegetically as the subjective experience of the player-character is also projected onto the entire gamescape (. . .)" (2006: p.102). It is the subjective experience that it is projected in the ludic landscape of the game, and it usually is presented as a staged and narrated story.
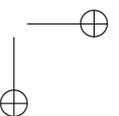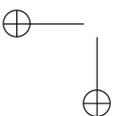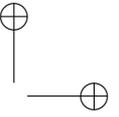
Historically the term perspective has its origins in per spectra, which means "to see through". Yet aside etymology the First Person Shooter is the medium in which this notion of "seeing through" unfolds, by means of HMD interface (the visionary model) or with the screen (the practical way). Maybe that is why playing an FPS is like seeing another world through another opened window, another *aperta finestra*.

I accept that no matter how many references the FPS imagery has on the real, in its deep the total reference never lies in the real. It is noticeable that the FPS imports some signification models based upon the real, but the reference to a preceding real does not exist in the domain of the images of synthesis, which was somehow valid for the synthesized imagery in general, as defended by André Parente. On the other side, the universe of images of synthesis is responsible for the elaboration of a *graphical reformation* of the utmost importance. The FPS is an example of the graphic revolution, of which the more realistic of the graphics, the less virtual of the game. The status of the FPS is a status of an icon-videogame genre within the "virtuality" pursued by many theoreticians and programmers, game designers and artists. It is the FPS that inherits the *perspective device* legacy in the history of representation of images in Western culture. Self-referenced and self-justified videogames like the FPS are not validated by referring themselves potentially and/or slightly to the exterior world. Instead they enhance the universe managed by linear perspective, grids, geometry, Cartesian coordinates and the computerized cyberspace.

If in the Renaissance paintings the spectator stands outside the image and the painting did not include him, in the FPS, the next-generation videogame, the spectator is included in the represented space, in the cyberspace. By indicating the subject's centrality grounded on the point of view, on the *perspective device*, the FPS reveals the application of the perspective laws though, unlike Renaissance paintings, now the spectator stands inside the image. So the image is already includes him, therefore, his position will no longer be at the so-called "vanishing point", somewhere outside the image, in a similar way to God's positioning, being absent of its creation.

The spectator in the FPS, which now is a *user-player* of images of synthesis, is integrating the imagery, the space of representation. There is such a plane of attractiveness in the images that as it is impossible to runaway from those images, the *user-player* resigns himself to the ludic mission of trying to find out the exit inside the virtual world itself. It is true that there is a
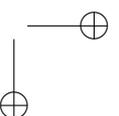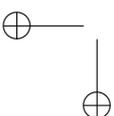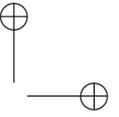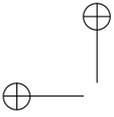
vanishing point for linear perspective, it is also true that there is a getaway strategy in which the *user-players* is held hostage. Although the First Person Shooter itself, as a game that simulates most of reality, is already on its own of a form that escaping from the real, since it its a game before anything else. Thus, it has being placed in the *mimicry* category of games that Roger Caillois mentions in *Os Jogos e os Homens* (1990). In a brief way, Caillois points out that "in one way or another, we escape from one world making 'out of it' another one (. . .). The *mimicry* corresponds to that" (1990: p.39)[20]. Once the player is represented in the representation space itself, the player becomes too in addition a representation in the virtual environment; he becomes a mask, a simulacrum; as well as a residue of body motion, gestures and sight. The player slips into the mimetic game world, into the game world where he sees himself mirrored now.

Five hundred years after the perspective and vanishing point concepts were introduced and used by painters, architects and European engineers, the computer – machine of all machines – allows to make the reverse in space viewed in perspective, in the virtual image. That image in which spectator lays in a graphic, plastic, audiovisual, ludic environment, which is above all observed in the first person. "Being there" in the Virtual Reality of the FPS means that one can see everything through the eyes of one character, in its place, with its proportions; that is inside an anthropometry frame just like the real human's.

Again I underline that there is an agreement between the real and its representation, in part which we can say they are inherited by the Renaissance, and that is useful as a background for the synthesis realism. Following this way, the synthesis realism, the virtual reality, receives the techniques of representation of the real through the graphic mathmatization. In this sense we verify that in the FPS some Renaissance ideals are recovered since that in the FPS, it is exercised a specific kind of representation in space, considered to be *avant-garde*.

Although for ludic purposes, the representation of the real in the FPS implies overcoming pictorial shapes and the perspective development, underscoring the relevance of the individual in a virtual world that is flat but, on the other side, is also understood as a challenge. A sort of "parallel reality" is how

---

[20]*Idem.*
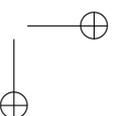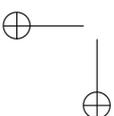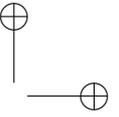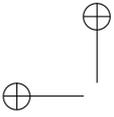
the First Person Shooter is also comprehended, where the existing universe is defined upon the subject, almost in a solipsist manner, as if only what's exclusively on the *user-player's* conscience would exist. A world searched by and defined by the subject is how the Virtual Reality of the FPS is introduced, where the subject shows up mostly as an individualized appearance, which is a legacy from the Renaissance this subject emphasized; even if on the other hand a certain dematerialization of the subject occurs, an unavoidable virtualization, typically in the cyberspace itself.

The whole strategy of creating a virtual world that is seen in the "In Your Face" mode, as if the *user-player* would be before images so convincingly they would absorb him, is a strategy that is inspired in Renaissance models, that presupposes the core of the world through a face in a Mathesis realm, a founding structure of geometric origin. In the image of synthesis of the FPS the *perspective device* enhanced by 3D technology stands out in respect for the construction of the image under the central perspective model, by continuing so a convention of representation that is the outcome of a certain historical commitment.

1.9   TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

As McLuhan alleges, the technological change caused by Gutenberg's typography are on the foundations of an intense technological individualism. In *La Galaxie de Gutenbergue* McLuhan assured that "the Press is the technology of individualism (1977: Vol1 p.291)[21], which makes pretty much sense since that with typography equally begins the division, the classification of universally recognizable pieces, namely the *typos*, the easily readable typeface. Individualism is the outcome of typography caused by the split of the *typos*, and its repercussions were felt in both the Industrial and the Electronic Revolutions. But with no electricity nothing important would have happened related to electronics. In our present time the effects of the technological change caused by typography are still on their way. Though one cannot affirm that the existing focus is about imagery and the audiovisual, or that the type is in second place or even forgotten. Linearized text, its mechanization, were indispensable, otherwise no object of the indus-

---

[21]N.A.: This translation from the French edition is mine.
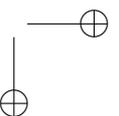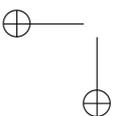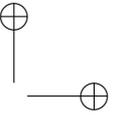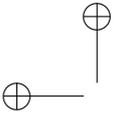
trial kind would have been managed as it was in the last centuries. To sum up, the most crucial part of typography still continues in the electronic age, so its not about discriminating the object but in its process; which is affecting us, subjects, as the organization at stake falls on the subject's identity.

Behind the technology of individualism lies on the Gutenberg Press, since it is pushing the *typos*, in the opus, the operation which was set on till our days, with many technological manifestations. Except that there is an autotelic principle, which is, that the guterbergian program works on itself. Also, the program exists in the *typos* that drives us from mechanization towards electricity. Aside from the latter to electronics, and so on to the virtual. Aside the organization of the *typos* what is left is merely a disorganization, the dislinearization, as in the core of the typography-imposed technological change a fibrous organization of mechanisms and functions rules, culminating in 20th century's cyberspace.

Our time is marked by the cyberspace being understood as an icon, the aegis of technical space, many linearization formats, plastic organization and cultural mutation. In effect, the subject's identity suffers from such specifity stigma, of meticulous organization, industrial separation. At the age of the Electronic Revolution, and Virtual Reality, the subject still manifests in itself the features of the typographic machine, like a typewriter (separation, alienation, production and organization).

Cyberspace, the platform interlinking to every computer, becomes an abundance space, of information, that seems safe before the unsafe real outside world. When in fact its interior agglutinates all data, reduces them to a separated, calculated and atomized lined-up types. Through this path the subject's identity in the age of cybernetic space mirrors the technical features of the existing cyberspace. One faces cyberspace as a space to dismantle, which is available to divide in a gutenbergian manner, whose tendency is to become subjective considering the excessive linearization the subject also have access to it also on *Crysis*. Of course the technological change is the after effect of the institution of cyberspace as a system oriented to itself: a *mise en abîme*, a game of separating mirrors whose reflection falls back on themselves. We could say that the technology of individualism finds its ultimate exponent in cyberspace, to be accessible universally, comprehensible kingdom submitted to reconfigurations, now not so much of technical inclination, but also, of subjective inclination. This is why Atkins (2003) declares the "self-reliant

LabCom Books
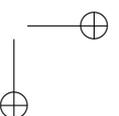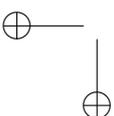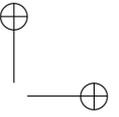
individualism" has its apotheosis in the First Person Shooter *Half-Life*'s cyberspace, because it is a game in which the concept of "survival" is empowered, unlike the concept of mere "exploration" (*paidea*). Individualism was then re-configured again in a graphic fashion.

Reconfigurations matter very much since reconfigurations have origin in the typographic revolution, software equipment a perfect floor for proficiency. What a typographic revolution means is as they find in the hardware/software equipment a perfect floor for proficiency.

A major characteristic of typography-imposed technological change is found in cyberspace, for the latter is established precisely as a reconfigured, re-configurative system. Despite of the existing prevalence of image and sound, cyberspace accuses in itself a deeper technological change, because the textual and typographic component remains, not just based on programming, in general, but, for instance, in the chance of permitting *user-players* to write to each other with a text system built-in multiplayer videogames.

It is simply something obvious what we find out in a First Person Shooter: the technical nature of cyberspace preserves the textual form, at least in its logical-algebraic semantic genesis. Such conservation is the aftermath of Guntenberg's typography, we find out its ideal enunciation device in cyberspace, for it is a fact that there is a "narrative device" that condenses several mechanisms to constitute a homogeneous whole centered on it. And there aren't well-succeeded FPS disregarding a "narrative device". Then when we examine modern videogames conceived to be experienced in the first person, what lies before us is exactly the edge of that technology of individualism mentioned by McLuhan in *La Galaxie de Gutenbergue*. It happens this way as there is a typographic practice which becomes a topographic practice, ever since text, code and simulation of the real got mixed up to accept a specific space, a cyberspace, a safe technological environment for enunciation. The entire *graphical reformation* that is institutionalized in the cyberspace of the Virtual Reality age makes images made out of texts and textures emerge, as well as a new kind of identity over a technology in constant alteration.

Having the organization of the *typos* reminiscent in cyberspace, the subject's identity adopts several behaviors of multiplicity, and substitution. As if it was not enough the subject's identity gets from virtual architecture reconfiguration symptoms. Since it is impossible for the subject to redefine himself in the real space that what he sees is identity being redefined in time. In other
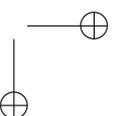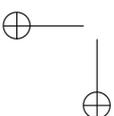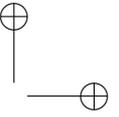
words if the subject cannot escape in space he tries to runaway in time, in the virtuality vertigo, a world of *ilingos*, as he tries to be, embody another person, an other persona, within a world of *mimicry*, as Roger Caillois would say. The motive of this phenomenon is that the subject tries to create more instantaneous changes in his identity in order to keep up with the pace of cyberspace, of virtual architectures. So through this way the subject surrenders himself to a universe of endless updates and upgrades to fight back monotony. Gilles Deleuze in *Différence et Répetition* (1989) affirms that the intensity is individualizing, and that "the virtual (. . .) possesses a full reality of itself. Its process is the updating" (p.273)[22]. It means that the most important part of the game is the updating prevalence per their change in a time frame, which points out at a mutation inside the boundary of time. As a game the FPS permits that mutation, mostly when played online, merging text and graphic textures.

Practically the change, the alteration, was also identified in television, where, according to McLuhan, the extension of one sense, the tact, was already felt, since television appeals to our touch, the intense participation. Though we can see the real transition is set in film which McLuhan underlines in *Understanding Media*, saying that: "the message of the movie medium is that of transition from lineal connections to configurations" (1994: p.12). In my opinion the configurations dimension observed in cyberspace begins in film, where the image has another order, due to the montage (editing) and the *monteur* (editor), that a more subjective manipulation appears. What the *user-players* of the First Person Shooter games find in the ludic cyberspace of network gaming is reconfigurations and intense participation dimension In addition to those two findings mentioned above, the ludic cyberspace is more evolved in a renewed technological frame where the virtual updates, and both individualism and identity mutation are remarked.

For all these reasons Geoff King & Tanya Krzywinska defend that "a more immediate and unambiguous centering of the gamescape on the position of the player is found in first-person games, in which the impression is given of a more directly subjective player experience 'inside' the game-world. First-person games bind the player directly into the gamescape" (2006: p.103). Games always existed, that is a fact, yet games that bind the player straight to the game landscape, to its ludic structure, that is not likely. Innovation lies

---

[22] *Idem.*

LabCom Books
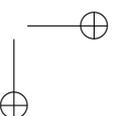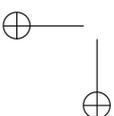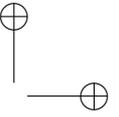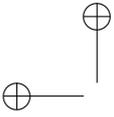
in the subjective experience that player has by entering the "game-world", a world of configurations, connections and rules (*ludus*) ready to be discovered (*paidea*).

1.10   NEW CULTURE, NEW GAMING

VIDEOGAMES occupy a special place in cyberculture, like electronic music and the Internet, though the First Person Shooter videogames are the ones that provide body and image to cyberculture. Three-dimensional space and the level of quality of the programmed fictions puts *user-players* in a constant mutation within cultural range. Games are the instrument to keep the audience familiar with a new technical literacy, focused on computation, networks and the digital image's viral plasticity. However, like Atkins suggests, the player's literacy remains at least as synonym of skillfulness. First Person-style videogames represent the *machine-place* which is cyberspace, they are the most significant graphical representation of the visual culture and they get a great mixture with MUDs (Multi-User Displays), by absorbing the aesthetic schemes from cinematography and theatre.

In *Understanding Media*, Marshall McLuhan wrote something of a greater significance: "when cultures change, so do games" (1994: p.239), and one decodes that each time a culture gets in a deep mutation process so do games; in the case of the global ludic culture of our time, which is the "macroscopic inclusive culture", mentioned by McLuhan (1989), that argument still makes sense. Perhaps it might be necessary to invert this question in order to comprehend it, since in the case of the videogames in the age of VR. It is a culture that changes because of gaming. Moreover, the phenomenon coincides with another, that is to say that the culture change occurs at the very same time games change, it means that McLuhan's theory can still be kept in mind as being interesting and relevant at the precent time. One should also consider another argument, Jesper Juul's, whom makes pretty much sense, in *Half-Real – Video Games Between Real Rules And Fictional Worlds*, where he states that "while videogames conform to the classic game model, they also modify the conventions of the classic game model. Games 'have' changed" (2005: p.7). It matters to keep from this argument that just because videogames establish a dialogue with the classic game mode, there is already enough relevant chang-

ing. Thus, they represent a major change in the bigger picture of gaming concept. The First Person Shooter symbolizes the edge of the ludic evolution in contemporary videogames, a cultural landmark.
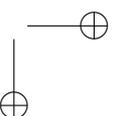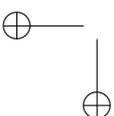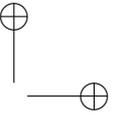
The best thing to do is to delineate the outlines of culture, as we look forward to understand what is critically involved, but if it is a technical culture that is at stake then we must speak of aided-culture, oriented by technology, by its course; it's a "technology-driven culture". It is of the utmost importance the words of McLuhan on this matter, as "(...) in operational and practical fact, the medium is the message" (1994: p.7). From this excerpt we draw the conclusions that the message is formatted by the medium, hence the encoding media is printed on the message. By taking into account that games are inserted on a much wider cultural frame and that our times are those of globalization, so games are the message of a a wider range medium. Network games, namely the FPS, are global games, and that in a mcluhanesque manner demands a technical literacy and a global culture to merge in a new tribal manner that completes the meaning of the *user-players*' lives. McLuhan highlights that "the games of a people reveal a great deal about them. Games are a sort of artificial paradise like Disneyland, or some Utopian vision by which we interpret and complete the meaning of our daily lives" (1994: p.238). In my point of view that artificial paradise is what we find in many kinds of videogames, though the FPS videogames continue to represent a suspension of the first reality. Such thesis truly matters because with first reality on hold implies paying major attention to the map, and not to the real; a devotion for the simulation, substitution or prosthesis.

Games reveal in their artificial realism, according to Turkle, that "(. . .) we're moving from a modernist culture of calculation towards a postmodernist culture of simulation" (1997: p.28). There is clearly a transition being drawn to simulation, since globalization, the implementation of the "global village" praised by McLuhan coincides with the total technical charting of planet and the complex telematic information web. What is left is just space for simulation when every space is digitized from the real. "Geo-metry" is in charge of drawing up the outlines of every real estate and capitalism has verified all its owners. The simulation's universe starts in military cartography and ends again in the military-complex, which Turkle calls the "Military-Entertainment Complex", because in her perspective the videogaming industry is a consequence of warfare simulators designed for the U.S. armed forces.

LabCom Books
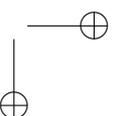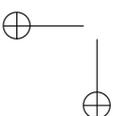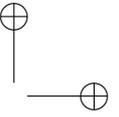
A new culture requires an alteration in the ludic regime, in the type of games that are in vogue in a certain society, yet in the case of the modern videogames, it's not about a new culture created from scratch; it's just a globally new technical culture in association and centered on a dynamic medium: the network computer. It was the computer which absorbed all data in registry form record style, accepting a blending of cultural forms that were calculated and managed separately. The existence of network did make a difference because they grant the permission for global communication and open new path for simulations. In the words of Jean Baudrillard "simulation is no longer the simulation of a territory, of one referential being, of a substance. It is the generation upon the models of a real without origin or reality: the hyperreal" (1994: p.8)[23]. A major characteristic of cyberculture is deeply the fact of being based on the hyperreal, since it is faster, lets us predict the real, precedes the territory, it fits in the simulacrum precession theorem, where the models of the real, that is to say the *typos*, prevail before the referential reality.

Preceding simulacrum implies an imposing simulation next to the real. The simulacrum is lighter and faster than the real, it precedes reality thanks to its typical and ideal performance, its cybernetic game and its hyper-reality. To think of the postmodern culture of simulation referred by Turkle, or the cultural mutation mirrored on games, as McLuhan suggests, equals to think on videogames, the Virtual Reality. In this domain the First Person Shooter is prominent. By using software like the *FPS Creator* (2004) the *user-player* can even play the role of a demiurge and intervene in a world, as well as to create their world from scratch and even change it repeatably when needed. This is very important as it means that contemporary games reveal the need to intervene in the simulations level in the position of someone who sees the world as a God; which only makes sense in the age of telematics and the World Wide Web, cyberspace and VR.

In sum, games show symptoms of their contemporary technologies, reflects the appearance of the latter in society; in this case a society where the "principle of reality", as Baudrillard would say the result will vanish due to the nature of virtuality, will replace real eventually. Simulacrum is preceding the real because the real cannot compete with the virtual ever since the discourses of technical competence have emancipated and improved the general-


[23]N.A.: This translation from the Portuguese edition is mine.
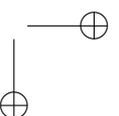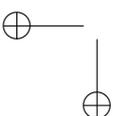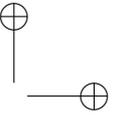
ized technical literacy, in a cultural way, from where videogames came from. For this motive, culture changes and games keep up with that progressive rhythm, without disregarding that games are not based in a familiar structure, but instead in a structure identical to the rock band formation, by affinities, preferences, by shared interests. In a famous interview for the Playboy Magazine, McLuhan said that "the instant nature of electric-information movement is decentralizing – rather than enlarging -the family of man into a new state of multitudinous tribal existences" (1994-98). The retribalizing future invoked by McLuhan implied a social decentralization by means of technology, whose pace would be so fast that all that could be seen were the effects of every technology being replaced by another. Each medium of communication would lie always inside another one, in a viral mediatic tendency constantly full of sequels.

New media, the new electronic games, made possible that viral multiplicity, connectivity and interactivity. Like Rheingold and Turkle point out, today we are all "McLuhan's children" in a culture that gets to know itself better with simulation technologies. Turkle says videogames provide the chance to live in simulated worlds governed by rules, and that "they bring this kind of experience into the child's culture and serve as a bridge to the larger computer culture beyond" (1984: p.507). Due to their technical discourse videogames are inexorably related to technical literacy, belonging to a young cybernetic culture, and that somehow functions as an instrument to get familiar with the contemporary major cyberculture. Videogames appeal to, and are, order, in the sense that Roger Caillois means to general gaming in *Os Jogos e os Homens: A Máscara e a Vertigem* (1990). Therefore it makes a lot of sense that more than ever every time culture changes, so do games change; it means that the kind of former order changed, and that games now bring a new set of rules.
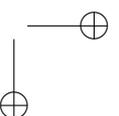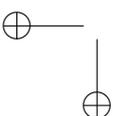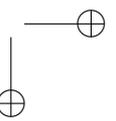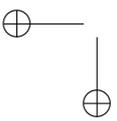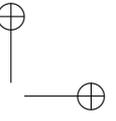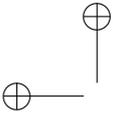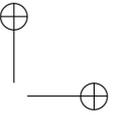
Chapter 2

INSIDE CYBERSPACE

2.1 SLICED REALITY

THE FPS cyberspace stands for a form of Virtual Reality, a digital geography of something designed to be played and used by the *user-player* exactly in portion. Thus, despite the VR program had been visionary in marking the cyberspace experience in graphic and sound terms as something immersive, the truth is that such FPS experience works out more like a cut. It's under the spotlight a computer-generated reality in an artificial manner requiring the player to try out that very same reality in a sliced form. In case the premise of immersion in the virtual is of an enormous significance, it is due to the fact of the images in question being experienced in a 360 degrees system. Every time the *user-player* interacts with the FPS environment he is face-to-face with the screen border; the problem becomes a problem of contemplation and interaction with a space observed in a partial way[1].

At its audiovisual state cyberspace, it is seen thus like something existing only inside the screen, as a consequence of the ergonomics and design problems featured by the prototype hardware, which endows the FPS environment with a *sliced reality* status. Sliced in the sense that there is a "bigger cake",

---

[1]Actually human beings see 155 degrees in vertical and 185 degrees in horizontal, this according to Rheingold, about the possible 360 degrees around us. But in a FPS interacting with the game on the screen means that we're having access to a 90 degrees VR, given the framework limitations. All that we observe is no more than a slice of the immersive 360 degrees generated by the graphic engine.
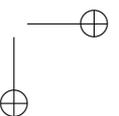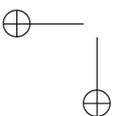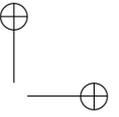
part of a circular field of virtual, where the access is not granted, yet it still is registered in the FPS program. For the player all there left is hence an interaction with a cyberspace existing only at this side of the screen, though obviously because it is visible in portion, in a piece of image, it features some limitations in the perceptive field of the subject that is playing and using it. This limitation has an interesting effect on the interaction level, namely in how it addresses a deeper involvement to the player, impelling him to discover even more in the graphic environment of cyberspace and to pay more attention to the sounds played in such environment. Precisely because there is no domestic 360 degrees virtual display device available at the present time, eventually the screen turns out to motivate a more careful observation.

As if it was not enough already, this space available in audiovisual terms makes the FPS metonymical, in the perspective that the part in which the *user-player* has access granted to be representative of the wholeness working in 360 degrees. Approximately $1/4$ of the total environment available is what the player has left to stare at in real-time interaction. To this extent it is proven that in the FPS the screen-mediated available VR is disclosed in a sliced mode, given that, as André Parente correctly alleges, in relation to the image of synthesis in general, "it is so much worth for what it shows as for what it hides: it shows hiding itself and hides showing itself" (2004: p.28)[2]. Having said this, it is inferred that FPS images makes the most out of this cut, of this partial visualization on screens, in the way that it generates more elements on field than the *user-player* controlled character angle of vision can focus. In additional, the player can always check for himself by changing the respective angle of vision and displacing himself onto any other on the virtual environment. In case of exchanging positions of the subject or of the observed object, the player notices that clearly existing digital life wherever he stares at and/or the game's character.

If we look from another perspective of the space and time, the FPS cyberspace respects the real-time, so it is possible to walk through architectures and free roam zones (*paidea*) for hours and hours, in real-time (as in *Driller* [1987], *Far Cry*). The notion of temporality is predicted in what concerns the way how every representation occur by the program that generates images and previews the behavior of characters visibility on screen. On another point of

---

[2]N.A.: This translation from the Portuguese edition is mine.
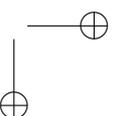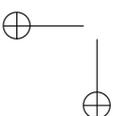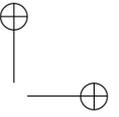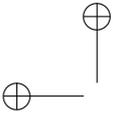
view, the FPS presents a timeless cyberspace, since it does not matter when the *user-player* will experience the FPS, because its environment will be entirely like the designing predicted program. Therefore it's a whole program framework, functioning in a matrix, that no matter how far it will take the random behaviors of the game's characters, the fact is that everything will be approximately valid and functional as predicted before in the program (*ludus*).

On space, in topological terms, if there is anything else the FPS predicts it is space, and such space, which is a cyberspace, stands overall as scenery with no correspondence in the real, with no possible reference. If there are some similarities with the real, they're usually thanks to the useful inspiration that holds up the realism of the FPS, like the game *Kuma: War* (2004) demonstrates. So even when similarities with the real are notorious, what the virtual environment of the FPS presents does not directly exist on the real, henceforth it is something that exists over the real as an image and sound. Though there are exceptions, because FPS games like *Call of Duty* focus precisely on the recreation of places already existing in the real[3]. One may say that, in this manner, the FPS cyberspace is above all timeless and "atopic" (placeless); it exists only inside the computer machine.

It matters to point out here that the FPS becomes most of the times a sort of animated fiction, a three-dimensional fictional field that leads the *user-player* to get "on stage" bearing the purpose of solving enigmas and finishing the game no matter how many obstacles and setbacks may came up (like in *Half-Life*). Thanks to its features at the argument level, FPS present a fiction programmed to be experimented in a first person, which turns the argument and the featured situations to be assumed as realistic and believable. We have to flag the emplotment (enmeshing) process, that is explained by Atkins, in *More Than a Game – The Computer Game As Fictional Form* (2003), and which is responsible for how the *user-player* immerges himself through the argument in the FPS game. Despite being observed as a *sliced reality*, in fact a FPS is a virtual environment that generates motion graphics in an immediate, instantaneous, volatile and practical way. Because in-game graphics changes so fast and sudden the *user-player* has no chance to be aware of the whole

---

[3]Actually I would state that there are two major types of First Person Shooters. On one side, stand the "realists", whose goal is to simulate and remake reality in a believable form, and on the other side, we have a "hyper-realist" faction, who wants to get back to real just as an inspiration source and represent in fact something truly different in cyberspace.
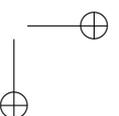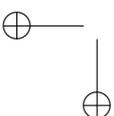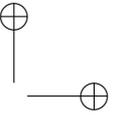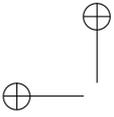
rendering technical process; the rendering procedure almost of the weaving kind that computer executes in real-time. The outcome is obvious, once at the game the *user-player* is contended in the First Person Shooter with an animated and action-packed digital environment, nearly endowed with a life of its own, which is so evolved that it is capable of generating instantaneous images as the player sets out into any direction in cyberspace architecture. In other words what may be understood as a limitation to the FPS cyberspace experience is foremost an invitation to get on stage in the field of the virtual, since the limited vision of the architecture provokes, by the screen, a certain need in the player for major discovery (*paidea*). An appeal is made to an intrusive subjectivity, which makes the player to get into, to perform incursions on uncharted territories on the FPS.

Let's distinguish also that the dimension of spaces, levels, "maps" that the graphic engine renders to be seen in the first person, and which are previously programmed and designed in 3D, makes the technical demands overwhelming even for the most powerful graphic card processors. In this field the developers' answer is to conceive 3D environments in sections, divide the FPS cyberspace in portions, so that the hardware owned by the player may "run", that is, execute, activate, process the game. With this way, the game is experienced following the block model, here we take *Half-Life* as an example, because as some levels are being finished the player awaits for the computer hardware to load and render the remaining map[4]. One can clearly understand that such strategy, besides denouncing indirectly cyberspace's sliced reality, it denounces too that the FPS is a sort of LEGO game, entirely thought in a linear fashion, predicting some randomness, yet still conceived, however, in blocks, like the lines of setup typographic typeface. All that the player does throughout the game is getting over obstacles and unblocking previously closed zones, which are not executed without permission of the system. So the cyberspace which welcomes us inside its environment, in this specific scenario of the FPS, logically predicts this tension of blocking/unblocking environments, with some extenuating features, of course.

---

[4]Usually to keep the action flowing, it happens that the game suffers a slight pause when the player is in a lobby, next to a door or inside an elevator (a medium zone), so that the hardware has enough time to read the remaining game code without facing major delays to slowdown the game's performance.
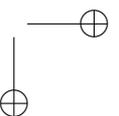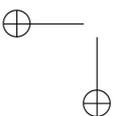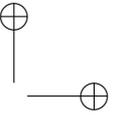
2.2   CYBERSPACE – A VEHICULATION SPACE

IN the book *Realidade Virtual* [*Virtual Reality*] (1997), Rheingold, its author, begins by referring that: "They called it 'Cyberspace'. In fact, it is a place. The major question is to know which kind of place?" (p.16)[5]. Moving forward in this sense, I would add up that the kind of place cyberspace represents is a space prone to vehiculation, virtual body motion, thus being "space", but at the same time a "non-space", in the gibsonian style. In another perspective it matters to remark that the "cyber" prefix is added to the "space" word, since it comes from Norbert Wiener's "cybernetics", suggesting control, steer. Cybernetics' classic condition considers that there is a leading figure, one who drives, guides and controls a vehicle, that's its figure's power. Now in the concept of cyberspace such vehiculation domain is present, the idea that a ruling figure leads to somewhere else in a determined environment.

What is impressive about cyberspace is that it is mostly that architectural aspect, the most geometric and disclosing feature of the "Matrix Simulator", the ability to root in itself, a whole perspective, fictional, *graphical-plastic* and virtual device. There is this inclination towards vehiculation in cyberspace, for it is a space designed for wandering, roaming and interaction; cyberspace is a *vehiculation space* ever since someone thought on its Euclidean non-space like a place to discover outside the real. And the non-space is rooted in the videogame, especially in the FPS, because it is where this *vehiculation space* concept manifests the most due to the proficient development of graphic cards, hardware, built for first person virtualities experiences. Like Barry Atkins declares, and with pertinence, "this pervasive air of the future decay, of course, is familiar enough from genre science fiction texts, be they Golden Age or cyberpunk" (2003: p.65). Thus it is this decaying future that takes *user-players* to find in cyberspace, in agreement with the cyberpunk science-fiction[6], a *vehiculation space*; vehiculation impossible to find on the real, considering the increasing dangerousness of urban spaces.

Since a long time ago cyberspace is a *vehiculation space*, because its connectivity was associated to FPS since then and before that in videogames in

---

[5]N.A.: This translation from the Portuguese edition is mine.

[6]On the cyberpunk science-fiction there is also available: ELIAS, Herlander (ed.) (1999). *Ciberpunk – Ficção e Contemporaneidade*. Lisbon (Distribution: Sodilivros).

LabCom Books
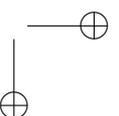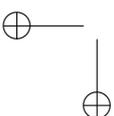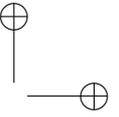
general. Gibson says precisely in *Neuromancer* (1984)[7] that all that backup device of cyberspace, the *Matrix*, "has its roots in primitive arcade games" (...), in early graphics programs" (1988b). In my opinion, this origin in primitive videogames, the pioneer image software, means that the *Matrix* had always had a *graphical-plastic* conception as a basis, a type of systematic non-space meant for connectivity, experiencing and space exploration. Maybe for that reason the "Matrix Simulator" Gibson begins to defend in its short-stories is so well disclosed in cyberspace, as well as we can see in its most audiovisual exponent dimension, where the program-text had always been headed to.

At its deepening, cyberspace was always favorable to a certain kind of movement, of pursuits, chases, in which keeping up with the released novelties would be automatic understood as an evolution sign. That factor reveals the Virtual Reality system in itself, inclusively. By using the HMD helmet and the DataGloves, the *user-player* gets familiar with a non-real place, a non-space, possible only because there is this "Matrix Simulator" as a support beneath it. Therefore, it would only work as long as the player's sight could be followed by images no matter where he would stare at. In short, the hardware and the software system of the virtual are connivent to a type of run away movement to which the *user-player* is impelled to; it makes him to explore, escape, evade and try solving puzzles (*ludus*) standing on his way (as in the FPS *Duke Nukem 3D* and *Doom II*). Only relatively to spaces of urban genre (of indoors architecture), because in terms of open spaces, as Gibson mentions the digital territory (that is the outdoor spaces), the style is very different (as we may see for ourselves in FPS like *Far Cry* and *Battlefield 2142*).

Cyberspace's open spaces face some mutations in its vehiculation model. In the illusively ground of cyberspace, with no architecture barriers, the *user-player* interacts according to a different model, the one of the "Cyberspace Cowboy", as envisioned by Gibson in *Neuromancer*. Like a masked hero, a rogue cowboy, the *user-player* turns himself into a new explorer, a "Lone Ranger", a wanderer in the new digital desert where he would ride endlessly. Because it is a new type of space, a space for data representations, the *user-player* would interact with this system through another kind of vehiculation, as much close to the pedestrian scale and the walker's walk like as if he would

---

[7]The first Portuguese edition: Gibson, William (1988). *Neuromante.*Lisbon: Gradiva (but a new edition is already available).
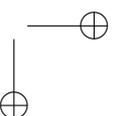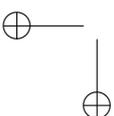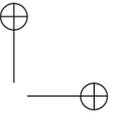
go anywhere like flying. Liberty granted in cyberspace surpasses the laws of Physics and hosts the subject like a maternal space in a post-matter phase regarding unparalleled freedom. It is what happens to Case, *Neuromancer*'s leading character in Gibson's novel, as he sees in cyberspace under a first person perspective every graphic data representation, in a relieved way, so all is essentially known in a virtual and audiovisual manner, like in a FPS. Case in *Neuromancer* feels so comfortable in the maternal space of cyberspace that he can walk, fly and perform data interpretation.

As a space that endows a special kind of transportation, cyberspace would be so believable, as being the graphic surface of the "Matrix Simulator", that it would sustain the generalized hallucination available for all *user-players*. It is in this perspective that the cyberspace is remarkably defined as:

> "A *consensual* hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts . . . A graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity" (1988b).

For this reason Gibson affirms that the cyberspace is a coherent space, even though it is in fact a system which implies a "notional space" it is a conceptual space. In another text, entitled *Chaos & Cyberculture* (1994), Timothy Leary did an interview to Gibson, where the latter defends cyberspace as:

> "(. . .) a consensual hallucination that these people have created. It's like, with this equipment, you can agree to share the same hallucinations. In effect, they're creating a world. It's not really a place, it's not really space. It's notional space" (p.25).

By interpreting Gibson's words we may conclude that this "notional space" model, of a conceptual space, of something so radical in an abstract structure, is of enormous significance, since it means that the metaphor of geography is applied, at least in part, to make theory on how the *user-player* would travel in such virtual environment. The kind of transportation that the cyberspace permits, and which is the core for the FPS interaction model, lays deeply in the assumption that cyberspace inverts the computer data interaction model. Instead of being outside us, in Gibson's theory, information is actually suffering subversion and starts sheltering *user-players* in a maternal fashion. We stand inside of information.

LabCom Books
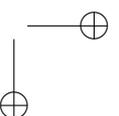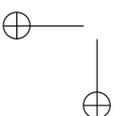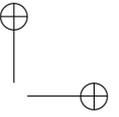
If we look at this in a different angle we may verify that cyberspace shows itself at an audiovisual level because it works out like a *graphics depository* – a cluster system of graphic cuttings for the construction of a virtual *graphical-plastic* space, manipulated to have certain similarities with the real. That is, I would say, a real taken for granted.

I have to say too that the cyberspace envisioned by Gibson is a reflection of the attempt to graphically represent a technological transformation. A territory was missing and also scenery for a new narrative, an innovative discourse. Revolution was being shaped when a Virtual Reality generated and experienced online computers was then being enunciated. And taking in account what Gibson stated, and very right, in the *No Maps For These Territories* documentary:

> "I'd gotten to a point where I needed a "buzzword." I needed (...) a signifier of technological change, and that would provide me with... with a narrative engine, and a territory in which the narrative could take place" (Mark Neale, 2003: Section 2.8: Cyberspace).

Nevertheless, this idea of the "narrative engine" is very interesting because what happens with the FPS graphic engine programming is precisely that, there is a script, a program on which every representation is inscribed, every play of situations and the behaviors of game characters; and on the other side it is correct too that the FPS works with a virtual territory, a gibsonian cyberspace domain which has an engine of its own, the graphic engine. Besides that, if there was this entire "narrative engine", the *user-player* could not have the feeling of being on stage, starring in a situation of the cinematic type. The very notion of "place" is changed, in cyberspace, because as Gibson himself asserts, the most geographical part of the "Matrix Simulator", cyberspace, is a "non-place", a territory of machinery and hallucination. However, it is a place that exists just through the man-machine interface of Virtual Reality each time the *user-player* gets online in simulations consoles.

2.3   TRON: THE ELECTRONIC WORLD

To think cyberspace as something subjective requires that, firstly, one comprehends that this conceptual space is known for its scenography
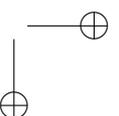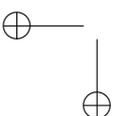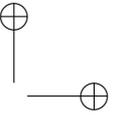
control, and for providing the feeling of belonging to a place. Secondly, it is the territory where the tension between the winner and the looser remains. A sports (*âgon*), ludic and predation conception lies beneath cyberspace, in such "electronic world".

The audiovisual universe depicted by Gibson as "cyberspace" and as a "Matrix Simulator" matches directly how Lisberger & Daley describe "the electronic world" of *Tron*. Before Gibson's *Burning Chrome*, *Tron* (1982), Lisberger's motion picture, exposed cyberspace in all its thrust; a videogame world. Such a cyber-spatial universe, which Lisberger & Daley mention in the novelization of the homonymous film, that it is connivent in all of it with Gibson's descriptions about a three-dimensional, geometric world, an agglomerate of graphical represented data for the interaction of its *user-players*.

Lisberger & Daley depict this "electronic world" in many ways, yet what makes us curious is that they mention the existence of a "Game Grid" in the world of *Tron* (a sort of Game Web) that shows cyberspace as an entry and exit point for *user-players* on the behalf of an entertainment confined to digital arenas (much like it happens in FPS *Quake III Arena* [2000]). In that kind of arenas the most proficient and skillful *user-players* would stand a chance to play in the human-vs-human model or in the human-vs-machine model. Competition (*âgon*) was so hard that the "Game Grid" of *Tron* would become a world prone to dangerous and ludic games seen and experienced in the first person (as it is finely demonstrated by the FPS *Tron 2.0*). The way it is presented approximately three decades ago, in this cyberspace Gibson's imaginary is very notorious, so it is suggested the access to first person audiovisual experiences like in today's First Person Shooter. But at the time *Tron* was released videogames were still on a primitive stage and they haven't become Virtual Reality's programmatic icon. *Tron*'s brilliant aspect lies exactly on that point, in the way it exhibits the universe generated by and about the computer, before the FPS videogames had reached the level of photorealism and the convincing representations of nowadays.

If we observe carefully the contemporary "electronic world" of the FPS we'll notice that its prototyping was entirely defined by Gibson, initially in *Neuromancer* and later in *Burning Chrome* (1985), yet Lisberger & Daley were the ones who best represented the virtual so far in *Tron*, the motion picture. This way, the "electronic world" of *Tron* stands for the virtual as a graphic and plastic depository, the videogame environment raised to an expo-

LabCom Books
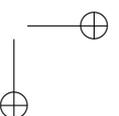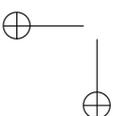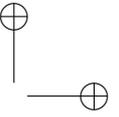
nent in whom the *user-player* would get directly reach out the virtual by his eyes. Although in the film there isn't any helmet and DataGlove interface, but a teleportation of humans into the digital realm. A universe illustrated by *Tron*'s authors like this: "a rectilineous, glowing landscape, lighten by electricity, cast its rectangles and edges onto the sky" (1982: p.21). In this excerpt of *Tron*, Lisberger & Daley basically portray the *subjective landscape* patent in the pioneer first person games like *Battle Zone* and *Driller*.

To reflect on what is the meaning of the FPS is, now, to think also on *Tron*, on this definition of "electronic world", where the cyber-spatial dimension manifests itself as an "inventory of effects" (a McLuhan's expression); all there is, all that is possible to do, it is described, or about to be described, through that space of technique, the new place for technology that is a *machine-place*. A place that is not a physical space but rather an extension of the real Cartesian ground – *res extensa* –, and that still possesses a gravity core able to attract everything. This is where all connections go back and head for, ultimately extending.

Gibson's definition on the illusively infinite space, "the chessboard grid", the "unthinkable complexity" and the "consensual hallucination" are all attributes of the "electronic world" of *Tron*. A movie like this illustrates Virtual Reality and enhances at its time what videogames have surpassed more than a decade later, and it implies the videogame revolution by the First Person Shooter genre in the following decades.

It's even possible to say that the vehiculation system necessary for traveling in the three-dimensional cyberspace of the FPS starts in *Tron*, in its proposals. Given the immensity of the "electronic world" the *user-player* would have to accept slavery in playing in the "Game Grid" until he would be deleted, or go for the victory and look for a breach in the major-program. It never ceases to be interesting that this need for wandering through the "unthinkable complexity" identified in the "electronic world" would require a transportation vehicle[8]. The logic of the walker and "the return to the pedestrian scale" are also denounced in *Tron*, when the protagonist *user-players* face such an im-

---

[8]The cowboy model becomes high-tech in *Tron* by replacing the knight with the motards biker through the "Light Cycle", and by replacing the *western*'s desert duel with the videogame "disc" game in the "Game Grid". Behind these replacements the idea is to highlight the vehiculation modality need to travel in the infinite electronic wasteland, as it added a ludic and a competitive style to the battles.
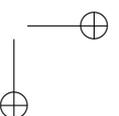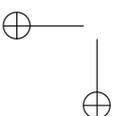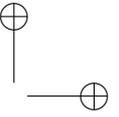
mensity that they realize it is impossible to know the entire "electronic world". A world that had a cyber-spatial architectonic grammar of its own based on simple and minimalist forms, in the most perfect geometries, underlining the geometric nature of the virtual, as the vectorial shape, provided with not much polygons, still stood far from the complex and detailed real. About the early First Person Shooters, the architectonic grammar inherited from *Tron* is still present, like in *Wolfenstein 3D* (1994), *Driller* and *Battle Zone*. But until more recently, FPS show such a realism that they get far from the vectorial shape in the name of a photorealism, as if almost imported from the cinematic image (as in *Crysis*), so there aren't any reminiscences of an age of the still identified "machine-image", from the time when representations of the virtual were imperfect and precocious.

By analyzing *Tron*, we also see that the movie illustrates an "electronic world" that comprehends cyberspace as a deadly place, so huge that maps would become useless. The FPS cyberspace has in *Tron* its historical precursor, the ideal depiction of the utmost-place, the furthest-zone that exposes all technology's predatory substance. Domestication and threat on the subject occur in cyberspace, like it happens in relation to any alphanumerical typeface. Imprisoned in the depths of cyberspace the subject can only play, contaminating his subjectivity with a set of seductive and ludological replacement mechanisms.

2.4   UNCHARTED TERRITORY?

LONG before Gibson, McLuhan's assertion was that "with the advent of an electric information environment, all the territorial aims and objectives of business and politics tended to become illusory" (1989: p.5). It is comprehensible the reason why McLuhan says that all territorial aims and objectives of business a politics tended to become illusory. With the expansion of information through electricity, the "electrified" world would imply that it will dissolve all geopolitical borders. Yet if it is true that McLuhan was not referring himself to cyberspace, when he mentioned the "electric information environment", on the other hand it is understandable that his theories had layout the foundations to conceive cyberspace. McLuhan highlights that it is all about an "electric information environment". That is to say, it is the

LabCom Books
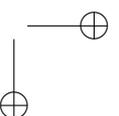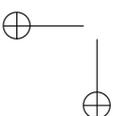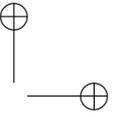
information that is electric and not the environment, but as a consequence an environment filled with electric information turns out to be an electric one.

So this is what we deduce from McLuhan's theory. The "electric information environment" points out that the electric information makes ridicule every geopolitical borders and territorial demarcations. In the epoch of McLuhan the evolution of cryptography, cybernetics and computation, in a scene marked by pop mediatisation, announced an "electric information environment". Once established such domain it would make sense to launch into orbit computerized satellites for political and commercial purposes. Charting the real was an on-going process for the global territory; the globe would become a village until a new return to tribalism by means of communication is detectable. Reality would be controlled by simulation, according to the miniaturized game model. Follow by this, when Gibson declares in *No Maps For These Territories* that are "no maps for these territories" (Mark Neale, 2003: Section 2.8: Cyberspace) it is because geography is already under the control of information technologies, as McLuhan foreseen. The question is that the "electric information environment" evolved at a pace that now needs a specific chart for its own, an equally electric chart, as we see for ourselves in the First Person Shooter videogame.

If map for each territory should have exist, that is because the territory is measurable, this is, calculable. In the case of cyberspace, that serves as an arena for the contemporary FPS, authors like Gibson characterize it as of an "unthinkable complexity", as others like Rheingold mention the existence of an "incalculable complexity" (1997: p.17), still in its deep, cyberspace is calculable, but not by humans. Through this path, cyberspace may be understood as being chartable; able to be charted. Its only and exclusively a matter of calculation. And we have proofs of this in the way developers conceive the game levels, the "maps" for the First Person Shooter, since it is precisely upon geography that the virtual environment is built up, and as if it wasn't enough, only afterwards the computer processes all data in the stage of rendering. In other words, rendering is the final stage, so charting precedes calculation. Wandering in the FPS cyberspace demonstrates that calculation is the responsible for allowing one to walk through the digital ground, for its cartography, in real-time.

Thus, if we had only acknowledged Gibson's works in which both "Cyberspace" and the "Matrix Simulator" are depicted in a significant and taste-

ful manner, the description of all the virtual territory, the whole cyberspace, would remain out of its illustration. But in *Tron*, as in the novel, we contemplate the metaphor for the audiovisual pursued by contemporary technology. All that cyberspace and Virtual Reality technology mean is entirely contained on *Tron*'s landscapes, in its border less world, in its uncharted territory, in its *graphical-plastic* structure, in its post-geographic imagery. Gibson endowed the "electronic world" with more plasticity in its perspective of the cyberspace, though the "electronic world" of *Tron* is the best example of a *machine-place*, an audiovisual world, made of clear and distinct Cartesian principles, completely rationalist. Whether in the vision of Lisberger & Daley, or in Gibson's, both of them illustrate in a plastic fashion the digital universe, showing it as fantasized as infinite.
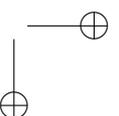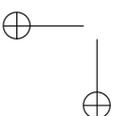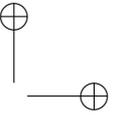
In today's videogame in which all is seen under the first person perspective, the *user-player* deals with representations that have been historically built upon the way how the virtual world was illustrated by Gibson, Lisberger & Daley. Nevertheless what began in primitive videogames could rely just in images such as *Tron*'s, until the most complex First Person Shooter of present time, in which only the online game the infinite is disclosed and the total charting gets hard to be accomplished. The reason is that at the time *Tron* was being produced by Disney, the latter was facing a major creativity crisis and many commercial failures. And once that arcade games parlors were the obsession of North-American youth at the time, Disney intended to make an innovative film, which in fact would work out like what we can do as we play a FPS videogame. Disney thought that it was possible to achieve that in an animated feature, in order to create something new, somehow able to breakthrough among the younger layers of the audience. So *Tron* gets its inspiration, according to Lisberger & Daley, from the first videogames, like *Pong* (1972) and *Break Out* (1976). The outcome in the film is fabulous, virtual combat arenas are recovered by the digital image, that we have seen in the past in movies like *Spartacus*[9] (Kubrick, 1960), and the competitive, predatory, threatening game genre, at a pedestrian scale, that we find in today's FPS videogames, was already represented in *Tron*.

---

[9]This is the aesthetic of videogames as *Quake III Arena* and *Speedball 2*, still the director says in *Tron's* Special Edition Documentary that "when you see *Tron* you have to picture yourself inside a *Pac-Man*game, picture it out fighting for your life!The only way to get out of that game is figured out from the inside this time".

LabCom Books
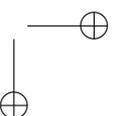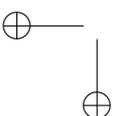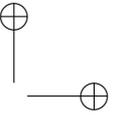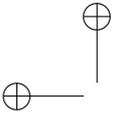
The idea was that the protagonists would step inside the virtual world, but some of the problems remaining in the film production at the time, like the symbiosis between images of people, vehicles and computer-generated sceneries; with today's technology, those problem just don't make sense. *Tron* was the laboratory for generating all that supposedly mapless territory, for permitting full CGI (Computer Graphics Interface) rendering, for merging real and virtual with an unified look. De Kerckhove says that "as in *Tron* (...), with Virtual Reality, we are no longer satisfied in providing the replication to our canvas, we literally 'get inside' them" (2004: p.60). Having said this, the new contemporary dimension of the virtual pushes the *user-player* into machine-generated images, force him to penetrate an "electronic world" with reminiscences of the real. It is obvious that in behalf of geometry and in detriment of geography, the observed images belong to the post-geographic genre and demand a certain type of conquest of a lost nature again. Lisberger & Daley say about the landscape in *Tron* (1982) that somewhere it:

> "Transformed into something with angular towers, buildings, illuminations, reticular energy, solids, shapes similar to mountains and rivers of brilliance and burned and sterile places suggesting deserts. The whole set was defined by grid shapes, resembling, more than anything else, a world of circuits" (1982: p.53)[10].

Being defined in this manner the landscape of the "electronic world", as a sterile, rationalist place, and provided with circuits, what is in question is how the virtual represents itself. Inside the territory of an unintelligible map it is endowed a "return to the pedestrian scale" in a cyberspace that unveils itself after all as a synthesized real. Considering also that cyberspace is a territory requiring a certain kind of vehiculation too, it is notorious that it is linked up to a trajectory notion aggregated to another notion either, one of horizontality. For this a whole cartography is presupposed demanding an all-condensing memory: the computer. Except the territory has no map available from the point of view of human calculation. As Gibson mentions, there are "no maps for these territories" (2003), which are ever since *Neuromancer*'s cyberspace, territories of subjectivity held hostage of a Cartesian objectivity ever changing. It is in this sense that cyberspaces are hard to chart in their wholeness, so to speak.

[10]N.A.: This translation from the Portuguese edition is mine.
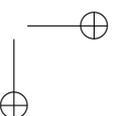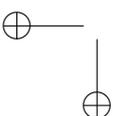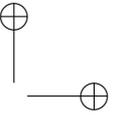
At the very moment of defining Gibson's "Cyberspace" and the "Matrix Simulator", there weren't many media available to correctly illustrate what was the computer space, until *Tron*. The only computation space, in its epoch, provides such an image that we known as the videogame space. When Gibson observed how arcade game players interacted with the games in those parlors he came up with the term he coined as "cyberspace". For him it was impressive how *user-players* could get so mixed up with the object which represented on the virtual image screen. Uncertain of what to call it, Gibson named it "cyberspace" since it was a space of control where the *user-player* exerted its power over the animated object.

Merely the effects are observed in this territory without a total map, built with blocks to be surveilled and "panoptically" (Foucault, 1987) manipulated, in this "electronic world" regardless of *topos*. There is this "placelessness", an absence of place. By excellence the space of cyberspace is a Cartesian space, a thicker *machine-place*, the space of extension (*prosthemos*), prosthetics; extended ground, of *res extensa*, in which everything can be placed on it. In order to sketch up this new machine territory, cyberspace, Gibson tried to think of what he would see if he would be actually inside the virtual world of the videogame, in the "machine-images". How players behaved while playing videogames was the ultimate inspiration. Hence Gibson confesses that:

> "Well, if there's space behind the screen, and everybody's got these things at some level, maybe only metaphorically, those spaces are all the same *space*" (Mark Neale, 2003: Section 2.8: Cyberspace).

To accept what Gibson says, the projection that the *user-player* reveals in the First Person Shooter videogame is something he had clearly predicted in the first videogames. Getting each time more inside that space (undefined at the time) of graphical representation, of network information, virtual entertainment, would be the trend set for *user-players*. The most important is that like Lisberger & Daley, Gibson identifies the existence of that very space, behind the screen, in every virtual image.

LabCom Books
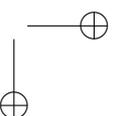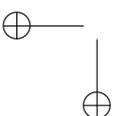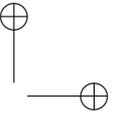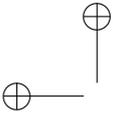
2.5   ART OF HUNTING

I N all First Person Shooters, since *Battle Zone*, *Driller* and *Wolfenstein 3D*, there is an *art of hunting* becoming necessary to reach the end of the game easily, and even in *Doom III*, one of the most realistic FPS, such an art demands to be mastered. It continues in *Doom* the direct confrontation between the *trajective subject* and the casual threats, between us players and the game puppets. In fact, direct confrontation remains ever since the FPS exists, and it implies that the battle between us, protagonists, and the adversary, to be guided by a monstrous, personal relationship, a new kind of hunt between hunter and prey, predator and victim. The question is that along the game the leading character and the foes switch these roles easily, because there never is a full control of the game, given the fact that most recent FPS are no longer linear, so they provide countless surprises and course accidents. It is in this perspective that Atkins states, about the FPS, that:

> "The game's designers have gone out of their way to make this a frenetic, rather than leisurely, form of entertainment where even the most mundane of contemporary environments, the corporate office, takes on a terrifying potential" (2003: p.63).

Trying to play a First Person Shooter is each time more an experience with the purpose of mastering the *art of hunting*, thanks to its new ludic regime whose goal is to push the *user-player* to exercise the roles of gatherer, hunter and terrain scout. On the other side, this "return to the pedestrian scale" across giant virtual worlds of the next-generation videogames always needs the subject to become an armed "flâneur" (Baudelaire, 1993). What is the most odd, and it is this that Atkins says, is that in the FPS even the most ordinary scenery acquires a new potential, just because it is a FPS. In this new type of "flânerie" (Baudelaire, 1993) the subject must master the new *art of hunting* clues, solving mysteries (*ludus*) and draw his conclusions on the environment where he gets immersed (Manovich, 2001a: p.127). In the interior of the new virtual territory of the First Person Shooter the subject, now a *trajective subject*, wanders through space like a detective (*paidea*), reading its corners and edges as if he's reading a special book. Becoming a better hunter in the virtual world who asks for a subject that is able to decipher the temporary and subjective landscape of cyberspace.
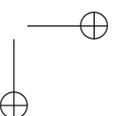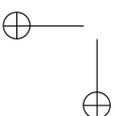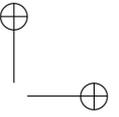
For a start the subject has to apply a step-by-step methodology, investigating by excluding parts, taking as an advantage the whole curious incursion in cyberspace to observe and "dig", the reason behind is looking for clues. To exercise such new kind of "flânerie" means that a space exploration by immersion must occur in the labyrinthic world of the FPS cyberspace. Under the perspective of the trajectory contemplated by the subject the issue is to learn how to deal with the contained space of the virtual world.

To do so, the *user-player* looks for hidden data, he examines carefully, walking across lobbies and analyzing information gathered on the field, as it happens in *Doom III*. Mastering the *art of hunting* is crucial on this territory as the map is not as useful as it may look at first sight so the subject must dive into the labyrinth, experiencing space, collecting evidence, thus becoming an index reader, as it is when one penetrates the "one building complex" of *Quake*. Finishing the First Person Shooter only becomes possible because the *user-player* subject transforms himself into a hunter, an armed "flâneur" performing incursions in a digital predation ground (as we observe in *Breakdown*), walking through underground ramifications and attending to the gradual closing until the ultimate opening in the end. First we have a process of "entombment", towards the tomb, and then a process of evasion, towards the exterior, as Atkins (2003) suggests.

Under this system of ideas, the *user-player* needs to end with credit his hunt, across every enigma, beating opponents and overtaking obstacles, which requires a certain analysis of space and figures inhabiting each FPS. After all, each game is a specific game, with rules (*ludus*), narrative, figures, places and new goals. It is in this sense that the subject sees again his subjectivity being redefined every time he interacts with a different FPS, since each videogame of this genre leaves on him serious memories and a unique experience.

Thinking the FPS as a mere entertainment product is a mistake due to the fact that it is the kind of product inserted in the new media class, as Manovich assumes too. So the FPS must be observed more as a subjectivity device, like the type of media that permeates a whole new subjectivity regime. In the First Person Shooter the classic figures of aggressor and victim, predator and prey, hunter and hunted, the good and the villain, are all back again. Though, it is known that all depends on the kind of spaces available for wandering. With no *sui generis* architectures all the *architectonic walkthrough* would not look much attractive, and then the immersion concept would fade away on

LabCom Books
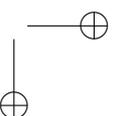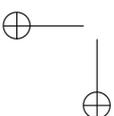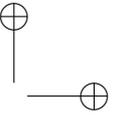
a screen, which is already restrictive within itself. It matters to remark that the FPS cyberspace works out as a huge arena full of chasers that stalk us, as in the territory without total map the pursuits are continuous, in the same way the introduction sequence of *Half-life 2* has shown us. And long since the origins of the First Person Shooters history that this concept of videogame lands on a certain need of escaping forward without looking back. Hence, the FPS works like this from *Doom* till now. In-game images respond as a face, they take possession of the subject's face, impelling him into an unavoidable return to weapons, as *Halo – Combat Evolved* exemplifies.

Interacting with the universe of each First Person Shooter is a very peculiar sort of experience, yet in general this videogame genre reveals every ambition behind the golden age of VR's prototypes. There is even a certain gesture behavior encoded till the extreme, which makes us to express ourselves in the leading character of the story, as it brilliantly takes place in Valve Software's *Half-Life*. The weapons' crackling is so uninterrupted that it may provoke a saturation effect, like in *Black*, for instance. Performing a sort of "flânerie" that supplies us with every proof and clue to solve the puzzles (*ludus*) on our way seems to be the only way left to deal with this predation space. Escaping from the "entombment" of each level on the First Person Shooter is a constant desire of the subject, who is face-to-face with more labyrinths every time he finishes the objectives of the first labyrinth (except when reaches the end). Besides, in the First Person Shooter the end seems hard to meet, in terms of objectives of the game. The maps themselves, that is, the levels of the game, the architectures to wander in, look endless, as the digital desert of Lisberger & Daley's *Tron* or Gibson's "Matrix Simulator". Nevertheless the *user-player* fights hard to decode the temporary landscape of the First Person Shooter in order to finally escape if he manages to be a good terrain scout, knowing all there is to know about the territory where he immerges on.

Once inside the violent space of the FPS, the border signed by the screen, between real and virtual, gets blurred in the name of an enormous adventure in spaces favorable to ambushes, persecutions and duels, in the same style as *Prey* permits us to see for ourselves in its orbital dungeons, or *Half-Life* in its underground facilities or *Killzone* in its hazardous ravaged streets. A major innovation in ambushes happening in the FPS, according to Barry Atkins, is that: "every ceiling tile, every ventilation duct, every wall recess, every corner,
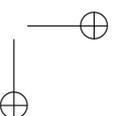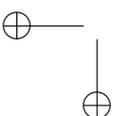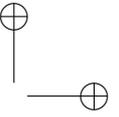
land, every pool of radioactive sludge represents potential sites of ambush"
(2003: p.63).

Let's say that there are no danger-free zones because all corners are po-
tential set ups panic is constant. In another view, despite the graphic violence,
the actual groundbreaking photorealism, the *user-player* gives up to its codes
and soon tries to become a warrior, thus protecting him from adversaries or re-
turning attacks on them. Also we have to point out that the predation space of
the FPS manages to seem so mysterious as it is clear and distinct; respectively
because it demands from the subject a more primeval behavior, alike the one
of the pre-historic "hunter-gatherer"; and also for relying on an optical and
typically Cartesian perspectivist regime.

On the other hand something unnatural lies in the FPS, something which
just cannot replace real. In the FPS territory the *user-player* manifests a sub-
jectivity dedicated to capture, adventure and discovery; a voyeurism turned
predatory is then revealed. Even technically, the FPS is consecrated by its
combat imagery, by imerging the subject all the time in far more astonishing
situations than the previous experienced ones. The edge of the FPS is when
the subject feels addicted to his new hunter condition in an audiovisual uni-
verse of overwhelming proportions, endowed with riddles, chaotic situations,
accidents and clear objectives, as in *Battlefield 2*. Remain in this new *art of
hunting* recovered through the digital by the FPS it's strictly warfare optics
implicit on the scope, in the practice of hunting.

I shall say that in the First Person Shooter the subject's subjectivity is
corrupted by the recovering of a new need for getting on the battlefield. As
if it was not enough to master the *art of hunting*, the stealth strike, managing
resources and ammunition, the *user-player* also has to accept that he stands
on a hazardous scenery. Danger is no exception, we must underline, but only-
so the virtual environment per se, as we observe in the *X-Files* TV series,
namely in the *First Person Shooter* episode (written by William Gibson and
Tom Maddox, 2000).

The *art of hunting* that the FPS explores so well makes the objective space
to matter the most, in a *subjective landscape* that is worth just for casting us
into the fight, for a hand that proves that we are there, in the virtual, which re-
quires a weapon, yet it does not directly proves that we're really there. Instru-
mental gesture is the residue that makes us to accept the aesthetic of traveling
that takes it all in a rush, transforming the subject into a hunter wandering

LabCom Books
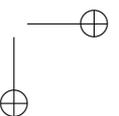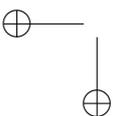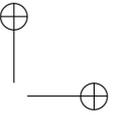
(*paidea*) in the virtual world of the FPS, in a "situationism" scenario that is premeditated (*ludus*) in its deep core. Situations construction is notorious in this type of videogames, the staged and programmed situations place the subject and, more than that confine him to technical competence devices. In reaction to photorealism and the credibility achieved by images, the *user-player* acts against subjectivity being corrupted by semiotic mechanisms, in an artificially scenery which generated by the graphic engine, in ferocious fights.

Even more than a simple arena prone to hunting, the First Person Shooter leads us to discover the art of resistance, persistence and conquest. To take the subject to travel in space, in such way, at a pedestrian scale, is only happening as long as the virtual territory expands and proves that there is a retreat from the world.

The *user-player* himself dives in the immersive FPS imagery retreating from the unique condition of active subject in the real world. Thus the virtual environment of the FPS is a refuge sheltering a subjectivity framework that found out in the virtual its extended form. As the ultimate space in extension, the cyberspace patent on the FPS unfolds by its dangers, by the action enhanced in images contemplated in the first person. Not to mention that it makes us pay more attention, demands more complicity, places us in a new environment where we can hunt down as well as being undoubtedly hunted. The simulacrum regime of the virtual recreates its own hunting ground under the first person perspective. Image realm imprisons us as if we were prey in a spectral kingdom, in a new type of property underlying our subjectivity. In short, in this space protected by technology the subject may come out as a winner or as a looser, but its type of experience so far still unmatched.

2.6   THE CINEMATIC EXPERIENCE

IN cinema, especially in the science fiction genre, many movies have tried to demonstrate what clearly means to be inside the so-called cyberspace, despite of the classic *Tron*. Some movies even try to recreate situations inspired in First Person Shooters, as in the well-known *Doom* (2005), based on the homonym videogame. Curiously the contrary does happens too, many FPS videogames portray the cinematic style to provide an interaction with the virtual environment apparently imported from the film canvas, where we can
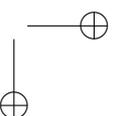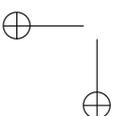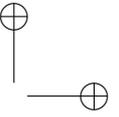
find examples like *Black*, *GoldenEye* or *007 – Nightfire*. We realize that there is an entire dialogue between videogame and cinema here on debate, and in some cases there is really an easy identifiable fortuitous symbiosis. The explanation lies in the fact that Virtual Reality looks for concepts in cinema all the time. Therefore cinema is the medium elected by Virtual Reality, and it does builds up its lineage, as Manovich states in *The Language of New Media* (2001). Though we have to say that it is not just about referring how cinema precedes subjective Virtual Reality, what's on stake is above all to point out that cinema is responsible for establishing a first person subjectivity regime explored even better by the First Person Shooter. It is Geoff King & Tanya Krzywinska who leave to us the assertion that "techniques such as hyper-rapid editing, unstable subjective camerawork and the propelling of objects at high speed out towards the screen are often used in Hollywood action sequences to create a heightened impression of viewer proximity to, or participation in, the action" (2006: p.159). Such "unstable subjective camerawork" that replicates the viewer subjectivity, in its deep is already a form of *machine-subjectivity* being unveiled by cinematic experience. This to state once again that in cinema there are countless examples of movies that exhibit subjectivity sequences seen in first person recycling by then the First Person Shooter formula as in a revisiting fashion.

On this extent of getting inspiration on the logic of the subjective virtual reality of the First Person Shooter, many movies can be listed, like *Avalon* (Mamoru Oshi, 2005), *Doom* (Andrzej Bartkowiak), *Elephant* (Gus Van Sant, 2003), *Strange Days* (Kathryn Bygelow, 1997) and *X-Files (FPS Episode)*.

For instance in *Avalon*, the entire story is about the First Person Shooter, about a network videogame dedicated to subjectivity multiplied in cyberspace. Entitled like the movie, this game – *Avalon* – would be an accessible cyberspace through HMD hardware. In terms of gaming, *Avalon* consists in a First Person Shooter as much addictive as illegal. Young men look for playing *Avalon* since it allows them to have the feeling that they're in a different real world and for providing an altered subjectivity condition. Those who played *Avalon* fought hard to earn something out of it (credits) based on the scores that had obtained in this FPS, mostly when playing in team mode, in the so-called "parties"[11]. Of course like every other game, this game also cre-

---

[11]The term comes from "party" because in the early videogames culture players gathered
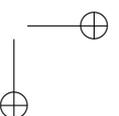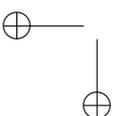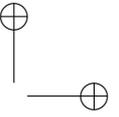
ate situations that player will face dangerous situations. For instance, when player died in the game, they faced a comatose state called of "Unreturned[12]. In other words, *Avalon*, the First Person Shooter itself, had its victims, as much as it worked at the same time as a refuge point for all those who lived miserably the most annoying suburban reality.

In the sense of feeding the ambition of the illegal virtual reality issue, players carried on in *Avalon* by high-scores and experience points[13], remaining the best ones on Class A and the rest of them below on Subclasses B or C. Inclusively, all players left behind a trail except elite players, like Bishop, for example. In this movie, Ash is the leading character, a lonely woman on the game who plays only in "single player mode" since she distrusts everybody in the First Person Shooter, because all is fatal inside it. But by playing alone Ash did not took any more chances nor did she had the backup support of a team. The best game mode would be the "team mode", in "party", to contemplate the battle among factions, hence it was in that point that the true battle occurred, or, in another word, the true illusion of battle took place; whose counterpart would be the insipid, poor and considered to be a disillusion, reality outside of *Avalon*. Players prefer the illusion of FPS and due to that fact they control the access to *Avalon* with "key-words" and ask for specific entry points.

Just like the First Person Shooter games, *Avalon*, the movie, grants to its *user-players* a set of obstacles, among which are the "level bosses"[14]. Throughout the movie, *Avalon* is being revealed and the sceneries where Ash is playing are several and successively harder to overcome. In the beginning, Ash plays on open field (*paidea*) and takes out the Gunship, later in the C66

---

in parties, conventions where game competitions happened in a more groovy way, relying on co-operative, network gameplay system.

[12]N.A.: In this film the "Unreturned" would be all players who were in excessive contact with the FPS and became ill, so for them there was no way possible to come back to a healthy condition. The term addresses us to those players who haven't come back to the real world after playing "Avalon", the game.

[13]Like in an evolution system similar to RPG (Role Playing Game) videogames, in which the player controls an avatar evolving in its role as time goes by.

[14]Along the film, Ash is confronted with many level bosses. The first one is a Tank, the second one is a Double helix Helicopter, the third one is a Mobile Missile Tower, and the last one, in Class A, is reality simulated as we do see it in our everyday life.
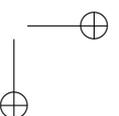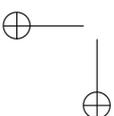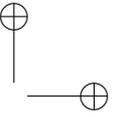
Ruins she is ambushed by the Nine Syster's Party that rule *Avalon*[15]. At the Flak Tower 22, Ash faces a Mobile Missile Tower where she meets the game master, Bishop. But only when she is granted with access to the D99 Ruins she is able to overcome the game filed of Class A. Finally, she may play in Class Real; the ultimate level of the First Person Shooter in which all that is seen to resembles reality. Once Ash is on this stage, she goes out at the street wearing civilian clothes, not military outfits, switching the sniper rifle for an elegant mini-pistol, as she faces an ordinary everyday street life, with people, car traffic and public transportation.

On a closer examination we see that if *Avalon* makes a fiction on "the state of the art" out of First Person Shooter, then in *Doom* makes a fiction with a First Person Shooter action sequence inserted from its own story. Put another way, we have this situation in which film dialogues with the First Person Shooter homonym game aesthetic. In order to achieve this, they try to pay homage to the game designers with a cinematic style sequence by coping from the game. The point is that in *Doom*, the movie, the fiction of the game recreates the virtual world of that *Doom* game in itself, to make it closer to the real.

Taking this into account that the game *Doom* was inspired in survival horror situations, the movie remarks substantially that type of atmosphere, discarding virtual aspect and endowing it with a realism that the latest game of the *Doom* series almost achieves.

Todd Hollenshead, from ID Software, the company that created *Doom*, says that walking through the dark zones turns the environment into something gothic and confronts the player with his subjectivity, at the same time it increases tension, wrath, rage, fear, and surprise among every sinuous paths across the game. Fast-paced action in an obscure and underground environment turns the movie into a sort of real stage of the game. Besides that, one of the authors of the original game, the famous John Carmack, affirms that the game explores the "sense of urgency", that "the first person perspective increases the empathy with the game character". In fact that is what happens in the movie, there is this exacerbation, a realistic exaggeration of all that the

---

[15]They wanted Ash to give them forcedly their game data, which is her game situation, her "savegame", for the only form to surpass adversary players without having to defeat them is to conquer the very same experience score by stealing it. To do so there's nothing better than playing with a group, organizing collective strategies with peculiar tactics.

LabCom Books
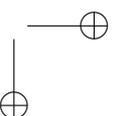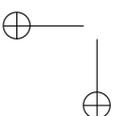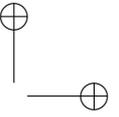
game provided to the player in the virtual ground. The motive behind this is that, in Carmack's point of view, *Doom* wants to be a "real event", a true situation, and precisely for that reason the movie provides that seriousness aspect, in the sense of cinematic realism, of a virtual reality disregarding the game looks.

Let's not forget what makes *Doom* a relevant movie on this dialogue established between the First Person Shooter and the cinema is that it possesses an imagery sequence that imitates the subjective perspective of the game. They call it the "First Person Shooter Sequence" and, in agreement with Lorenzo Di Bonaventura[16], film producer, this "'FPS Unit' works out like a 'plot device'". That is to say that it functions as a "narrative device" introduced in the movie, an element placed inside the story itself and which permits viewer to see the action on the film in the first person perspective, like in the game footage. The "FPS Unit" is an one shot action sequence, it lasts for five and half minutes, with characters and sceneries, whether real or virtual, that simulates the game. However we should highlight that between the film footage and the homonym game footage lie substantial proportion differences[17].

Another interesting movie has shown First Person Shooter sequences is called *Elephant* (directed by Gus Van Sant), which portrays the everyday life of a group of students at a North-American high school in a quiet, small town. The entire movie is set on many parts according to each character's subjective perspective, and in the end two characters, whose story was yet to tell, reveal themselves in a shooting and kill most of the students in the school. Van Sant's movie depicts how two young men perform an incursion in the high school carrying guns and explosives, and also that the two young men were playing FPS games on the computer just before the massacre. It is odd that the game footage that appears in the movie looks cartoonish, as the school

---

[16]Cf. The short Documentary entitled *First Person Shooter Sequence*, available in the Extras section of the *Doom* Film DVD release.

[17]There are things that can be hidden much better in the game's environment because the image, in its majority, is seen on 4:3 screens, whereas in cinema theaters, with widescreen perspective, in 16:9 format, there is not much to hide on the image, since the viewing angle is so wide that is not possible to hide whatsoever on the corners of the screen to surprise the viewer. Hence, in the cinematic version of the *FPS Unit*, the character that is simulated can have the weapon moving and not visible all the time, since there is more free space on the screen.
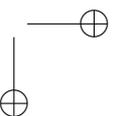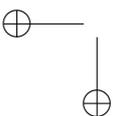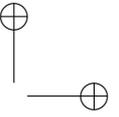
raid images are of a far more explicit graphic violence than in many games, namely those of the First Person Shooter genre.

Nevertheless the film director attempts to explain how the FPS is a form of incursion of violence in schools, among teenagers. The leading figures of the school raid enjoy violent videogames and plan to kill everybody at the building at that exact time. And in one of those tense sequences, Van Sant uses the subjective perspective so that every action on the movie, like the lobby sequence, is observed in the first person perspective as in the game the young snipers had player before the assault. In addition it can be said that this lobby option in the movie is an artistic quotation to the FPS games, in which the action is observed according to the *perspective device*. So it makes much sense that authors like Geoff King & Tanya Krzywinska refer that the FPS is also about a "'corridoring' of player movement" (2006: p.82), since that the typical gameplay of a FPS for the player is to wander around the architecture of the game, which in its turn requires the typical traveling in lobbies and halls (though it can be said either that the player is forced to choose certain paths).

Focused on the First Person Shooter problematic is a *X-Files* TV series episode as well, entitled *FPS*, written by William Gibson and Tom Maddox, that is an engaging fiction about the First Person Shooter. According to the story that the "FPS" enterprise designs videogames for first person gameplay inside a real playground. Things get complicated as in the middle of one game, party players die supposedly because an uncontrolled character does not corresponds to any player's control. The TV series leading characters, Mulder and Scully, are called in by the company to find out the whereabouts of the voluptuous Maitreya, the autonomous virtual character who gets inside the simulation and annihilates flawlessly all players with her sword. Until the end of the episode no one knows whether Maitreya is controlled by an addicted player, who was refusing reality, seeing the virtual as a unavoidable vice, or if, on the other side, she is a dangerous AI avatar generated within and by the simulation itself.

During all the First Person Shooter simulation there is a computerized device which puts all combat simulations ready and places in the scenic points guerilla units by insertion modules, which are, software. Mighty Maitreya remains heavily on the simulation, the seductive and homicide character thinks she owns the game, even saying at some point that "I am Maitreya. This is my
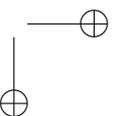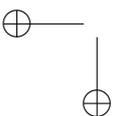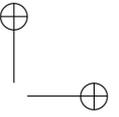
game". But for the protagonist Scully not even the FPS meaning is clear, until Mulder rephrases it as "videogames, digital entertainment".

For those who play the "FPS" the goal of the game is not to perish in the body count accumulated by Maitreya, along the game parties that occur in the simulation playground, whose images are seen on a projector. It all happens in the "gamespace". Simulation becomes uncontrollable and no player is able to beat Maitreya up, hence Daryl Musashi, which is an OG ("Original Guru"), is also called in as a FPS expert to play the game and beat her, yet he fails, ending in virtual death. Scully hates de FPS and thinks it is just a modern and futuristic version of the western movies' gun duels. At the core of the problem left to solve is a Maitreya that, besides being virtual, keeps killing human players, when in real world only guns kill people, not the images. On this point lies the contradiction, the *images of violence* become *violent images*.

Strange Days is another movie that pushes the platform of the First Person Shooter to new heights. It matters to say here how special is its introduction sequence, in which all action is seen through the burglar's eyes. Actually this sequence is a recording that a user is experiencing by playing it in the first person; such recording showed a failed robbery as the burglar who was trying to run away, fell off building's rooftop and died. Set in 1999 Los Angeles, two days before the millennial New Year's Eve for the year two-thousand, *Strange Days* tells the story of Lenny Nero, a former cop, dealing digital experiences recorded straight from the brain, called as "clips". In order to experience this kind of virtual reality sensitively, this type of subject reality in the first person, as it would be truly ours, the user must be hardwired to SQUID hardware (Super Conducting Quantum Interference Device), a discrete device connected to the brain initially designed for undetectable wiretapping cops. As for the introduction sequence that shows this futuristic virtual reality seen in the first person, in a "shooter" style, it occurs in the opening of the movie and starts with showing the burglar putting his mask on and holding a revolver. In this very fast images sequence we can see what really saw the person who recorded the experience, like the actual viewer of the recording sees for himself too. The perverse side of this kind of digital recording consists in the fact that it is possible to record everything, from pornography to explicit graphic violence situations, as well as reproducing this sort of footage endlessly in repetition as long as there is reproduction hardware available. Despite of the introduction
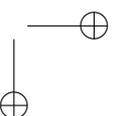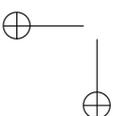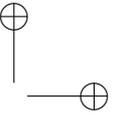
sequence which featuring the First Person Shooter, this kind of theme fades away along the movie, but it cannot stop being relevant.

2.7 MEDIUM CONFIGURATIONS

ONE of McLuhan's substantial thesis is that the "the medium is the message" (1994), which means media reconfigure messages in agreement with their protocols and specificities. This logic demands that every message gets the medium code "printed" on it, and that the medium determinate and provides the conditions for the message, as it imposes itself before the message. All relevance falls on the medium, not on the message, since messages circulate among and in the media which are preponderant. Each medium has its own special configuration and virally stands by carrying its code onto each message, so that each message loads in a pregnant manner, which follows the medium's code. In the end, media communicate media and not messages in an isolated and merely communicational point of view. Same is to say that it's the media reconfigurations that flow, in a contextual form, and not the contents; form beats content. States McLuhan that electricity is the only medium existing as pure information, whose role is determinant in the Electronic Revolution, for he adds that it is "(. . .) a medium without a message, as it were, unless it is used to spell out some verbal ad or name" (1994: p.8). Moreover, McLuhan says that "the 'content' of any medium is always another medium" (1994: p.8). Therefore the media are always important, because their contextual role takes them to prevail among future media, once that every new medium inserts itself among the logic of the previous one, in a progressive fashion.

McLuhan highlights that the only emphasis of messages is effects-related, as human environment reconfigurators, as media provoke behaviors raised by them. He calls a tension among perception and environment for being true that each time a technology is introduced it modifies environment and requires new sociability forms, for it changes the individual's perception by raising a perceptive change after a technological change. A previous medium of communication becomes visible as a next-generation medium of communication is released, that we can see clearly, here, inside each medium lays upon the previous one. It is typically modern that new forms of sociability come out ev-

LabCom Books
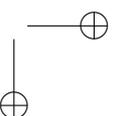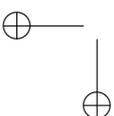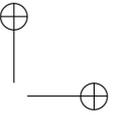
ery time new media come out too, turning the human environment into a new one as it unveils itself as a counterpart to what was previously established.

Guilds and other types of communities become noticeable after being unnoticed before and thus now are purposely designed as such. Within this mcluhanesque theoretical framework, cyberspace is foreseen as an ultimate landmark where all previously created technologies are relevant as long as they extend by technical prosthesis human skills.

The "electric information environment" (1989: p.5) has its impact because it changes human condition, the way it was established before, and in the human environment as it was known until the release of new technology and/or media. Retribalizing human come into being precisely as sensibility is modified by the new media that favor the appearing communities and guilds. So the tribal and the civilized are thus called in this technical and mediatic frame, exacerbating the feeling of belonging to a community with a renowned identity. Thanks to the configurations, each medium introduces in human's regular routines.

Retreating communities celebrate the admittance of new communities. What happens with the player of First Person Shooters is exactly the following; the retreat he performs on real communities coincides with his integration in online communities. These communities share the same taste for simulation, videogames and for the virtual space experience, accusing in themselves the symptoms of a retribalism as defended by McLuhan, in the sense that they come back to orality and to a tactile aspect of the pictorial space. Even the form how they understand their new "return to the pedestrian scale" of the FPS is post-geographic; it is a return to the ground, to the deserted scenery which is perfect for the construction of a renewed identity. Network communities and guilds, clans and tribes as those appear aggregated to the network videogame, namely the First Person Shooter, since they understand cyberspace as a space of identities, subjectivities and culture to share. The logic of these communities is one of reconfiguration, of communication lines, not the kind of forced hierarchy, as the effective code is the medium's, of cyberspace; the contemporary "electric information environment".
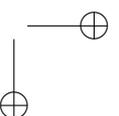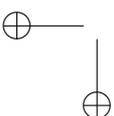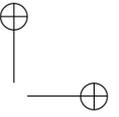
2.8 TYPOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY: BEYOND CHAT

IN the First Person Shooter there are MUDs (Multi-User Displays) that have been created for online conversation channels, where the specific typographic practices are exercised too. These displays, in the FPS, allow players to play online, being invited to users whom play in the parties that eventually become players, and also there are players who become users only after interacting with those online conversation displays. The core question in this phenomenon has to do with the fact that we are beyond chat, because the game MUDs call for writing skills, conversation, as well as very peculiar interaction abilities, enhancing the social side of cyberspace by multiplayer modes. It is possible to accept that there is a relation between certain kinds of typographic practices in the topography of cyberspace, since that in the *machine-place* of cyberspace, in its *topos* of *graphya*, the gathering of *user-players* cultivate a feeling of belonging to a community already lost in reality. Sustaining that "space is a fundamental axis of the discursive organization" (Mourão, 2005: p.66) makes sense as it is considered that cyberspace is a zone of social organization. Identifying the type of discourse requires identifying the kind of space its organization. Space is coordinated by the axis of the virtual in cyberspace and it determines the "enunciation flux" (Esperança, 2005: p.106); until it is verified, especially in the FPS, a "new proxemic" (*Idem*, *Ibidem*: p.107) as the outcome of centrifugal dynamics of the multiplayer interaction.

It is not odd that authors as Jesper Juul, in *Half-Real – Video Games Between Real Rules And Fictional Worlds*, say the FPS "*Counter-Strike* is an important incentive to community building – being part of a community will make you a better player" (2005: p.91). Online communities solidify their social structure by sharing their interests on ludological matters; that is to say, they subsist by sharing interest on the digital ludic culture. Because the FPS is seen in the first person it enhances "each one's" participation in a "whole".

Typing is, as in the interactive game, a way for the *user-players* to meet each other and to meet other people, to share the same personal and cultural interests. An entire discursive network exist working on during a game party, underlying its map, no to mention that every message is archived in these

LabCom Books
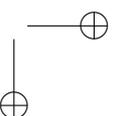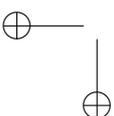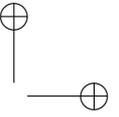
MUDs, which undoubtedly are places for debate, social interaction, and just for merely ludic purposes.

Due to this merge of digital typographies and topographies, it is estimated that online relationships need time to take effect, those "agencements" in the cybernetic space. Following this, game MUDs, in this case of the First Person Shooter, are very much relevant because they're also places for identity production, for growing specific communities. *User-players* see in this manner their identities being shared and called in for hybrid hardware/software environments; from where new *typos* of ludic collectivities arise based on online social relations, for which the typographic practice finds in the digital's topography its native space.

One may say that instantaneous text cohabits with the game's immediate action, concerning the prevailing image plasticity in the FPS videogame. Out of the sum of these two parts emerges a third component. Defined by Geoff King & Tanya Krzywinska as a "playable-text", the third component is referred in the following excerpt like this:

> "What is required here, as generally in the study of games, is analysis of the game-as-playable-text – the material offered by the game itself – and consideration of a number of different ways in which the same game text might be experienced from one occasion to another" (2006: p.65).

Out of the addition of topography with typography in the videogame stands out this "game-as-playable-text" concept, therefore it is important as a sum of space and writing towards a form of playing text. In case we decide to analyze carefully a videogame, there is no need to be an expert to do so, we notice that 3D games have always been "playable-texts", because the images we see flowing in the game are a consequence of the encoding inherent to the graphic engine. This way, in its deep, text has always been the basis for 3D images, so it is not strange at all that First Person Shooters which permit opening windows for instant messaging while players play the game are, of course, obviously beyond chat. "Such a mutation in language matches the replacement of utopia, which happens in the time, whereas heterotopias happen in space" (Cascais, 2005: p.262)[18]. Exchanging utopia for heterotopia [in this case] means that what has not occurred yet in space through writing finds refuge in an appropriate space, another space.

---

[18]This translation from the Portuguese edition is mine.
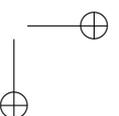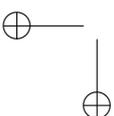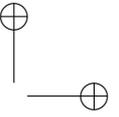
What is going on in the MUDs of the FPS games, if I may use an expression of Scott Bukatman (1993), is nothing more but an effective "terminal identity", in other words, identities that only exist inside computer terminals. Such *shared identities* react against each other, given the amount of *user-players* online, and they're the destiny, the end of a cross-network lineage; staying all the time in a terminal updating in a cyberspace which gathers different topographies and typographies. Michael Matias (2004), in the text "Preliminary Poetics For Interactive Drama And Games", says about the player of First Person Shooters that he is:

> "(...) able o move about this environment from a first-person point of view, gesture and pick up objects, and converse with the other characters by typing. The computer-controlled characters look differently out of the screen to gesture and talk to the player. The conversation discourse is real-time; that is, if the player is typing (. . .)" (2004: p.30).

Exercised in game MUDs, namely the MMOFPS (Massively Multiplayer Online First Person Shooters), the "terminal identity" provides interaction with the game scenery as a set of simulation, as well as permitting chat between other *user-players*, with the goal of cementing peculiar community feelings. Instead of dealing with other users in chat MUDs through typographic practices (typing, text editing, reading and organizing ideas), the user can simply play. By playing he becomes above all a player, hence the term I use, *user-player*, then make sense, for the conversation completes the ludic interaction, though never is the priority. The purpose in most of the games is to help finding team elements and foes along the game, as well as to customize the ludic side of the First Person Shooter. Let's not forget that it also helps to make stronger *user-players* groups that constitute virtual communities, henceforth based on walking through 3D digital worlds.

If in the chat MUDs users were exercising their alternative identities in online communities, in the FPS MUDs *user-players* can easily customize their social presence in cyberspace. We cannot be surprised as *user-players* get new virtual *alter-egos*, game characters extremely similar to themselves or totally different, depending on the option they did.

Multi-User Dungeons And Alternate Identities (1996) is the online text in which Howard Rheingold speaks about the classic chat MUDs and states that in relation to alternative identities "MUDs are evidence that text still has

LabCom Books
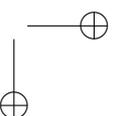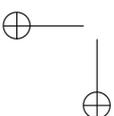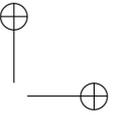
its powers, even in this highly visual era" (1996). Of course that Rheingold places MUDs in confrontation with other more visual media, though it does not cease to be interesting that he also thinks the strongest component in MUDs is definitely text, thus underlining the typographic practice in an age when all virtual topographies seem pervasive. The answer is that in MUDs lie singularizing forms conceived for new identities, subjectivities that articulate in technical spaces. On the First Person Shooters the interactive image is the epicenter of experience, yet on the other hand, if games allow typing to team-mates online throughout the game, it legitimates and confirms the text-component. In this way, it provides the alternative identity shared in cyberspace, a graphical legitimacy. Within this optics, games like *Quake* with its *Quakespace*, call for a player who uses technology and who also types, chats and exercises his identity, partaking it with an online community. On this matter, Steven Johnson, in *Interface Culture*, alleges that: "the architecture of that virtual space doesn't 'frame' the conversation – it's a central component of it" (1997: p.73). We may say that the virtual space does not enframe a gathering point for certain online social practices. A virtual space is a privileged discursive place.

The linearization imposed by typographic technology and the establishment of how type becomes publishing, meets in the FPS an echo. Playing in 3D photorealistic arena, regarding by means of communication by typing, is to call on typographic practices that were thought to be not as advanced as image. Hence the convincing videogame that rescues, in an appropriate place, a kind of happening, the gesture of typing associated with the publishing event. Along with an online game party, played in cyberspace's *semi-public space*, the player becomes a writer and subverts somehow a fast medium. Under this logic, a typographic practice is retrieved from the ludic digital environment's topography, as well as a communicative modality which parasites the portliness of the virtual. Although it is of an utmost pertinence how writing returns to the computerized audiovisual world, not thanks to its uniqueness, but to its light register, its humble technical and mnemonic demands concerning software and hardware. Opening this path, the gigantic gear of the virtual not only it does not eclipse the typographic practice, as it legitimates, in the multiplayer game mode, so to consolidate a community feeling, again based on words; in sum, in the act of writing and typing.
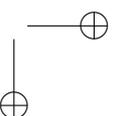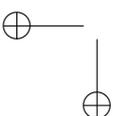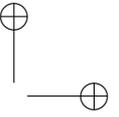
In chat channels, typing, as it appears in videogames just to endow the electronic real with some sense, and as a form of assuring the *socius* in cyberspace, leaving behind intelligible and shared records. More than playing, the *user-player* that has fun plays and uses the space of technique, shares his online identity, in words and actions configured in displays of technical nature. Geoff King & Tanya Krzywinska think these displays, these communication modes designed mostly for participation, promote a shared language which helps highlighting players as a subsection of society. For this to be the case, they add that "becoming acquainted with the language of gaming and sharing experiences with other gamers creates a sense of *shared identity* and interest" (2006: p.220).

To think on the First Person Shooter is to think on a new ludological structure that takes *user-players* to play (*paidea*) with a refigured reality, whether it is at a typographic level, or at an info-graphic level, pretty much similar to Gutenberg's printed book. Whereas in the narrative procedures, reader and writer stand far from the reference mentioned in typographic representation, in cyberspace, where technical multiplicity and digital uniformization are merged, something similar takes place, as the *user-player* gets so faraway from the real as the programmer. However, the major difference is that both can have access to the same medium at the same time, interacting with other *user-players*. Besides that, refigured reality occurring on the virtual world of the First Person Shooter needs a common typography, the end line for every recent typographic practice, in MUD format, chats and other systematized applications for typographic practices. If it is true that a great part of online game users, especially FPS players, enjoy installing instant messaging software and running it in the background of the game, it is also true that both merge up in the FPS, but not that often and as useful as in *Counter-Strike*. One may say that there is a return to the word; we're going back for the type, a whole writing linearization practice, as the virtual reaches an outstanding degree of realism it is upon word that we ask for the real "reality check", considering the virtual *status quo*; which in its turn derives from the digital world's topographies.

The greater violence is not even if the *user-player* stops interacting with the FPS, it is rather when he stops typing to whoever is playing online with him. Because the suspension of typing means the player is leaving the virtual world, as seen as a grotesque goodbye or an abrupt exit from the cyber-spatial

LabCom Books
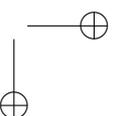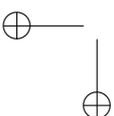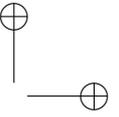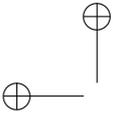
topography; where exactly the typographic makes the difference one can say because the online universe is optimized and conceived for images and not much for the time-demanding writing.

On this sequence of events it is clear that the programmer has a privileged role, since he is the one who writes the 3D environment, who programs and encodes it, yet under the penalty of becoming hostage of all the panoply of technical displays. It is not by chance that there is a significative margin between designers and 3D game programmers, concerning the script and the story authorship. The reason behind such abyss is that those who plan digital simulation's topography got away through the graphic plasticity from the communication and confidence space provided by typing. Script and story authors' role is only that of making text returning back to the machine where it came from. One also has to highlight that most recent First Person Shooters emerge above all as the game narratives and the programming/*mise-en-scène* achieves outstanding quality levels. It is underlined, in this manner, that communicational involvement, and the next-generation videogames realism, is possible we thanks much more to the invisible or obvious component of typing than to the broadband graphics plasticity.

It is in such context that when McLuhan mentions the Industrial Revolution and the whole Gutenberg's technology, hence entitled as "galaxy", considers that "movable type was archetype and prototype for all subsequent industrial development" (1994-98). Logically that even in cyberspace, in full electronic revolution, what occurs in this sector is that we see text not getting eclipsed by sound or image, and even less by connectivity, as it remained ever since in the entire industrial machine, whether it is in the electric, electronic or cybernetic machine. Text's logical procedures are sustaining all software, graphics and technical protocols. The *typos* archetype gives birth to every consequent mechanism and writing does not disappear, in the sense that writing was the first form of image-building. As it is remarkably said by Flusser, "writing is a metacode of image" (1985: p.16)[19]. In other words, the technical images are the continuation of evolved texts. The Galaxy is simply being reconfigured upon new images and new texts, in new *topos* (common places) and *typos* (models).

---

[19]*Idem, Ibidem.*
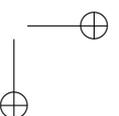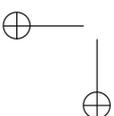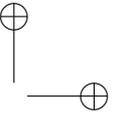
Inside the reconfiguration process clearly defined by Marshall McLuhan in *La Galaxie de Gutenbergue* what matters is the technological shift triggered by typography and which later reveals itself, in my perspective, in compartmentation and in linearization, respectively in the Industrial Revolution and in the Electronic Revolution, where electricity is obviously crucial. However, in *Understanding Media* (1994), when McLuhan defends that communication media are over imposing the structural form on content, he affirms clearly that communication media formats communication much more than just being message carriers. In the First Person Shooter the online game phenomenon is important, it shows sharply that it is one format of interacting with the virtual and how digital topography is useful for *user-players* to interact among themselves, which are relevant.

Despite McLuhan did not had dedicated any chapter in his essays on media specifically to the digital computer, the latter never stopped being the object portraying modern technological change and that embodies a specific type of communication. The computer is its own message, its own environment, and cyberspace is the communication format that matters to review, because of its peculiar attributes, among many are its calculation skills, is worth it associations, imports and several pertinent applications. Not only the computer recovers typographic practices, namely with the advent of the Internet, which were set numb by the rising television establishment in the 20th century; as in the other hand it restores a sort of public discourse on a *semi-public space*, but of a digital kind. McLuhan's work consisted on studying the transition from the analogical to the digital, the Gutenberg's Galaxy reconfiguration implicit in those successive technological transformations.

Let's see how important it is that for McLuhan the best way to analyze culture is to examine its communication instruments. In contemporary times if communication instruments work upon the assumption that there is a storm-like cultural shift, and within a nearly constant modernizing technical frame, it might mean that it is necessary a type of sociability. The First Person Shooter case shows that communication has a format of its own, the exuberant 3D realistic environments recreate spaces where *user-players* can interact and talk, but, above all, write to each other, exchange information about third parties in that enormous predation space that we know as cyberspace. The profile of typing is that of a conversation instrument, though it allows planning and hunting operations, adventure and fight, given that the space of the First Per-

LabCom Books
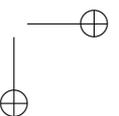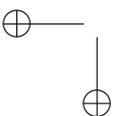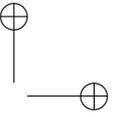
son Shooter is a violent ground, where whoever haves fun communicates too, keeps in touch and answers with its own kind of registers. Being eternally viewer or user is not the objective in this kind of media; it is, in sum, to reach the level of a communication operator or the level of game party leader, with the purpose of dethroning clans and capturing enemy flags.

Like in the MUDs, Turkle spoke so much about, playing a FPS in the first person is to become integrated in digital's topography, not just by writing, but also through typing, so it is the role of images, to verify the identity shared in the network. If typing helps *user-players* getting enlightened, images confirm and elucidate their telepresence in cyberspace. As in MUDs the user which was typing imagined the Other on the other side of the screen, there was already a discursive cutting; in the FPS, when we play it online, the *user-player* who makes speeches and appears, is a graphical product and not just because of its online typing. Once that writing was the only vehiculation available for imaginary worlds, until the appearance of other media, in the interactive digital media, such as games, the typographic component remains underlying like an ultimate portal left open to another dimension, the classic vehiculation fashion that the audiovisual apparatus solidified. But the textual machine and the typographic practice remain, in an apparently residual form, a preponderant role in the entrance to the virtual. Through such logic, even in interactive and de-linearized environments, despite the sequences had been overtaken by multiplicities; it still remains an absorbing totality dimension, a matrix frame. We conclude, this way, that the enunciation models available are juxtaposed, despite the audiovisual apparatus obtaining a clear powerful position. Typographic enunciation has been graphic ever since, and if such enunciation remains in cyberspace, though more hanged on the visual component, the textual dimension does not vanish because it enhances the graphic domain, by checking it.

## 2.9   THE MATRIX – A SUBJECTIVE LANDSCAPE

E VER since *Neuromancer* (1984), William Gibson's novel, that the "Matrix" concept is well-known. Actually it was mentioned a year after *Neuromancer* in the short-story *Burning Chrome* (1985), by the same author. And what happens to both science-fiction texts is that the *Matrix* is
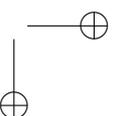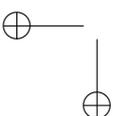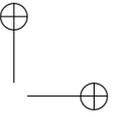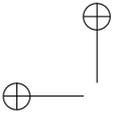
seen as a technical structure holding up connections, the connectivity behind every data representation stored on a computer, and that surprisingly has its origins in videogames. *The Matrix* would act as a sort of simulator, hence Gibson mentions in *Burning Chrome* the "Matrix simulator". It is understood that Gibson refers himself to equipment which would grant the access to cyberspace. Such a structure, in which a matrix of simulations would sustain cyberspace, in fact is the present time that we can find reality in FPS videogames, the domain where *user-player* accesses by means of software to environments that, once they're online, they become the true essence of gibsonian cyberspace. As we interact with an online FPS Gibson's ideas seem clear, because the *user-player* surfs in a machine-generated three-dimensional territory, programmed for the machine, yet it is not experienced in an objective form, but in a subjective one. It means that interacting with the "Matrix simulator" forecast by Gibson, the relation between player and cyberspace is a subjectivity-based relationship. Same is to say that the *Matrix* is a *subjective landscape*, so it depends on how the subject respects, or not, the rules (*ludus*) of that very same *Matrix*. Henceforth, as the subject behaves in cyberspace so the final result shall differ in a type of more specific audiovisual experience.

The Matrix is comprehended as a *subjective landscape* since it depends on a series of variables. In the first place it is equipment-dependent, concerning hardware available for the *user-player*, and then it depends on the videogame, its version, and on his behavior at the time of the interaction. So the access to the "Matrix simulator" as announced by Gibson, is subjective, personal, private, singular, despite the entire connectivity which is required by getting plugged into the global, the online collective, which is predicted in the objective programming. Resuming, cyberspace is what you contemplate as you "enter in the Matrix". One may also accept cyberspace as a mnemonic space of events, a digital territory where all processed, accessed and registered data which leaves a record behind. That record handles everything which happens at an informative and graphic level in cyberspace, where all things occurring possess characteristics of a certain kind of graphic eventuality, thus cyberspace would be the most geographic version of the entire "Matrix simulator" existing only in the domain of the virtual. The *graphic behavior* of the programmed entities and the staged situations in the digital ground make this territory to become a sort of *ultimate graphical event*.

LabCom Books
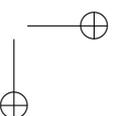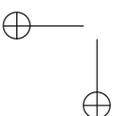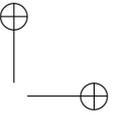
By logic a certain opening for the subject exists in cyberspace, a purposely receptivity at the entrance of the *sliced reality*, as if it would be truly possible to subjectively glimpse the wholeness of cyberspace with all its users plugged in. For that reason the cybernetic space when it is introduced in *Neuromancer*, and emphasized in *Burning Chrome*, has a certain attribute of metatopia, for being shown as a probable continuation of our contemporary technological world; an anticipation of a future yet to unfold, a time in which subjectivity would tune-up in an optimum way with the "Matrix simulator"'s objectivity, finally cyberspace on the whole.

First Gibson started by referring the term "cyberspace" in *Neuromancer* and later in *Burning Chrome* as a piece of equipment, necessary hardware to get online in the *Matrix*. Says a character in *Burning Chrome* that: "I knew every chip in Bobby's simulator by heart; it looked like your workaday Ono-Sendai VII. The *Cyberspace Seven* (. . .)" (1985). In this excerpt Gibson means the "Cyberspace Seven" as a simulations console. The explanation is that there was no other possible way to swiftly get into the *Matrix*'s *subjective landscape* composed by "Sim Stim" (the acronym for "Simulated Stimulations"). So far, the *Matrix* would provide seeing cyberspace in a frame of an illusively infinite space, a cybernetic ground where the representations of *user-players* would be hosted. Interacting with *user-players* was the only form to deal with these representations, and for that playing with them was absolutely necessary, as well as using the same software applications, hence the *user-player* concept.

On this path the subject who interacts with cyberspace is confronted with an other space, an alterity space where other *user-players*, which share the same illusion of space, get online in the common network in order to find a stimulation which does not exist in the real space. It's like stimulation found out in a heterotopic space, somewhere. About the heterotopic space, Cascais defends that it is a "(. . .) space we create, 'it is this where we stand on yet it is occupied in another way', precisely this other one" (2005: p.262)[20].

Space is occupied in a different way because it is made out of information, in the case of cyberspace, demanding a new type of proxemic communication and telecommunication. Within this extent, the *Matrix* would permit a symbolic data representation, of the paths in Virtual Reality's cyberspace

---

[20]*Idem, Ibidem.*
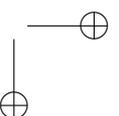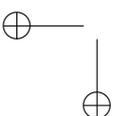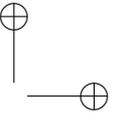
in interaction with the subject. Nevertheless the major question launched by Gibson in his fictions is this one: "how should be information represented in cyberspace?" Put another way the question is: "how should cyberspace look like?" And, in my perspective, cyberspace appears early defined as "a silver tide of phosphenes boiled across my field of vision as the matrix began to unfold in my head, a 3-D chessboard, infinite and perfectly transparent" (1987). According to Gibson, the *Matrix*'s *subjective landscape* was understood as a translucid, geometric, vectorial, digital space, granting the illusion of infinite space. Cyberspace was then seen as a grid incrusted with geometries left to walk trough, a "simulated stimulation" unmatched in the real world, based on an information system designed for sudden and volatile interactions. Within contemporary VR project of the FPS all of these principles are respected in each game design process.

However, under Gibson's logic, for the illusion of space to be believable the underlying architecture would stand out. Due to the towers and data fields in which extend onto the non-colored "Matrix simulator"'s "non-space". Gibson describes that hallucination space of the *Matrix* again in *Burning Chrome* (1985), where he points out that "(. . .) towers and fields of it ranged in the colorless non-space of the simulation matrix, the electronic consensus-hallucination that facilitates the handling and exchange of massive quantities of data" (1985). So a "non-space" notion of the "Matrix Simulator" would work out as something conceptually coherent, a kind of cosy spot, a space designed to welcome *user-players* ready to look after something more than the material thing in the *Matrix*, something closer to maternity; a sphere of protection. I would like to add that in the FPS of our time what the *user-players* look for is precisely that zone of protection, the virtual dome where a monitored-danger can be found, a "simulated stimulation" is able to bring peace; to make us forget the real, until cyberspace becomes the ideal *vehiculation space*.
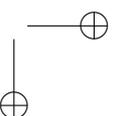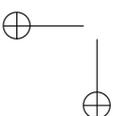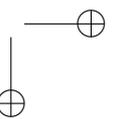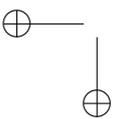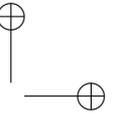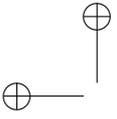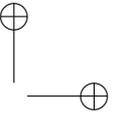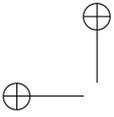
Chapter 3

MACHINE-SUBJECTIVITY

3.1 THE TRAJECTIVE SUBJECT

As we examine the First Person Shooter from the subjectivity point of view, all that stands out besides its technical apparatus is always its subjectivity without subject, or, in last instance, a *machine-aided subjectivity*; handled more by machine than by subject. In this regard, subjectivity is a *machine-subjectivity*, because it submits the subject to a geometric trajectories display. Subject becomes a hostage held within a machine *vehiculation space*. Thanks to cyberspace, within itself, an environment which can only be analyzed as it requires a course, a trajectory for action. Thus Geoff King & Tanya Krzywinska, (2003) speak about the "'corridoring' of player movement" (2006: p.82). It is understood that the subject stand on the *user-player's* condition is a *trajective subject*, a subject whose condition depends on the exercise of the trajectory, on its discovery.

It's the subject's assignment in the FPS to blend with images, since the hand that accuses his presence in cyberspace is the evidence that subject and space share the same code, the same digital language, and that is effective in the connections and in all instances which applies to the machine-space of cyberspace. Whether we mention the subject or the FPS cyberspace both spheres share the same charts, the territory of the virtual, of computerized images and sound, the same virtual ground built upon "machine-images". The subject turned into a *trajective subject* re-examines himself in a comfortable
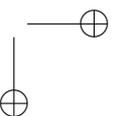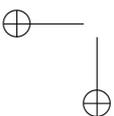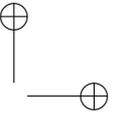
images package that get him numb, yet at the same time they invite him to step in an universe yet to explore where the *art of hunting* is necessary. This is why, for example in *Counter-Strike*, players implement the "camping" strategy: after a flaming war they wait stealthily in certain spots of the map for the enemy to show up. We comprehend that in the "'First Person Shooters', some players tend to contain a number of 'choke points'. These are locations on a specific game level or map where opposing teams tend to meet in decisive confrontations" (Jesper Juul, 2005: p.108-109).

Trajective subject is a subject which exercises his subjectivity along the trajectory. Traveling within the pre-established virtual architectures of the FPS the subject is clearly contended with a scenography contemplated in perspective due to the images weaved by the graphic engine. The problem is that as the subject enters in the visibility scope of the virtual character, that is an extension of him in the game, he is willing to refuse his own real perspective. And the *trajective subject* of the FPS is a subject who enjoys the discovery exercise (*paidea*) in the game environment, which gives in to the FPS subjective virtual reality, until the perspective inherent to the FPS, digital world becomes more desirable; the *trajective subject* gives prominence to a *machine-subjectivity*, nearly loosing himself and getting mixed up with the virtual imagery. In the case of interacting with an FPS the only bridge available between real and virtual is for sure the indicating hand featured in the game, which demonstrates that there is somebody halfway between the real and the virtual, who does not fully steps into the virtual and who does not entirely refuses the real. One is in the middle, in the course, in the trajectory, on the run. So the question of the subjectivity is residual all the time, and it almost manifests itself with no real subject, for it confines itself to the role of an unstable and self-centered subject, a subject which is a course; henceforth resigned to the dynamic condition of being a hunter.

According to Edmond Couchot, before the technologies of the virtual the subject never stops being a *trajective subject* who remains interfaced. We can say that he is a rather different condition in relation to the condition implicit in the dycotomical subject-object relation. It means that the *trajective subject* does not maintain a distinctive relationship between himself and the object, in this case the virtual world of FPS imageries. Inside cyberspace the *trajective subject* has no precisely defined borders thus unable to separate the real from the virtual, for it is part of the condition of experiencing
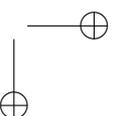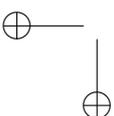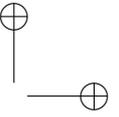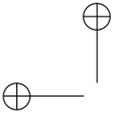
the path that very same border blur, since it is presented something infinite as the electronic desert. Reminding the notion of infiniteness, of "unthinkable complexity", provided by Gibson (1984), we understand that it makes the "interfaced subject" (Couchot, 1998) to be held hostage of the interface and giving in to cyberspace's topological and labyrinthic structure. Exactly at this tension frame between the real and the virtual Couchot defends that the "equipped subject" (with virtual's technical processes) is simultaneously getting assistance and being absorbed by technology. Technique already corrupted his subjectivity. The whole *trajective subject*'s subjectivity no longer looks like the sole expression of the Self, of the consciousness; it is defined by the technique which permits and sustains an exercise of wandering in the virtual (that, in my point of view, slowly becomes a predation, a hunting, violent exercise). In the text *Tecnologias da Simulação – Um Sujeito Aparelhado* (1988), Couchot says that the numerical gear weaves a staged subjectivity, that it borrows subjectivity from the subject. This is how today's audiovisual, virtuality displays, incorporate the subject, equipping him to be useful so that the devices accomplish their purpose of shaping the subject.

The First Person Shooter is the ultimate ludic device, the next-generation virtual environment sustaining the "subjective computing" dimension, inseparable from virtual imagery and that cannot hide the stealth, predatory, voyeuristic and manipulative character. Therefore it is part of the ludological structure of the FPS that very predatory nature of the images which rescue the wandering at a "pedestrian scale", calling for a reconnaissance and a field inspection in order to end the game. Being able to deceive the subject until he feels immersed on the architectonic walk trough its part of the FPS imagery paraphernalia too. One is aware that in the contemplated images not only is realism lead from real images, as the realism from the real subject itself is lead to the virtual too. Within such struggle, the First Person Shooter lays down as a condition that the subject is trajective in the sense that the gamespace, the cyberspace left to unveil, is built for the real subject and in the real topological world (the hardware lies always in physics). The outcome of this equipment of technique is the unlikely chance to know for sure what is real and what it is not, whether in space or the subject.

With the cyberspace available in the FPS one gets into the third generation of "machine-images", a domain where no longer exists a subject defined as such, but rather a mediated subjectivity. Since halfway between the virtual

LabCom Books
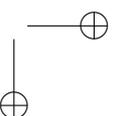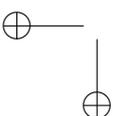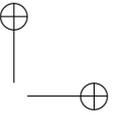
territory without a total map, and the real world, lies the subject contended with a restlessness that puts him in a position of constant redefinition. In another word, due to overloads of the "machine-images" the subject inherits the inconstancy of those very images, the respective permanent need for an update. On this extent Couchot declares that the subject is "forced to constantly redefine himself before the image as a 'subject'" (1998: p.23)[1]. One infers of Couchot's words that in fact the *trajective subject* exhibits behavior characteristics usually in virtual images, which means a shift in the exercise of his subjectivity. Given that the virtual images plasticity requires a response from the subject, and consider himself cannot compete with them, he then redefines himself in *scopophilia* and wandering operations in order to achieve a redefinition of a subjectivity already captured by the virtual.

For this to be the case, looking at the hand of the *trajective subject* in the image that we have seen in first person on the FPS, is the same to watch a tactility residue, a token of a hunting-related behavior and its courses, shootings and fights. It is not due to chance that the weapon already turned into an aesthetic scheme, being also captured inside the virtual, thus this system of viewing 3D virtual landscapes becomes a convention. Nobody shoots something else in an environment and experiences that place later. Now the "nonplace" of virtual images gets mature and no more resistance to the virtual's graphic kingdom is favored. The realism borrowed by the FPS from the real is so stunning that all characters and 3D environments are "auratic" as they return to us at our gaze in a disturbing manner, there is an aura in those digital puppets whose manipulation strings remain unnoticeable, a disconcerting authenticity.

By fighting 3D images of the virtual environment, the *trajective subject* faces a new technologically-mediated subjectivity. First Person Shooter's virtual reality validates the existence of substitute subjectivity, because cyberspace is not only a *vehiculation space*, a space of simulation of the real space based upon mimetics (*mimicry*), it is a substitution space instead. For this to be the case, the *trajective subject* ceases to be a user in order to become a *user-player*, somebody in the condition of redefining himself as a subject before the real, someone who prefers to be interfaced and absorbed by a supplanting, replacing, universe. That is how the real no longer looks interesting

---

[1]*Idem, Ibidem.*
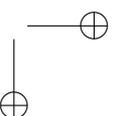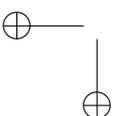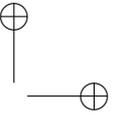
in comparison with the virtual world of the FPS, because on this extent the *user-player* practices a type of subjectivity by interacting with images which respond to human commands. Finally, the question of control is pertinent though it does not explain it all, since in the FPS the subject is more a trajectory than a subject, precisely due to the scenic tracks compelling him to move images and himself on the latter, as in the real and physic world he stays put then the whole predetermined time demanded for the interaction.

3.2   SYNTHESPIANS

I F there is a designated space that is common to the entire digital universe, to every 3D representation, to all videogames and, mostly, relatively to the FPS, that is because of the characters moving along that space there is something wrong, in fact they're a new type of puppets moving on their own. Each character on stage, in a FPS, seems to have its own life, distinctive behaviors, attributes borrowed from the real world. Though in its essence these puppets, whose strings remain unnoticeable, do not act or perform; they just work in a sort of digital event, a *graphical event* that occurs just like it was programmed to do so. As Jesper Juul (2005) summarizes, "games are events".

Under the spotlight is the kind of presence that those puppets, figures built based upon real images and illustrations, acquire as they move in cyberspace. Realism in the FPS image obtains such scale that images themselves become a pure alterity, a provoked existence thanks to calculation and geometry, the well-succeeded implementation of substitution and simulation techniques. Let's not forget that Atkins (2003) already mentioned the "process of othering" (*otherness*) which is turned on in the FPS, in the puppets that move exhibiting alterity in cyberspace. This way, "dolls" are not what matters but rather the digitally calculated puppets, copying in some aspects the real almost as if there is a sort of *graphic behavior*. And such behavior implies a new type of bearing vector, since that the images envisioned as streaming out of the screens, in the golden age of the VR prototype, start imploding and absorb the real, contained in the FPS cyberspace. A world is hidden inside the FPS screens, which is a world activated in a suspicious way, a cyberspace fully-equipped with realistic puppets whose space happens to match the very digital writable medium itself. The *graphical behavior* of these puppets is so

LabCom Books
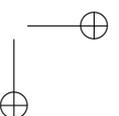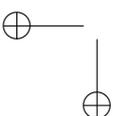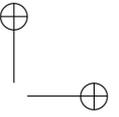
convincing that it seems more like an alterity seized by cyberspace. Hence the *user-player* gets invited to recognize the puppets working in this FPS cyberspace.

In an arena abundantly supplied of *graphical behavior*s, as it is cyberspace, virtual reality is thus effects-driven. Notorious is that such virtual reality is an effects-driven reality, as it is clearly shown in the *Black* FPS by resembling spectacle-situations. What is amazing in the FPS is how its primary attribute, in relation to special effects, is put side by side with the behavior of every graphic on stage, where drama has its apotheosis overall when hardware and software make all things possible, as we see for ourselves in *Half-Life*, for instance. Myron Krueger's "responsive environments" idea has a direct match in the First Person Shooter, because it is the field of computation where the *military-image*, representation, programming and entertainment converge into, generating an *ultimate graphical event*. Total attraction is on, because nothing else was left, cartography and calculation predict all that happens and responds on stage at a scenic and audiovisuals' point of view.

Another characteristic of this space prone to autonomous puppets is that as the *user-player* alienates himself from the real world in order to dedicate to the discovery of the virtual environment of the FPS, he may finish a game, but above all he becomes forever endowed with skills to repeat the whole course, expects that something new, sudden and unpredictable might happen. So the *user-player* knows that interacting with those realistic puppets in the First Person Shooter can be interesting in a second time or even more, under the "Replay" logic (to repeat) and the "Restart" logic (start from the beginning). Logics as these are only possible as there is always the chance to reload again in cyberspace and restart the whole "Matrix Simulator" of the puppets on stage, because software permits built-in "Reloading". Behind the re-run possibility stands the further examination, the chance to play and restart the game level in the FPS is attached to the fact of existing in the game, as a *graphics depository*, an unstoppable nature in the information which is not fully controlled by the *user-player*. It has its acme from online gaming, in the multiplayer mode, where information proceeds as the last instance from one direction to another, until there is no way to know for sure which player is an ingenious AI program or a less clever human. The evolution level of the on-stage puppets in today's First Person Shooter leaves any *user-player* perplexed, for the programmers who like to keep everything in mind to make the great *graphical*
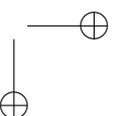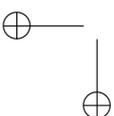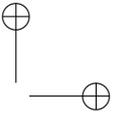
event perfect, thus making hard to know who is human or what actually is a
"synthespian" (William Gibson, 1998: p.75.), a synthetic "tespian" (doll), as
for each player all the other characters are seen from the outside; they are al-
ways the "others". Under this perspective the player maintains a relationship
only with images, constructs, mediated subjectivities, digital representations.
Machine-subjectivity occurs within the frame of an artificial alterity provided
by cyberspace.

A major question about cyberspace is that, like the science-fiction au-
thors suggested, it has its own type of place, and it is raised upon graphic
representations. In First Person Shooters *user-players* get face-to-face with
a set of plays, narrative details, argument, objects behavior, sceneries and
programmed figures, which demonstrate the spatial, territorial nature of cy-
berspace. Moreover, these are the attributes of a cybernetic space that primar-
ily is a depository for semi-autonomous collected representations. It means
that all that happens inside cyberspace unfolds just how it was programmed,
predicted, specified, but since the "Matrix simulator" today is more evolved
than it was two decades ago, videogames like the FPS manage to absorb and
attract the *user-player* to get addicted in its precise kind of representations.
Thing like these happen because "games are formal systems that provide in-
formal experiences" (2005: p.120), as Jesper Juul defends. In other words, the
game's objectivity provides a subjectivity experience for the *user-player*, one
of the antipodes of the equation has straight implications onto another.

Never is too much to say that the FPS is the elected videogame genre to
better impose the Virtual Reality formula and make the *user-player* enter in a
great *graphical event*. Playing and experiencing a FPS is, so, to accept con-
templating cyberspace from within, one sees every data representation in the
first person. *User-player* contemplates a kind of space which is in fact a me-
dia format, a type of communication medium, information technology, every
time he is in the digital ground. On this extent, Lev Manovich says in *The
Language of New Media* (2001), that what is going on is that "for the first
time, space becomes a 'media type'" (p.251). In short, notions of space and
territoriality surrender unequivocally to communication systems, they became
communication by-products. As an outcome of this transformation, because
there is no longer a clear zone opposing between subject and image, the sub-
ject becomes an object too in a space that is hijacked by image. It is deduced
so that, before such situation, the subject lets himself play indefinitely un-

LabCom Books
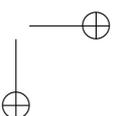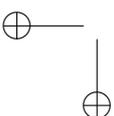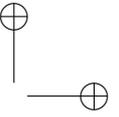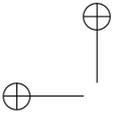
til he finds out a potential exit from the virtual, playing on the First Person
Shooter till he gets over with every obstacle remaining in the cyber-spatial
arena, where all animated objects are actually a graphic, resonant and ratio-
nalist occurrence. Finding the exit door under a panic state is the primary
goal, as the entire *Doom* FPS series or *Quake III Arena* (2000) has shown us.

Throughout the game situation, the *user-player* deals with virtual envi-
ronment's *graphical events*, handling all that shows up represented, being
somehow forced to walkthrough cyberspace, performing the vehiculation, at
a "pedestrian scale" under a certain frame of horizontality. In this struggle,
the *user-player* may just move out, interact and wander in the courses. Fol-
lowing this logic of submission to the path, and not its immobile position,
Couchot affirms that "the interfaced subject is more 'trajectory' than subject"
(1998: p.28), for what we define today as the territory without total map is
the innovative dynamics of the trajectory which is standing opposed to inertia.
Forced to walk across the virtual architecture of the FPS, the *user-player* needs
to comprehend those occurrence rules (*ludus*) of all *graphical events*, every
happening that involves graphics and animations automatically triggered by
puppets. Therefore the *user-player* must examine the space of navigation in
the game, know how to "read" the maps; he must possess guidance skills
and opportunity sense once he is among his foes (as it is required to perform
"camping").

Enframed in the optical and tactile vector apured cyberspace, the *user-
player* tendentiously forgets that this gamespace is a "limit-space" (Pinto,
2005: p.212), and that its major attribute is its image self-referentiality. The
FPS addresses to itself, it is in tension with the elements of the outer world,
making available a type of foreseen interaction; from which we cannot escape,
unless from the threatening adversaries as we competitively and frightenly
wander in its architectures. *User-players* appreciate the feeling of control but,
moreover, they get addicted to the practice of that control. Nevertheless it re-
mains a paradox, because now a player is controlling the game character, and
then he is submitted to the game rules (*ludus*). Not having at all the full con-
trol of the game (*alea*). He [the *user-player*] controls most of the game when
he uses specific software to modify game maps matching his own preferences,
that we known as creating "Mods".
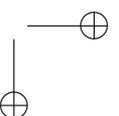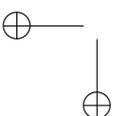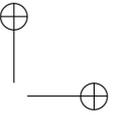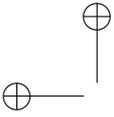
3.3   SUBSTITUTE SUBJECTIVITY

A *substitute subjectivity* requires from the *user-player* in the FPS more than merely plays and discovers an action-adventure life through first person, from a virtual reality technical display. Replacement occurs for the most part since the subject chooses for playing another person's role, a character in the game. Following this logic, the subject plays a game that, within Roger Caillois' theory stands inserted in the *mimicry* game genre, given that the mimetism component strongly prevails. In this field, as the Caillois enlightens:

> "The game may consist, not in the accomplishment of a task or in the assumption of a destiny in a fiction place, but above all in the incarnation of the illusory character and in the adoption of its behavior" (1990: p.39)[2].

We have to keep in mind that the characteristic of the *mimicry* games is more than to make evasion prevail in a different topography, it is more than visiting and discovering a new place, which happens to be virtual. It is mostly the embodiment of a character and its behavior. With this mechanics the "substitution" question reveals that it has being of the utmost importance since it implies the character incarnation as the most relevant; and also that there should be something virtual supplanting what previously remained instead of a simple simulation. It counts here not what is being replaced but the substitution in itself, that is to say, the process, the modification (hence the pertinence of the "othering' process" ["otherness"] mentioned by Atkins [2003]). That transformation in the First Person Shooter unfolds because the subject replaces his subjectivity by a ranking in the computerized audiovisual gear, in the sense that he rather prefers his extension of subject in the game, in the substitution display (thus showing off the "Narcissus Narcosis" referred by McLuhan in *Understanding Media* [1994]).

For a clear comprehension, the substitution display settles on a certain "subjective motion", an attribute which is imported from the 80s Japanese "Manga" comics into the cinematic motion images; and later from comics into the FPS. The "subjective motion" strategy, when introduced in the FPS, places the *user-player* in position to see not just the action on the virtual ground, but

---

[2]*Idem, Ibidem.*

LabCom Books
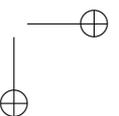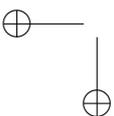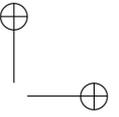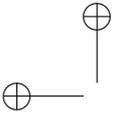
to stand before anything else on it, taking for that purpose the place of the subject with those images. Therefore, the player does not see images; he takes their place in an optical and bodily manner. Objects analyzed in the discovery process (*paidea*) of the virtual spaces in FPS become involving as the player assures the controlling-position of that virtual sight, transforming himself into a *trajective subject*.

The condition of the *trajective subject* demands the player to get dazzled next to the *machine-subjectivity*, with the fact of feeling in the virtual character's "own skin" (*mimicry*), until substitution is preferred in comparison with merely contemplating the simulation of the real at stake. The idea of the subject becoming that observing object in the virtual, that virtual camera, such virtual subject, turns into something more compelling and pushes him into the whole setup field of the virtual, this time as a driver, an explorer, a hunter (or a victim). Resuming, the subject, who lets himself being actively absorbed by the digital equipment, is a subject who rather prefers the substitution of the real than the merely passive positioning before the simulation. Transporting the *user-player* into a new digital real, instead of just taking him for a ride into a fictive universe (mimesis), is the purpose of substitution. Remains as an objective to replace the real by the virtual, the question is that all things depend on the interface which is used. And if the VR visionaries would like the interface to be nearly invisible, thus the problem would be that of an inexistent proof that subjectivity would be somehow being mediated, set by technical systems. However, in our present time the ideal interfaces are much different than those of the HMD (Head-Mounted Display), so interacting by means of a screen at least provides the notion of such substitution process going on[3]. Cyborgization is not yet complete, subject and machine are still discernible.

One knows that the First Person Shooter sustain the interaction with 3D photorealistic universes through mouse-keyboard-screen interface, or a gamepad controller. Although in a science-fiction scenario the establishment of the *substitute subjectivity* of the virtual would reach such a peak of enhancement that the very subject would be at risk, as the mediation proving the existence of the substitution would no longer be noticeable. If the interface is invisible all that start as a substitution becomes a reduction, an objectivation of the

---

[3]In case one experiences a Virtual Reality through a screen built to cast 360 degrees images a gray zone is detected, because it allows us to be aware of the replacement process, and at the same time lets the immersion to continue with no easy identification of the enframed images.
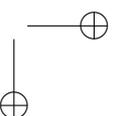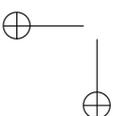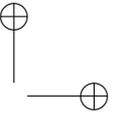
subjective as the objectivation stops being visible, even if it remains fully operational. It was not by chance that VR enthusiasts as Jaron Lanier and Howard Rheingold promised an immediate experience, almost mediation-less. Even in Gibson's texts the interface stands as something to be an ware of, the project was to dematerialize it for sure, clearing out the trails of the image-subject cyborgization. Future keeps for us the disappearance of the obvious interface, to reach the platform of the "interfacelessness", so that the on-going substitution turns out to be as effective as a baudrillardean "perfect crime".

Concerning the First Person Shooter it is noticeable that in this particular type of videogame, a new regime of "machine-images" is established, one of a new virtuality genre, less hallucinatory than the one proposed by science-fiction in its metatopias. In any case, the FPS represents a new step forward in the evolution of imaging, in the sense that it needs a virtuality accusing all the time the presence of a subject on the representation, constantly updated. General speaking, about the image of synthesis:

> "(. . .) ever since the moment that image began to replicate itself, it started to replicate the subject: the image in the era of its technical reproducibility is the image in the era of the automatization of the subject" (André Parente, 2004: p.30)[4].

Relying on Parente's words one estimates that, about the virtual image, the subject is, henceforth, called to step in the virtual, instead of getting closer to contemplate or simply interacting with it. Next to the technologies of the virtual, the subject is face-to-face with its own objectivation, "interfaction", settings, substitution and replication.

The motive laid underneath this whole process of replacing subjectivity is that the subject faces a sort of subjective integration, step-by-step, one level after another, one phase after the next, throughout stages, into the virtual realm. It is what flawlessly happens in the First Person Shooter, since in the beginning it was seen like an animated cartoon (the phase of *Doom*, *Wolfenstein 3D* and *Duke Nukem 3D* [1996]), then it started perfectly simulating the three dimensions (*Quake II* generation), and now it becomes something uncanny just to try out as long as in most of situations it is already too much real for us to be sure that it still is only virtual (as in *Crysis*, *Far Cry*). When Gibson says

---

[4]This translation from the Portuguese edition is mine.

LabCom Books
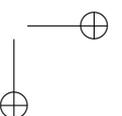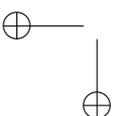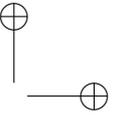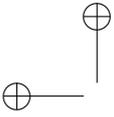
that cyberspace is more like a "notional space" he is referring to cyberspace as a conceptual territory, a design ground. The problem is that these games show a realism that does not make easier for us to be sure of that notion (the case of *Half-Life 2*), which somehow makes objectified our condition of subject. It is also implicit that our subjectivity is contended with a new ontological meaning of imaging, because in this particular genre of cyberspace there is not anymore a clear separation between image and object, both poles (man and machine) seem to share the same native code. This notion of virtual image matters primarily at the subjective viewpoint, if one takes into account that the First Person Shooter truly performs a revolution in the inert behavior of the subject towards the "moving-image", placing him obligatorily in the core of the representation through that substitution regime. In the aftermath the subject no longer stays as a viewer and starts interacting, suffering a specific type of automatization at the level of body motion and the active perception of the virtual images.

Substitution matters because it highlights that there is "a being over there" in cyberspace, a prisoner of the labyrinthic *vehiculation space* whose role is solely the one of the predatory trajectory. The revelation of the subjective self-reference graphically accused as an extension in the digital space. Besides, as a counterpart of the flowing images generated by the graphic engine of the FPS, we then have the real subject's paralysis. Such paralysis happen because the body motion and the subject's perception are already replaced in the virtual environment by their respective extensions (*prosthemos*). I would argue that it is a fact that the conditions of subjectivity, experience, the *hic et nunc* (the "here and now"), merge altogether with the conditions of objectivity of the experience in the virtual (Cartesian grid, digital space, machine-memories and 3D). As he places himself in a world of substitution, the subject faces a new challenge: assaulting the place of an other (him)Self and not relying just to simulate it. Initial subjectivity is supplanted by technical mediation of the subjective. Virtual imaging acquires more strength and predominance than what it represents, since the real is replaced by the virtual; there is a process of choice, of option between one sphere and another.

Further ahead of all that has been said so far, it also matters to remark that in the First Person Shooter its peculiar genre of architectures available for discovering appeals to our subjectivity, in the sense that all that is important is the internal vision of things, the interior disclosing as it is cut off from the
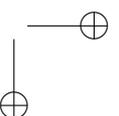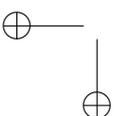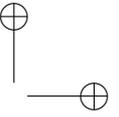
outside. What makes the experience of space in the FPS sou captivating is the existence of a technological "agencement" in its images that turns them into seductive, inviting, and demanding our presence subjectively. Therefore, either in Couchot's words, or in Parente's, it is most underlined the overall needs of the virtual image having a propensity for involving the viewer, then re qualified, the way I see it, as a *user-player*. The reason he is more active than a spectator, more involved than a user, and also he feels free to take his chance like any other player pursued by curiosity.

3.4   SHARED IDENTITY

ONE of the many ways to fight loneliness using the computer is to play and/or chat in the MUDs. In the MUDs the *user-player* can play, have a conversation by means of using microphone or typing in software's dialog boxes. With these systems, the *user-player* has the possibility to share his alternative identity, interacting with other people in cyberspace, exchanging messages and playing in groups. Sharing his identity with the other *user-players*, through the character he controls in the game, the *user-player* masters information technology, on the whole, and videogames, to be more specific; getting familiar with the virtual universes which welcome communities interested on certain games and themes. By sharing the identity, one is sharing it always in a collective manner, this share is representative of a relationship pursuit, of the needs to feel "we are altogether", gathering; meeting inside the virtual place, where discredit holds still to make solid an interactivity relationship on the behalf of a *shared space*. And the notion of *shared space* prevails as the network computer is estimated as an entire object, a social entity, a confluence and community's reunion instance.

Cyber-culture finds out in cyberspace a certain re-conquest of space which remained lost in capitalistic and modern real estate, recovering it under the form of a new territory, at a time when Earth is completely charted. Hence this is the vision of Mark Dery, for whom cyberculture:

> "(...) seems to be on the verge of reaching escape velocity. Marshall McLuhan's declaration in 1967 that the electronic media introduced us a blurred and panted 'world of simultaneity', where information 'rains all
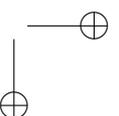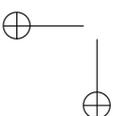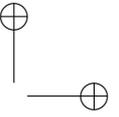
over us, instantaneous and continuously', sometimes smashing us, is more real than ever" (2000: p.9)[5].

The need for utopian spaces, the crisis of gestures, of real presence, the hazardous urban streets, the electronic entertainment evolution, lead the *user-player* to immerge into "moving-images" in which it is able to rescue him from the solids crisis, the weight of reality. Adhering to virtual communities, the need for an escape from the primary social tissue and the expansive cyber-culture, plus loneliness, make sharing identities in the ludic cyberspace some-what possible, as long as it is a technical place where a certain social, ludic and psychological component still remains. Sharing online identities allows us to euphorically practice our personality, as well as it does permit to exit the known map, to go out of the enlightened terrain, roaming across unknown paths. Such is the reason behind online gaming in cyberspace, considering too its social potential, a space which everybody looks for, as dangerous and volatile as well.

After all, as Johnson states, cyberspace is not only a space to meet people, a context; it is an entry point, a gateway for creating euphoric communities. In case we designate these communities as "virtual", just because they con-solidate themselves online, it also true that they expand because *user-players* integrating them highlight a disconnection with the exterior reality, a real-ity as such is seen in a dysphoric manner. The entrance in the misleading game world, whether by conversation, or entertainment, is what it is privi-leged; which are nothing else more but pretexts to motivate sharing alternative identities. In fact the ecstasy relies on the contemplation of "moving-images", in the search for a pure alterity, a radical one, in the erasure of the Other throughout word games or images games. Communities called into question are based on *unrelated relationships*, thus being enough for them the techni-cal connections to link up with the receptacle of cyberspace where everything converges into.

Furthermore on this problematic author Maria Maria Lucília Marcos says in the text "Ligação e Interrupção" that "interactive lonelinesses configure (. . .) an attempt to invest technique with a function pursued before within other modalities of reason and experience (religion, politics, science)" (2000:

---

[5]*Idem, Ibidem.*
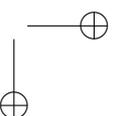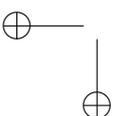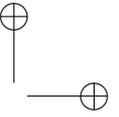
p.442)[6]. Thanks to not looking for answers in fields as religion or science, for instance, technology is invested as a solution for "interactive lonelinesses". The designated *unrelated relationships* work disconnected from the real though highly cross-penetrated in the technical network of cyberspace and mediatization. With identity and gesture in *Crysis*, it is within technology that one looks for those answers, so those gestures reported to it as a form of making loneliness peaceful and a form of looking for feelings of belonging to communities unestablished before. As Maria Lucília Marcos finely adds up, "actually, when everything can be close, when everything can be immediate, when all gaps seem to be conquered, how can one still say that the other is the other?" (2000: p.442)[7]. So that is the question, the immediatism has abolished the gaps in such a way that the Other is no longer outside, he remains inside, in the domain of the tele. All that gets effective in the First Person Shooter case, from my perspective, is the medium itself, the place welcome all *user-players* of cyberspace in its meshed receptacle. Once distances are conquered the poles resign for an inertia condition which saves for them only inter-activity in the extent of the cyberspace.

The major danger happens to be on tensions, in the contended game of the cyber game itself, as the game follows its own order, that evidently it will be printed in the identity and in a certain network community. This order is tense too since it summons entries and exits, connections and interruptions that depend on the related poles. Yet as the relation through the cyberspace is an *unrelated relationship*, it happens that the disturbing interruptions in participation, conversation and in the ludic game of the FPS, for example, are more memorable than its connections; in the sense that they remark a break, a communication hiatus. It happens every-time when communication channels get blocked, the bandwidth signal dropped, when users are kicked off a game party or simply when suddenly the whole network system collapses.

On the other hand, when the game is not interrupted, identity is righteously shared, flows and communities interact. If the game is interrupted, the problem's origins lie in a intentionally game interruption, for there are several *shared identities* that have absorbed the tension contained in cyberspace and became predatory among them, refusing or perhaps really understanding that

---

[6]*Idem, Ibidem.*

[7]*Idem, Ibidem.*
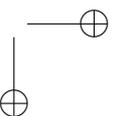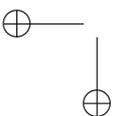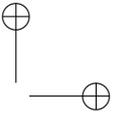
they're standing amidst *unrelated relationships*. Concerning about this aspect, Maria Lucília Marcos affirms that "communication is a contended fact because its question is always 'the other'. The other is uncanny all the time, he is always what is the most disquieting" (2000: p.444)[8]. Under this optics, if the Other is what is most disturbing, in the FPS scene, in multiplayer game mode, for this to be the case, it is because in networks *user-players* look for the "on-demand", radical, perfect alterity and is expected to be at their service; though they do it as an option towards the whole alterity in the real world. If there has to exist an interruption, it ought to be representative of Alterity in general, so it means a disconnection from the social issue, from every space, from all technique, the end of gestures of any kind, no matter how virtual they could be. A loss of overall identity occurs because a disconnection of the entire community happened too. It is the "Other" (*allos*) that is disconnected.

3.5 FELLOW PATRIOTS: CAPTURE THE FLAG!

ONE of the online communities' many features is the fact of being global, of having a dimension Gibson envisions as being "post-geographic". In cyberculture thus prevails the logic of patriotism, especially in First Person Shooter games. In these games the *user-player* shares his identity and, beyond that, interacts with other individuals whom also sharing their preferences, culture and language. Secondly, in the game space of the First Person Shooter there is a feeling of belonging to a global nation, common among every fellow patriot participating in the FPS. In this trend there is certain patriotism, even if it is in a fictional fashion, which is shared in a group form, collectively shared. This factor makes *user-players* to feel all alike as fellow patriots of an atopic (placeless) nation, with no real place, parallel to the real world. Perhaps one of the most famous game modes in the First Person Shooter is the "Capture The Flag", according to which *user-players* interact with each other, in cyberspace, whose purpose is to defend an endangered identity, imposing their nation, their clans over their rivals, in a highly competitive (*âgon*) game modality.

Fellow patriotism in the First Person Shooter exposes the need to remark typically regional relationships. For this motive interruption is most feared,

---

[8]*Idem, Ibidem.*
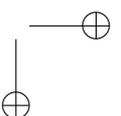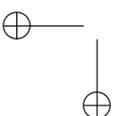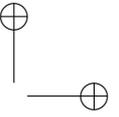
as being banned from a game party means to loose citizenship in the virtual, it represents to be kicked off from the community, to be expelled from it, to remain outside unrelated. The secret for not getting expelled from an online community is to examine which identities fit the best to each other, capture enemy groups' flags, draw strategies, occupy spaces, win contests and score the highest points. When the alternative identities of *user-players* do not work along there is a violent expulsion and bad reputation is earned, so any *user-player* stands no chance at all to gather back again with his clan, its guild; at least temporarily.

Thinking of these online communities required us to place them in a post-geographic epoch, as these are mirrored in cyberspace, in its exclusive to-pography. Citizenship passport, fellow patriotism certification in whirling, escape speed are synonyms of cyberspace. Transgression is replaced by the entrance, the engagement, the technical and psychological agreement in a FPS videogame which works out like an interactive and thematic discourse. According to Sherry Turkle, "nowadays people start to accept the notion of computers expanding the individual's physical presence" (1997: p.29)[9]. It is so because computers, in their wholeness, have a space that Gibson (2003) refers to be "the same space". This environment called of "cyberspace" (1984) may actually extend the physical presence of the individual; it is "an extension of the human body", inside, of course, the theoretical frame of McLuhan. Author Allucquère Rosanne Stone in *The War of Desire and Technology – At The Close Of The Mechanical Age* states on the hackers scene that they see computers not just like instruments, but mostly as "arenas" for "social experience" (1995: p.15). However what defines hackers is the same feeling pregnant in any *user-player*, which is, the feeling that an alternative nation exists, a world meaningful enough to defend, and precisely for that reason worth to be challenged territorially, so cyberspace is purposely the place for an alternative focus. Rosanne Stone understands computers as:

> "(. . .) arenas for social experience and dramatic interaction, a type of media more like public theater, and their output is used for qualitative interaction, dialogue, and conversation. Inside the little box are 'other people'" (Allucquère Rosanne Stone, 1995: p.16).

---

[9] *Idem, Ibidem.*

LabCom Books
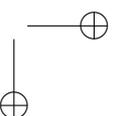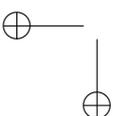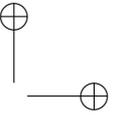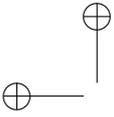
The alterity looked for across cyberspace is these "other people". So one may understand, this way, how cyberspace is seen as a refuge, like a last social tissue, endowed with a topography of its own; in which one travels as a means and as an end (in cyberspace and for cyberspace). Understanding cyberspace just as an instrument seems reductive, this digital space is the icon of cyberculture, it represents its range; how far cyberculture gets the cyberspace extends onto it; how far there is a network bandwidth available to get on to the online First Person Shooter, there are fellow patriots who want to play and share their identities. At the core of this cultural shift, where the technological component possesses a strong angle, is the reason of cyberculture being remarkable for everything that prevails. Thanks to its intensity and communication instruments usage, and not due to team members or issues. In other words, it means that in cyberculture revolution starts with Technology, not depending on the participants, thus there is no separation between player and user. Cyberspace is, in its core, the ultimate software application, the major hardware gear; the entire game where every identity couples in to generate only one online collective body. It makes sense, in this manner that Stone declares:

> "(. . .) in the *alter* space of communications technologies suggests a war between simplification and multiplicity. . . an explosion of actors and actants that includes the almost-living, the not-living, and the never-living (. . .)" (1995: p.44).

Cyberspace becomes an arena for fellow patriots of whatsoever factions, fighting for the supremacy over the cybernetic space, as if this way they would master the alternative space for communication technologies. And it is technologies that suggest a war between simplicity and multiplicity, for upon the possibilities scope, the sole homogenization standing out is just the digital binary language of its basis: zeros and ones. On another perspective it is technology itself, its extending human skills and characteristics, which affirms its predatory substance. Technology is predatory in itself, and being cyberspace an Other space replete of technology, the latter becomes a social arena, yet also a conflicting zone, mirroring the real conflict from which *user-players* try to evade from when they get online. Enclosing in cyberspace is a military mechanicism whose effects are cast over the identities chosen by *user-players*, over rules (*ludus*) that manage community games and the type
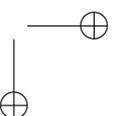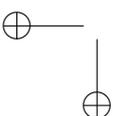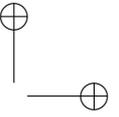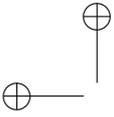
of exchanged discourses under the telegraphic literacy model. In cyberspace alternative identities of humans and machines (NPCs) are integrated with the objective of launching an element of randomness, able to restore in real society a lost cultural identity. Best thing to do is to get inside of the cyberspace to retrieve a lost feeling of community, rescuing at the same time, a citizenship uncomplicated by the social, though complexified on the networks, by the great on-going cybernetic game. Dery tells us in *Flame Wars* that "this medium (cyberspace) gives us the possibility (illusory as it may be) that we can build a world unmediated by authorities and experts" (1994: p.9). Such statement makes sense above all if juxtaposed to Caillois', as the the latter defends that the game, generally, is autonomous and made out of order, one understands when built with clear and distinct principles (*archê*), for what defines cyberspace is that it is understood as a "heterotopia" (Foucault, 1984: p.246); an Other space, standing apart, but not on the margins, as being "another place", a different space. A place disregarding authorities, but very orderly, with a founding *mathesis*, like "the electronic world" of *Tron*; grids and the infinite space extended along digital immersive perspective.

3.6   ALTERNATIVE FIRST PERSON

EXPERIENCING a First Person Shooter is to try to play in the first person's perspective but in the position of an alternative person. If the First Person Shooter is a game, then the most intrinsic feature in its design demands is always a game of the *mimicry* class too, within the typology defined by Roger Caillois, since it implies the *user-player* to observe the action and interact with cyberspace all the time, embodying a character; there must be a role-playing procedure, much like those of the RPGs (Role-Playing Game) board games. Surprisingly one of the most remarkable FPS of all time still is *Half-Life*, whose author is a science-fiction writer too, the famous Marc Laidlaw. In Mark Dery's *Flame Wars* book, Laidlaw published a text called "Virtual Surreality: Our New Romance With Plot Devices", where he highlights that, for him:

> "(...) virtual reality is mainly a wonderful 'plot device', one that allows surreal effects without recourse to dreams or hallucinations. VR is a fine
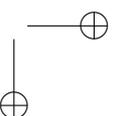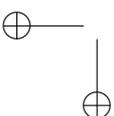
way of exploring, within the context of technology-oriented science fiction, the nature of reality" (1994: p.92).

In this excerpt, what Laidlaw defends is what we called "technical Virtual Reality", in which surrealism could be built as a "plot device", where script and story are the most important (one calls to question games that are "plot oriented", that is, organized, script-driven games). The author is a not an apologist of the "consensual hallucination" of cyberspace, as Gibson is. Laidlaw promotes a technical, realistic Virtual Reality, disregarding drugs, and that in fact it is revealed as a tool to research on the very nature of reality. Having seen this, one should add also that the most revolutionary First Person Shooter of all time, *Half-Life*, was written by Laidlaw, who also got involved in the game design. Of the utmost importance is that this author, Laidlaw, borrowed is face to Gordon Freeman, the leading character of the game *Half-Life*, which happens to be his *alter-ego* in the game, player-controlled. After this game was released, due to its strong narrative aspects, gaming cyberculture faced a major revolution; since the game drags the player into an incursion inside the virtual, into the core of a truly immersive digital romance, as Laidlaw mentions. As the *user-player* experiences, *Half-Life*, in fact he is managing a schedule of options, an interactive script, "walking in the shoes" of Gordon Freeman, a green eyes scientist wears glasses and an orange metal suit; that in its turn is the *alter-ego* of Laidlaw, the author. Will playing *Half-Life* make one feel like one would becoming the character of Gordon Freeman or the author Marc Laidlaw? This is the tricky question that concerns about the problematic in the alternative first person.

Actually First Person Shooter videogames' characters are all can be describe as alternative first persons, other Selves, could-be new Selves, playable by us. Though these characters could be understood as people as we could be, that is the discourse of Sherry Turkle on videogames in general, but it could be finely applied to the First Person Shooter theory. Says Turkle in "Videogames And Computer Holding Power" that "video games are something you do, something you do to your head, a world that you enter, and, to a certain extent, they are something you 'become'" (1984: p.501). That is to say that videogames, unlike television, that required passive assistance to a novel, they make the active role-playing possible in a virtual romance, in a total programming/*mise-en-scène*. Videogames require that one do something,
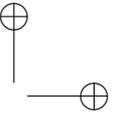
we must play, search for something (*paidea*), have clearance to access into a world.

At its deep, videogames allow us to become somebody different. In such arguments, once heading for the First Person Shooter assume another consistency, because even if Turkle refers herself to the most old and simple videogames, modern FPS have empowered all their characteristics. By having this figured out it is easy to comprehend how FPS games are placed between gaming and filmmaking, as they promote its experiencing as an *entrée* inside a cult film. For the *user-player* the only obligation is that when he plays, he must survive the entire "plot device", the whole "narrative engine" in order to complete the game and fade out the abysmal buffer between the real and ordinary universe of the game. Exactly in this sense Geoff King & Tanya Krzywinska underline that *Half-Life* achieved a remarkable evolution in this direction, avoiding "cut-scenes" or any other information to be loaded outside the primary "gamespace". Geoff King & Tanya Krzywinska believe that "scenes important to the plot of *Half-Life* remain fully interactive, allowing the player to move around while information is relayed by non-player characters and other integrated devices" (2006: p.45).

Another relevant question is that real life is not something we choose for, one just accepts it how it is, unlike a character incarnated in a FPS, like *Half-Life*, where the player chooses it, since he decides to play, that game and not any other, supplied with a certain "narrative engine", rather than another.

Resembling a selection of destiny the procedure on focus changes according to the game. In some First Person Shooters the player customizes his *alter-ego*, the character in the game, being clearly in a mimetic position, so these games integrate the *mimicry* genre. For all of this, every-time one speaks about alternative first person, one speaks of a sort of a "floating-identity" and a "root-identity". Once the player starts the game he questions his "root-identity", practicing his "floating-identity". To practice an alternative first person is consequently to exercise a second person, it is to be another person; it is standing on the *alter-ego* track. A "floating-identity" is the identity that the *user-player* practices in cyberspace; the one he develops in there, like Neo in the film *The Matrix* (1999) trains his "root-identity" of Mr. Anderson in the simulation construct, instead of doing it with his real Self.

It becomes one's concerns that when cyberspace becomes a receptacle, in a network form, of course, there are identities change and over impose on a
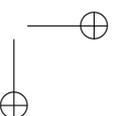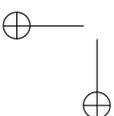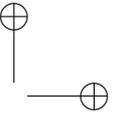
basis-identity, as cyberspace is the ground where all alternative identities are related. Lets underline that identification is shared because it works like a compensation phenomenon; the need for "being on the game", "to get in the game" (*inlusio*, *illudere*), in its interiority, actually exposes the necessity of a substitute identification that is evaluated by refusing the real. Between the exterior and the interior occurs a cutting, the *user-player* plugs off the outside on behalf of his "floating-identity", the internal attribute of the ludic cyberspace. Basically a mask is solidified, which grants an immediate aesthetic emotion of fear, mystery or seduction. In this way, the FPS turns out to be a phenomenon, namely on the MMOFPS (Massively Multiplayer Online First Person Shooter) level, as he makes possible to share identity, under what Miranda calls of the greatest attribute of cyberspace: "the grammar of masks".

It still remains unanswered whether the identities of the FPS cyberspace participants are harmed or enhanced by such "grammar of masks", the online multiplayer phenomenon. What is for sure is that they manifest complexities of their own and a camouflage typically of technical style as well, given the chances of manipulation provided by the digital environment.

In this register, identity enjoys the plasticities of the digital, it benefits with that, with the whole objective nature of the machine, but identity never ceases to be subjective, in the cyber-spatial arena, whether by managing chat windows, for the typographic practice of typing, or by helping himself with improved details and customized visuals, that it all blossoms. The discursive forms in question shape the sociability of anyone participating in the FPS; of whoever plays it, meets and recognizes other online participants, whether in a single player mode or in a clan, guild mode. After all, videogames in multiplayer mode represent a new age of simulacrum, they're typical in a new modernity, a postmodernity, simulations-driven. Through simulations, in the baudrillardean sense, a new optical and tactile regime of image establishes itself; in detriment of references and in favor of articulations, connections and networks. Like Gilles Deleuze once has said, and very pertinently, in *Lógica do Sentido* (1969): "we define modernity by the power of the simulacrum" (1974: p.270).
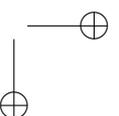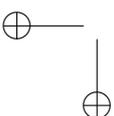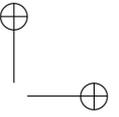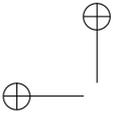
3.7 MULTIPLAYER – MULTIPLE SUBJECTIVITY

ROGER CAILLOIS in the *Os Jogos e os Homens* (1990), divides games into four distinctive types. One of those types, the *agôn* (Greek term), Caillois thinks to be the type which enframes all games where competition is preponderant. Caillois defines the games of *agôn* this way:

> "There is a whole group of games that appears under the shape of competition, that is, like a combat where equal chances are artificially created so that the adversaries may fight in ideal conditions (. . .)" (1990: p.33-34)[10].

From my point of view, about the First Person Shooter, it makes sense to see it as a game of the games of *agôn* type, for its multiplayer mode stands precisely over that determinant element which is the artificial creation of conditions to fight in equal chances so that the real winners may emerge. The competition element, thus being hugely relevant in online gaming, is the basis for multiplayer modes that, having to become a popularity phenomenon, in fact it all began with *Doom* and *Quake*, yet it is in games as *Battlefield 2142* or *Counter-Strike: Source* that network gaming turns out to be innovative; even if it looks like it is out of control. First Person Shooter becomes hence the game genre responsible for the subjective perspective in singular games and also in network games. Played in a personal computer or in a gaming console, the experience is one of the kind, though when one plays one of these games online the experience changes meaningfully. Thus, it does not matter if it is a local network (LAN) or a global network through the Internet (GAN).

For the record, the experience is inexorably an interaction experience with teamwork, an interaction envisioning network play, being chosen to the game party and the remote access point to which fits the FPS the best. Once network access is activated the *user-player* stands before another kind of phenomenon, that may differ from what has been in discussion so far, because his subjectivity gets stimulated as it is the other fellow patriots' in the shared network game. As a result, the game experience in multiplayer mode in a virtual environment is not the same like in single player mode, since that in teamwork the experience looks more unforgettable, addictive and much more believable, given that one just don't interact just with NPCs, the spotlight turns to human subjects.

---

[10]*Idem, Ibidem.*

LabCom Books
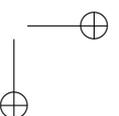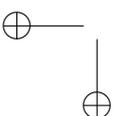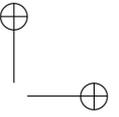
Among human subjects, which standing on both sides of the game also remain computerized neutral or enemy characters, one must deal with, however the most exciting thing in all of this is that there isn't one single frame reserved for subjectivity, because there are many. That means that each player reviews his subjectivity in the FPS cyberspace, it implies that having a multiplicity of *user-players*, some stay longer, others not, though the truth is that in most of the time in game parties, in every levels, there is a wide range of *user-players* interacting simultaneously; making different things, antagonist things (fighting for the objectives of foes), neutral things (turning on personal equipment or grabbing objects) or advantageous things (defending an established perimeter or helping out team mates).

All this technical system, the whole FPS architecture, it is inclusively interesting for providing the practical implementation of the "consensual hallucination" of cyberspace as Gibson defined it in the decade of the 80s. We notice that in the First Person Shooter, namely the next-generation kind, in the first place it is conceived from the start to take advantage from broadband connections, making easier access without image fades or blurs, sound errors or network signal interruptions.

In the second place, a FPS game that is made to host as many players at the same time as possible needs a consensus, a contract established among all players, as well as among *user-players* of the same faction in the game itself, in particular.

In the third place, the most groundbreaking First Person Shooters have widened exactly this consensus feature, the notion of teamwork. Thus it is the case of *Half-Life: Team Fortress* and of *Battlefield 2* too. Concerning the FPS *Battlefield 2* this permits especially that a *user-player* may use the map and choose for getting into action on the battleground, "in your face" style, by placing himself in control of any character of the game standing anywhere on the field. Besides the fact that it is possible to drive away any vehicle on the scene, the game area sometimes is so wide that the player can perform a specific type of a blurred *subjective jump*, which is triggered each time we switch characters/players. It shows how the First Person Shooter cyberspace is a real multiple subjectivities arena. Not to mention that the blurred and vertiginous jump between players of the same team, activated by the *user-player*, demonstrates an existing pursuit for the vertigo (*ilingos*), that
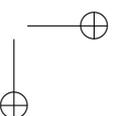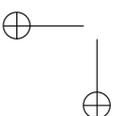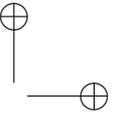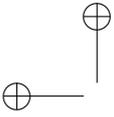
is common in games of *ilinx* (Greek term concerning whirlpools). And the
games of *ilinx*, according to Roger Caillois (1990) are purposely based on:

> "(...) the search for vertigo and (...) consist in the attempt to destroy, for
> a moment, the stability of perception and inflict on the ludic consciousness
> a sort of voluptuous panic" (1990: p.43)[11].

Battlefield 2 illustrates, as a First Person Shooter, and before anything else
as a game, such pursuit for panic, ecstasy and destabilized perception. Like
the game itself suggests, it is a videogame that needs a *user-player* to step in a
virtual environment as closer of the chaotic battlefield as it gets. I would argue
that the idea is to make it work like an immense theatre of war, a complexity, I
shall say, "calculable", that has much different properties from the many First
Person Shooters, given that it permits playing with any character, anywhere
on the scenery. Thanks to a striking speed of displacement from one character
to another, as in a fly-by manner. My perspective is that this *subjective jump* in
Battlefield 2's switch between characters provides the chance to put ourselves
in the whereabouts of a computerized team mate (AI-controlled), is a major
revelation in the FPS genre, for it accuses that the very audiovisual structure
of the FPS is relying on an intrusive subjectivity. What happens every-time
when one switches between characters, this kind of intrusion is, in the case of
Battlefield 2, a new aspect and it turns the game cyberspace into something
thrilling with excitement. We should not forget that any FPS of our time, no
matter how small is the number of the *user-players* participation, on it, still
grants access to network play.

In another view, that conventional network game, once it is examined
with computers or gaming consoles standing side by side with their respec-
tive screens, shows up a subjective participation, in an intrusive fashion, un-
matched by any real place. Therefore, against humans or the videogame AI,
the FPS is unique in the way it provides an entry point for a virtual reality
where social presence is strong. On the social presence issue in itself, Carrie
Heeter sustains that this could come out of a conversation with other human-
controlled (*user-players*) characters, or from the interaction with computer-
animated characters, so she adds up that: "someone or something else which
seems to believe that you are there may help convince you that you are there"

---

[11]*Idem, Ibidem.*
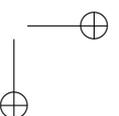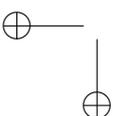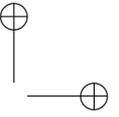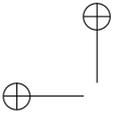
(1992). So the feedback is crucial for the existence of a bilateral relationship between virtual and the *user-player* which is holding the illusion of a virtual "that is as it is".

In some of the FPS games, when they're played in a network, it is even possible to open a command line window and type whoever wants to address any *user-player*, as it is possible in *Quake II*. The most recent FPS inclusively provides a set of pre-established orders and commands that are turned on every time we click on a predefined icon for that purpose. Manovich (2001a) affirms on the command line that the latter possesses a military economy of command and response, something which is confirmed in the FPS nature in cyberspace.

The FPS has most peculiar characteristics, it is the videogame genre which explores the cyberspace the best, its fast interconnections; as well as its audiovisual load demands a new type of videogame: more vast, immense, with plenty of players and neutral characters.

I would like also to point out that the FPS has, in some cases, the feature of allowing two or more players to play the same game in network game party by using only one single screen with the "split screen" method, so that all the action unfolds only in that same screen. In this case one contemplates action in those images getting multiplied according to the variety of points of view, different situations faced by the players in scenic points very heterogeneous throughout the game. Henceforth it is an after effect that the intrusive subjectivity system, inherent to the FPS in itself, suffers an enhancement, for which the points of view are multiplied, each player's perspective that stands on the battleground. Multiple Subjectivity is a fact in the sense that this ludic cyberspace favors such multiplication, underscoring the tacit contract among players. And besides the multiplayer game parties being estimated as volatile and full of instantaneous action for the players who had challenged the parties among themselves, the FPS, however is constantly providing something new and combinatory to offer *user-players* "extras".

As the screens get divided, each division corresponds to each subjective perspective, the latter gets multiplied; multiple perspectives don't just allow to see the on-going action within the screen frame that illustrates what we make out of our virtual Self, as they let us notice in every present player's behavior. The multiple subjectivity aesthetic scheme appeals so much to intrusion that even among *user-players* such intrusion is fertile, voyeurism really is a part of the FPS, of its rules, because it is a genre inclined to *schopophilia*, to "peep
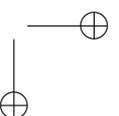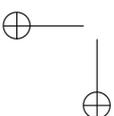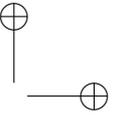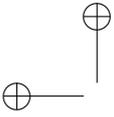
through" screens. Due to the intense fascination that this virtual environment generates, this consensually shared hallucination, exercised over *user-players* the polycentric positioning of players generates multiple subjectivities. And the zones of intervention on the virtual audiovisual world which are sudden, seductive, addictive, at the same time that they are prone for sharing written messages and even game strategies.

A genre of network play is exalted by the First Person Shooter before the off-line mode: the unique positioning of the character is seen in the first person in cyberspace. In the multiplayer mode, the FPS saturates that first person vision system and it is multiplied by the number of players allowed to get in a game party, until there is only one *user-player* left, but many more; not with each one in its turn but altogether at the same time. Even the self-referential position of character controlled by the player faces mutations, since that there are several players placed in the battlefield then several stable and centered subjects are standing on the field as well, now under a polycentric logic, where the only thing still common is just the virtual ground. Unlike the single player mode, the multiplayer game mode provides a static perspective arrangement whose center keeps changing all the time. The outcome is a complex articulation of spatial conditions. Many players have their own respective center in cyberspace, for because they are very peculiar *trajective subject* with much different game experiences among them. They are engaged with the disturbance caused by imageries seeming to be so much subjective that it even leaves marks and memories on us. It is authors Geoff King & Tanya Krzywinska tell us that:

> "Impressions of something like vertigo (. . .) can be created by some videogames, especially when played in the first person and when rapidly navigating tortuous spaces, a gaming tradition established by the vertiginous high-speed play of the pioneering first-person-shooter titles *Wolfenstein 3D* and *Doom*" (2006: p.161).

Unavoidably prevails the polycentric logic as such, so it is provoked a favorable disorientation (to the AI) in the game and an emphasis on the movement that highlights a volatile and intrusive subjectivity. In a consequent fashion, every time one crosses the same scenic point the *user-player* has a *déjà-vu*. Even between motion and resting the predation rule remains all over the virtual's panoramic configuration.

LabCom Books
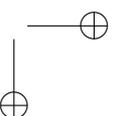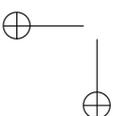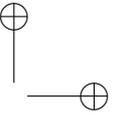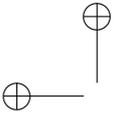
3.8   NEW COMMUNITIES

FIRST PERSON SHOOTER is a pioneer genre in interactive virtual environments, ever since it first launched in 16 bit computers until today's modern gear, its success is owed pretty much to the fact of being labelled as interesting by communities of players. Communities are indeed the key point of the First Person Shooter, because these communities are new and they establish around the concept of cult game like *Doom*, *Kuma: War* or *America's Army*, taking into account the features of the genre. It is really simultaneous the appearance of this kind of videogame asides with the establishment of new communities, majorly online, whose obsession consists in each *user-player* playing and experiencing virtuality in its most evolved stage. Of course that what is the issue here is, a type of the domestic sphere that we found easily in virtuality, though, in online or off-line mode, the First Person Shooter is a remarkable phenomenon in the domain of cyberculture. To play a FPS some dexterity is required something like information technology basic knowledge slightly above the minimum requirements for the average user; although in our time this game genre first appeared in computers and now easily spreads across the territory of electronic gaming in consoles.

Thus, the evolution of the First Person Shooter initially start with computers (the first decade, the 80s), and in gaming consoles (since the decade of 90), which helped out massifying in this type of media, the electronic games. Internet permitted that *user-players* could exchange game files, customize them and get in game parties where all participants stood for the same interest: entering in the illusive virtual world. From this point of view it is perceptible that in cultural terms considerable factors may emerge, such as the formation of groups, tribes, subcultures mastering technical skills within the global network of the Internet.

I also would like to highlight that, since the First Person Shooter is the videogame genre which inherits Virtual Realitie's paradigms in the best way, it also stands for making new specific interest groups to come out, that henceforth worship this videogame genre and not any other, considering its simulation attributes at the level of architecture and physics modeling (how *Doom* originates *Doom Nation* or *Doom World*). The fascination of surrounding the First Person Shooter is great since it is the videogame that lets us take a walk, "returning to the pedestrian scale" in cyberspace, overall under the optics like
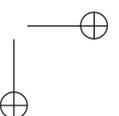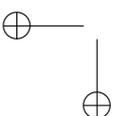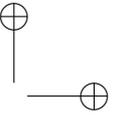
cyberspace as depicted by Gibson in *Neuromancer* (1984). From the technological evolution, and its meeting clash with online communities addicted in ludic software, a new type of versatile, cultural community comes up, that prefers to surf on cyberspace, chat online, search data and master software applications.

On the essay *Flame Wars*, organized by Mark Dery, this author mentions that in cyberspace, in network communities and in virtuality, a certain "thereness" (1994: p.565) is studied, that is on the extent of "is there". Yet it is referred that this is unlikely the place (*physis*) where one stands on when one accesses cyberspace. In other words, there is in the virtuality domain a quest for a new place; everybody tries to find an alternative place. "Flame wars" are triggered out in this alternative place, the ones that suggest Dery's essay title, and which are, therefore, every tense interaction and conversation popping up in the cybernetic space. Flaming wars are common in chat information environments, of online conversation, as well as they're typical in all game parties of First Person Shooters, in my opinion, once cyberspace is, from its roots, a contended place, of a predatory profile that is understood by the new communities as an unmastered territory, unclaimed by no property owner.

Author Steve Johnson, in the work *Interface Culture* (1997), addresses players and cyberspace users as "interfacers" in the preface entitled "Electric Speed" (1997: p.7). In his regard, "interfacers" are all individuals interacting with certain software applications in general. In my point of view they're also the *user-players* of the First Person Shooter that I refer to. As a matter of fact, First Person Shooter's *user-players* are the real "interfacers" in a way that, being aware of the screen frame as a border, they manage to feel experiences almost of the haptic, tactile level, because they identify themselves with the figures and sceneries of cyberspace. Whoever plays a First Person Shooter is an "interfacer" since it is making direct usage of an interface, yet holding up the belief that there is mediation somewhere, so that integration among the online community gets much easier, like the adoption and the improvement of alternative identities through gaming.

The famous Sherry Turkle (1994) states in the text *Constructions and Reconstructions of Self in Virtual Reality: Playing in the MUDs*, that concerning the multi-user displays for conversation, the computer is understood as a crucial object to think on the concept of community. In her words, "the networked computer serves as an 'evocative object' for thinking about community". So
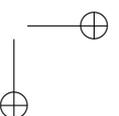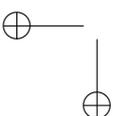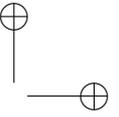
the notion of "community" is rethinked as the networked computer permits to chat and experience easily in virtual spaces under an interaction frame that leads us to rethink inclusively the very concept of "identity". There is only community if certain individuals with their own identities are communicating within a certain space. What is going on in the sphere of the First Person Shooter is that the sustaining space is attractive, and identities and communities are tuned with the plastic and versatile nature of the digital realm. Unlike communities that have established outside of the cyberspace, online communities are the reflex of singular identities meeting on cyberspace envisioning one common goal: the dis-multiplied personality, the evasion from the real into the virtual, and a complex addiction relying on the discourse of cyberculture. In this manner, virtual space is understood as a beginning, middle and an end, and not only as a medium. The inner universe of the digital realm, and its shape, share the same mutation and evolution encoding. Therefore in a cultural perspective, cyberspace is comprehended, by the First Person Shooter's *user-players*, as a new social arena of cinematic quality experiences, not requiring from the subject for that purpose to leave home.

3.9   DANGEROUS NETWORKS

P LAYING First Person Shooters also with people which are online, and that eventually are part of our clan, can be understood as a synonym of community creation as it emerges in social context of the real. Anyway the electronic networked game favors a special type of community. Steven Johnson says in *Interface Culture* (1997), on the online gaming communities:

> "(. . .) the idea of sharing these worlds with other gamers suggests a whole new model of community building, where the exchange between individuals no longer simply takes place *within* a space. Instead, space serves as content, not context" (p.73).

After reading Johnson's argument it is clear that 3D games' *user-players* see the virtual space, not just as a place, but mostly as a content, that is, more than just a game and file sharing. The player finds cyberspace is a refuge, a zone that happens to be an optimal receptacle. To promote this new kind
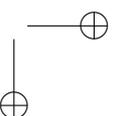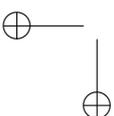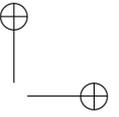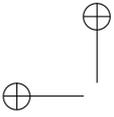
of community established on the Network, *user-players* think on cyberspace as an ultimate zone, a zone on the edge to excite their alternative identities, and to hideout too. Cyberspace in the gibsonian sense is thus the real game, the royal game, what *user-players* look for, since in cyberspace space is not what everyone looks after; one demands plenty of novelties, interactive and dynamic game space. It is what attract *user-players* for the First Person Shooters to be played by massive player networks, because both the technical game and the virtual game are forefront's of the same adventure that is pursued, as a content, and not only as a context.

Huizinga (1980) is the one who affirms that the game "provides satisfaction to every kind of community ideals" (p.12)[12]. To a certain extent, one may underline that there is no lonely game for *user-players*, in the case of the First Person Shooter, not even when one plays against the computer, since the whole game is full of Non-Playable Characters. On the online game, the First Person Shooter finds in such modality of MMOFPS (Massively Multiplayer Online First Person Shooter) its most coherent expression, for in this modality the game satisfies the community ideals referred by Huizinga. Logically the game possesses an autonomous reality, however if this was not to be the case, the game would not be cyberspatial, and it would not be, as in Johnson's (1997) perspective, much more content than a context. Besides, the game benefits from a whole indispensable tension-solution relationship, as Huizinga himself highlights:

> "The game is tense, as we use to say. It is this tension and solution element that prevails in every solitary games of dexterity an involvement, as in (...) target-practice, the more present is the competition element the more passionate becomes the game" (1980: p.14)[13].

The First Person Shooter's environment is tense because before anything else it is just a game, but as an electronic game, somehow, it recreates the contention, the struggle remaining in solitary games outside the virtual, suggested by Huizinga, namely the games of target-practice. And precisely because it is a type of game that simulates games of target-practicing, it doesn't discard the "competition" element common in the games of *agôn*. If the FPS recreates the tension of the solitary games, that is because it is a game designed

---

[12] *Idem, Ibidem.*

[13] *Idem, Ibidem.*
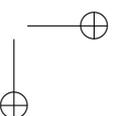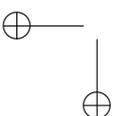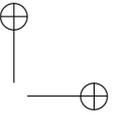
to be played in a lonely way; for each *user-player* plugs individually to cyberspace to play on the networks. However, when these players connect to the networked cyberspace, they are establishing a virtual community, a community which stands for "competitiveness", "connectedness" and "virtuality" principles. From the connection of many *user-players* single player based communities appear, making their subsequent groups, clans, tribes and other type of associations obsessed with cyberspace adventure. Such associations find in the networks a mean of sharing strategies, tactics, but above all the videogame complexity, as the discourse of the latter requires mastering technical skills.

The kind of communities at stake here is orderly organized, it is based on hardware/software identical gear, tastes and similar preferences, and because they worship a ludic activity around a certain FPS as a cult object, incorporating technical schemes and specialized vocabulary. Perhaps is for that reason that Huizinga defends that the game "creates order and 'it is' order" (1980: p.13). Without order there would be no game at all, because the game needs the contractual acceptance of its rules (*ludus*) and to be aware of its objectives. So the virtual game of the First Person Shooter obeys an ordination, not only at the level of laws, since the the communities which worship this game genre organize ludic activities about it also live in an orderly fashion, on the real. A cultural shift occurs in this aspect: it's all about communities which rely themselves on the virtual image, that reveal an organized behavior identical to the information contents supplied in these games. First Person Shooter games are not representations targeting an audience; they are representations which are, in their own way, the audience's destiny. It is in cyberspace that the FPS audience is sheltered, thus the game, which starts as break on *user-players*' everyday life, becomes an almost full-time activity; actually the return to the real is "the" break. Rules got inverted.

Online gaming networks become dangerous as they turn into the main focus of attention on the lives of the *user-players*, for which they require using technology and experiencing in virtual spaces. Danger lies in the fact of these networks granting access to spaces where individuals practice alternative identities with suspicious objectives. Anyway there is a heritage that results from the first MUD (Multi-User Displays) systems for online conversation purposes, and that reflects in the FPS networked game, consists in making possible for anyone to create an identity, to participate in the creation
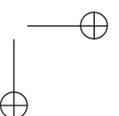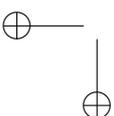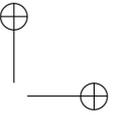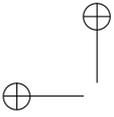
of a certain custom universe. Truth is that one can use the FPS online as a "meeting place" for other purposes besides the merely ludic experimentation, and arrange meetings where writing, voice and image sustain communication among *user-players*. But for the people who do not look for the dark side of cyberspace, Multi-User Displays, originally born for chat channels, allow, in agreement with Rheingold (1996), the roles played by each person address them new levels prone to practice new identities, that in their turn consolidate the scenery realism. On the other hand, Rheingold points out too that "people can become trapped" (1996), as it might be impossible to stop taking cyberspace as the real, seeing cyberspace as a base-reality, instead of a ludic break. Concerning this mediatization, Maria Teresa Cruz tells us in the text "Cultura, Tecnologia e Mediação" (1997):

> "In its profound implications, this mediatization would correspond to a 'society that lost its gestures' and that looks for a re appropriation of what has lost through 'mobile forms, images themselves set on motion' (or what Deleuze calls of 'moving-images')" (p.10).

If mediatization corresponds to a society where the gesture has perished that is because the gesture got virtualized and simplified to fit the most democratic and global medium: cyberspace. An excessive mediatization is in charge, throughout cyberspace, of absorbing the gesture, encoding it, digitizing it and envisioning the need for expansion of the new networks focusing on lonely *user-players*. Without domestic loneliness there would be no leitmotiv to justify all *user-players* to find shelter in cyberspace, where the gesture is necessary to trigger out several mechanisms. Especially on the FPS games the gesture of moving the computer mouse or the gaming console's controller, separates the frontier from this side of the screen and the world further beyond the screen. Videogames rescue gestures in an era in which tactile culture faces a crisis since the TV-image was a novelty. The television image defined by McLuhan as being tactile and participative, cannot keep the same pace of evolution concerning the revolutionary electronic image, focusing a non-interactive tactile culture. Electronic games will recover this gesture, resizing tactile culture in a retribalizing frame through the new online communities. As if enough was not enough, the gesture stands halfway, between the real and the virtual, being symptomatic of an individual that finds in electronic
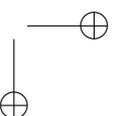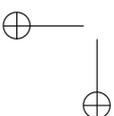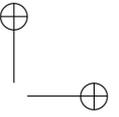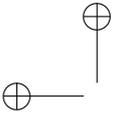
gaming communities a return to a lost community, far away from real urban hazards, in spite of not being totally safe in the digital context.

"Moving-images" referred by Gilles Deleuze, and mentioned by Cruz, imply an aquatic and liquid state of imagery, an sole refusement to the mechanicism of solids, towards a flux stream. In the essay *A Imagem-Movimento* (2004), Deleuze makes clear that "(...) the 'moving-image' is pure movement extracted from the bodies or mobiles. It is no abstraction, but instead a release" (p.39)[14]. Hence it is acceptable that if mediatization makes the gesture meaningless in our society that is because images prove that the mechanism of solids is rejected on behalf of the fluxes, the immersive images. We resume, the danger of online gaming, is that games, with the number of times played, have become more prioritary parallel to the reality. And that, like the chat MUDs, consider a disuse of gestuality. Gestuality based on solid and mechanic bodies, becoming obsolete in a stage of interaction and liquefying image where communities get effective more through identities and loneliness that leads to the digital place. Regarding the alternative to skip loneliness in the real world, one finds a computer-aided "interactive loneliness" in cyberspace.

---

[14]*Idem, Ibidem.*
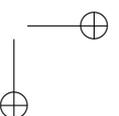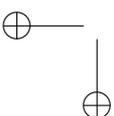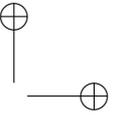
Chapter 4

CONCLUSION

O N this essay I dedicated myself to explain the theme of the First Person Shooter, searching concepts and arguments to feed such explanation from many pertinent authors. It was my interest to refer how important a new type of emerging figure was, the *user-player*, that besides getting involved in the virtual in a ludic fashion, also stands out for its information and communication technology mastery. Initially the project of a more hardware-dependent Virtual Reality demanded an immersion impossible to provide by-technology at the time, unless in William Gibson's science-fiction pages. The evolution of hardware especially conceived for electronic games in the last two decades achieved such an apex that software is the primary, the true core of the virtual environment generated in and for the computer. Put this way, one cannot find odd that the images of synthesis' realism is simply impressive and very close to the real, almost as if there was no mediation, no representation, but presentation instead.

Due to the realism conquered by this type of "machine-image" the 3D environments and characters of FPS videogames seem to have a life of their own. What separates the *user-player* from the virtual world is only the screen, the great border between the universe of the mechanicism of the solids (the real) and the domain of the mechanicism of the liquids (the virtual). More than making the player compelled to master displays of technical skills, the First Person Shooter manages to change the subjectivity at stake, before the kingdom of simulacrum forged in the computer's objective space. One may
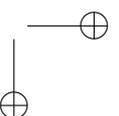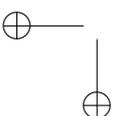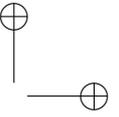
define the computer screen, in this case, as a mask, because it is a border which separates reality from gaming. The screen not only marks the gap, as it consolidates an each time a more complicated to witness distinction between the real and the hyperreal. The subject that plays is also the subject who finds an extension of himself, prosthesis, an add-on to the videogame imagery where his gesture remains confined, simulated, replaced by the new "shoot'em up" subjective game that is the FPS.

Without graphic engine the virtual world would be static, a dead collection of unanimated photograms. Because of the programming, representing figures placed in certain scenic points, the virtual world becomes a stage for activities of almost a cinematic nature. The only exception is that now the viewer has an active, interactive, and no more passive, role among neutral characters and other non-playable characters. And if the FPS is already impressive when it is played against the computer, in networked play the whole game model changes as when other human *user-players* participate, sharing the "consensual hallucination" mentioned in *Neuromancer* by Gibson. Two decades after the term "cyberspace" was coined and Daley & Lisberger having finished the first motion picture made out of images of synthesis, it is in the First Person Shooter that a technological revolution is radicalized, the new *graphical reformation*, much thanks to the subjective perspective imposed by noir, suspense, fantastic and science-fiction cinema. Nowadays the distinction between computer games (desktop computer) and videogames (gaming console) no longer makes sense since for commercial reasons electronic games keep migrating from one platform to another. What makes *user-players* to enjoy more one kind of platform is that they're addicted to certain game genres. Players are loyal to games, not to their hardware platforms, which mean that the genre is king, the software is determinant, and not the hardware, that just provides the conditions for the experience.

FPS, one can also think as, how virtuality expanded itself throughout electronic gaming achieving an optical quality indiscernible from the photography-imposed (and later by cinematography) regime of the Real. Even the relation between the military empowerment of the image and warfare repeats in the FPS, for all FPS images are *target-images*, prone to the *art of hunting*, revealing a predatory relationship between hunter and victim, ally and foe, marksman and observed. In FPS, virtual world continues the military aesthetic of the FPS ever since games as *Battle Zone*, and data grids that Gib-

son defines in *Neuromancer* and *Burning Chrome* are the basis for the virtual world construction in the FPS since *Doom* to *America's Army*. Without the mathmatization of the real it would not be so evident that this technological change which starts in typography, in the Industrial Revolution, godfathered the modern Computer with Electricity, the Internet and Virtual Reality. A major impact of the technological change in society has inclusively after effects in culture and in gaming, as McLuhan endorsed. And this is why today everybody speaks about cyberculture and videogames.
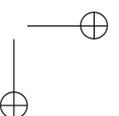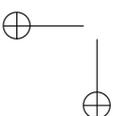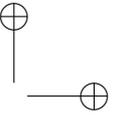
By having culture hosting technology we also have a culture of technique and a technique in a cultural fashion in convulsion, appealing for the entrance in the virtual. Experiencing a FPS is, this way, a form of establishing culture through games, in this case electronic ones, and also a manner for experiencing a *sliced reality*. Only in situations of total immersion we would be unaware of the slice we see in the virtual. Yet the impossibility of seeing everything appeals even more to voyeurism in the FPS, making the player to fit the best way in cyberspace, traveling within it, finding in the "electronic world" its ideal *vehiculation space*, as in *Tron*.

Despite of the upcoming films on the virtual and the FPS genre getting more popular and polemic than ever, still nobody managed to totally chart the virtual world, even if it still works in confined platforms and under a specific memory buffer size. Inside the FPS universe everything is memory, all the hardware and software culminates in data processing on the verge of dematerialization. From another point of view, this data processing, this cybernetic dimension of information, has its own configurations, and every time there is communication, the broadcast and prevailing element is the format.

In FPS, the format conceals two antipodes of the technological revolution, typography and topography to unveil the virtual's *Matrix* as a *subjective landscape*. Typography is introduced now as being dynamic, featuring animated characters, conversation windows and dialog boxes; at the same time the virtual's topography stands out with prominence thanks to the evolution of graphic hardware. In this system a sort of *machine-subjectivity* stands out, relied precisely on typing as a revelation of private and imaginary worlds, and in the computer's "machine-image" as an aegis of phantasy. In getting completely geared up by displays of technical skill, the *user-player* subject covers itself with a data clothing that capture him into exclusively virtual trajectories. Subject becomes trajective, alienated halfway between machine and
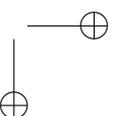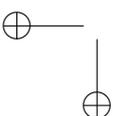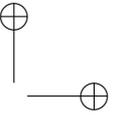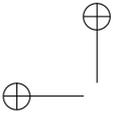
subjectivity. Inside the FPS cyberspace it is possible in this fashion to find "synthespians", virtual dolls, puppets endowed with autonomy and that return us the gaze, recovering an aura lost in images broadcast in older media. In conclusion, subjectivity is replaced by a *machine-subjectivity*, by filters of the real in technical devices which skip up the hazards of the real on the name of the virtual's commodities. Identities are shared and partaken among fellow fans of the communities, exposing a patriotism based on the network logic and which demands the *user-player* to practice his alternative first person. It all happens until subjectivity gets multiplied on the screens, as an infinitely replicated *mise en abîme*.

Considering a clear understanding for the reader who has concerns over the issues revealed on this text, and because the document is full of a specific vocabulary common in the FPS universe, I also included a Glossary of technical terms. At last we have a Chronological Appendix, where every tested videogame necessary for the creation of this monograph is organized according to dates and authors, in order to make the reading easier and the understanding of the issues.

Herlander Elias
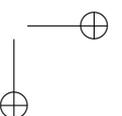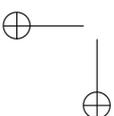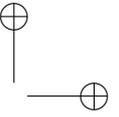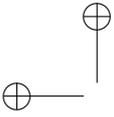
GLOSSARY

2D – Two Dimensions – The two-dimensional graphic system used before three-dimensional graphics emerged, it rendered drawings, retouched photographs or any other graphics since it only have just width and height.

3D – Three Dimensions – A new graphic system implemented with hardware in order to render specific graphics with length, width and height. With this system graphics started to improve their textures' quality level.

Add-on – Something you add on, for instance software updating an already existent version with new features and corrections. It can also be a new version of a game which extends and completes the original version.

AI – Artificial Intelligence – Computerized entities programmed to act autonomously upon pre-set rules and matrixes pre-established by software programmers envisioning a planned behavior.

Arcade – The old videogame machines from the late 70s and the beginning of the 80s decades, operational with build-in computer programs stored in ROM memories. In these machines games were available all the time, although only if a coin was inserted in the slot, since the arcade system resembled a television set furniture where the player used merely the joystick and the buttons.

Camping – A strategy used in *Counter-Strike* games, and that it is simply all about waiting patiently for the adversary controlled-characters until they cross in the right angle and start firing when the adversary is in close range.
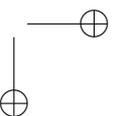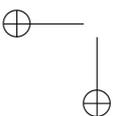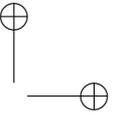
Capture The Flag – A game mode conventionally included in the First Person Shooter meant to be played exclusively online. The objective of this game mode is to increase the notion of community and the clan establishment among *user-players*, the mission is to capture flags in enemy territory to win a game party.

Cartoon – A synonym of animation, a hand-drawn design, usually in color. With new graphic technologies many of the cartoon references get improved in videogames.

CD-ROM – Hardware and software data reading system to CD (Compact Disc) recorded contents. Being a CD-ROM does not mean Audio CD but computer data files recorded on a CD as a memory. ROM implies that the information written on a read-only medium is not "re-writable" (Read-Only Memory).

Cel-Shading – It's a technique to create 3D graphics outlined with thin black strokes, and it applies to colored animated figures, so that there is a direct resemblance with traditional animated cartoons.

CGI – Computer Graphics Interface – What graphic designers refer as 3D graphics or digital special effects.

Check Points – Local point in the game that, once they're trespassed, mark the last stage conquered by the player, in order to make unnecessary start all over the game again every time you loose your life in the game. Normally when the player looses a life in the game he restarts from the checkpoint where it has been saved during last play event.

Choke Points – Points in the game map where teams fight each other forcedly to win decisive battles in the game party context.

Concept Artist – The designers that create the prototype ideas, making the design on paper or solid matter, concerning every blueprint, real or virtual, which end up in special effects films and/or videogames.

Cut-scenes – Animated sequences inserted among interactive moments of the game, whose purpose is solely to expose the remaining narrative in a non-interactive manner. The most modern cut-scenes are not video
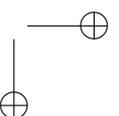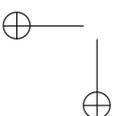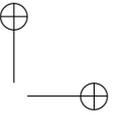
and sound excerpts created with imagery from outside of the game's graphic engine; they're made out of characters graphics and sceneries within the game, so that the player won't feel any difference between the cut-scene sequence and the graphic quality of the game itself. In games like *Half-Life 2* or *Doom III* the player in-between a cut-scene may even control the character's vision and stare at any other spot on the set, because it is a sequence already endowed with some interactivity.

Cyberspace – A term coined by William Gibson in *Neuromancer* and that was later re-introduced in *Burning Chrome*, altogether with another one, the "Matrix Simulator", referring to the new digital landscapes replete with online representative graphic information: cyberspace.

Deathmatch – A game mode of FPS and other videogame genres, whose player's goal is to face tough enemies, sometimes being all about battle against one single major adversary. In other words it is a duel unfolding on an arena.

First Person – A subjective perspective mode (same thing as "In Your Face") that permits simulating the field of vision of a character in the game.

Flashback – Video and sound clips, or animation excerpts, whose purpose is to show previous events, make easier to understand moments of the game's narrative which still unknown to the player.

Flash Forward – Sequences of audiovisual content, made from video, graphics and sonorities of the game, which suggests something that lies beyond the range of the *user-player* both in space and time terms.

FPFG – First Person Fighting Game – The nickname of the game *Breakdown*, in the Microsoft Xbox gaming console, because it has features of a first person fighting as important as the shooting sequences typically appeared in many FPS games.

FPS – First Person Shooter – Shoot'em up genre of videogames whose main attribute is the chance of playing under an enhanced subjective component and the immersion provoked on the player.

LabCom Books
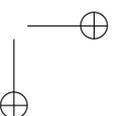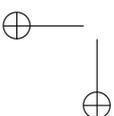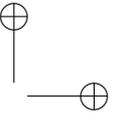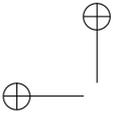
Gameplay – Gameplay is how the whole aspects of the game dynamics as it runs, in an organized manner based on laws (*ludus*), and it is far opposite of "free play" and "free run" game modes (*paidea*).

Gamescape – The landscape of the game, its graphic realm, virtual architecture and characters.

Gamespace – All that the player has permission to discover in the space available to play on the game, which is the playground where one feels free to explore or restricted by the goals designed to accomplish.

GAN – Global Area Network – A worldwide network, like the Internet, for instance.

Graphic Engine – All the code of the programming comprehending the physical properties of objects and scenery under the perspective of simulating gravity laws in the virtual space. The graphic engine, also known as "reality engine", is the instructions which hold what we have seen in cyberspace, in terms of optics and motion.

Hardware – Real world equipment requires a subsystem (software) to insert languages and instructions, commands and routines, in order to execute in rigid and physical manner all that the versatile software virtually allows a user to do.

High-Definition – A feature of digital format images surpassing by far the TV-image and the DVD-Video resolution, revealing a higher graphic resolutions.

High-Resolution – Graphic resolution of images that generated with huge amounts of pixels, so the fine detail shown improvement and in its best quality. This kind of images requires screens, cables and reproduction devices of its own to exhibit all its splendor.

HMD – Head-Mounted Display – The 3D image display invented by Ivan Sutherland for DataGlove interaction.

In Your Face – Expression concerning a videogame interface designed to see all action from the character's eyes point of view, a synonym of FPS.
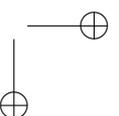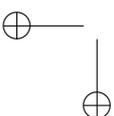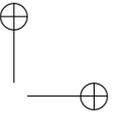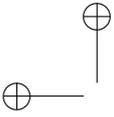
Joystick – A piece of videogame hardware used by the player to control on-screen graphical representations whose origins come from military simulators and warfare tanks.

LAN – Local Area Network – A close range local network, like an Intranet, for example, or any other domestic network, only some computers to be linked together is required.

Maps – Same thing as a virtual environment, digital architecture, gamespace or game level.

MMOFPS – Massively Multiplayer Online First Person Shooter – A FPS videogame designed to be played online with massive participation of players from all-around the world in large scale using "state of the art" gear.

Mods – As the name suggests, "Mods" are modifications introduced by *user-players* to change the game setup, customization is allowed, and these are uploaded to cyberspace to make these modification packs easily and available for the communities which keep looking for it online.

MUD – Multi-User Display – They were created for play or chat online in specifically designed channels, or for both purposes, which can only be used online by *user-players*.

Multiplayer – A game mode conceived to put together with several players interacting between each other in a common gamespace, which is available on local or global networks.

Nav Points – The navigation points, the bearings vector under which the player guides himself along the game to keep walking through and accomplishing the level's objectives and finishing the level.

No-Clip – A kind of code that grants the permission to the FPS player to walkthrough ("no clipping") walls in any spot of the virtual architecture. All that one has to do is to write down the code in command lines window for it to have an effect of unblocking the player-controlled character imprisonment ("clipping").

LabCom Books
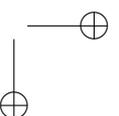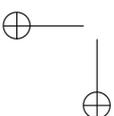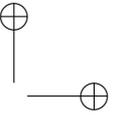
NPC – Neutral characters that interact with a player in the videogame, yet they're non-playable characters. Thus, in last instance they can be all characters on stage because the player just controls his own character in the game.

Online – The act of being plugged into something else, online in a network; usually the term addresses to an Internet or cell phone connection.

Party – Originally the word means cyberculture parties of the 80s where player gathered socially to play online. At such conventions trading homebrew software was pretty regular, like hardware and new media releases. Because this phenomenon coincides with the appearance of the first generation of online games like *Doom*, the "parties" from then on became a synonym of network gaming.

Password – A randomly machine-generated or a user-defined code necessary to have security clearance to access a system with authorization.

PDA – A Personal Data Assistant, digital equipment that works out pretty much like a small laptop for file managing, email checking and running light software applications.

Photorealism – A feature of photographic images which are closer to realism; that is to say, those of photographic register. In videogames, photorealism addresses the highest level of graphic execution in terms of software (graphic engine) and in terms of (graphic cards, gaming consoles and computers) due to the increasing high-resolution.

Polygons – A flat geometric figure with limits set by straight line segments following each other called as "sides". Etymologically has its origins in Ancient Greece and means objects with many (*poly*) angles (*gon*).

Real-Time – Connection speed and communication velocity between digital systems improved by broadband Internet gear. The better the access, the better the real-time experience, without breaks or drops in the image quality or in the interaction flow; means no stops between the given orders and the result unfolding in the application on-screen.
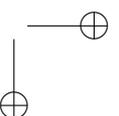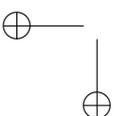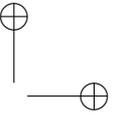
Reality Gaming – A concept of the FPS *Kuma: War*, where the player has the chance to play virtually game parties that recreate real events occurring in the Middle East theatre of war.

Rendering – The process of weaving data of 3D graphics or video editing, that is to say, of calculation, that the computer processor performs after correcting data in a preview version, an alpha or beta version.

RPG – Role-Playing Game – A videogame genre in which players control characters that evolve along the levels of the game in terms of points of experience, looks, attributes and powers. This game mode was imported by board games into videogames and has a strong theatrical component concerning the "on-stage" concept. It's about games where the character changes constantly according to the gameplay one has chosen for, so the non-linearity is implied to the game itself, depending on the role we choose to play.

Script – A written text that triggers effects in a program, for instance a game required for such purpose a sort of storytelling, especially in the new 3D games.

Shareware – Simple computer programs conceived for free usage and meant to be shared among users.

Shoot'em-up – Videogame genre where the player must control a figure on the screen bearing the elimination of every adversity by shooting them at all cost.

Simulation – Graphics system or an abstract system which recreates properties of the real and physical world, all in order to draw conclusions from it afterwards.

Single Player – A game mode in which only one player is able to play at a time.

Sniper – A professional well-trained shooter, an army marksman with expertise in shooting targets at long-range distances by means of telescopic lens.

LabCom Books
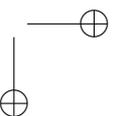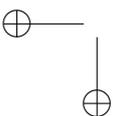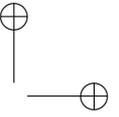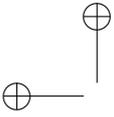
Software – Languages and orders, every type of programs and applications introduced on the hardware, considering the manipulation and use of the latter, its calculation abilities and input data management.

Split Screen – A form of viewing game images which splits the screen in a two halves, is shown the field of action for each player in a different screen, the ideal option for consulting what both are doing on the same screen simultaneously.

Sprite – Two-dimensional images, common in the age of pre-3D graphics, which used to animate static graphics to grant the illusion of motion in old videogames.

Strafe – A kind of movement performed by players in FPS game every time they need to move from one side to another, in order to grant him the ability to spy over corners without being shot or dodging bullets in a line of motion.

Synthespians – A merge of two words: "synth", of "synthetic", plus "thespians", that are dolls. The expression first appears in William Gibson's novel *Idoru*, and addresses one to computerized puppets, almost perfect autonomous virtual characters, until they're no longer understood as graphical representations.

Textures – Cartoonish or photorealistic graphics, or both, applied on virtual architecture's surfaces. High-resolution texture makes very convincing virtual architecture that closer to real, almost to drop the "virtual" part, thanks to their enhanced graphic formats.

Third Person – A perspective mode of videogames in which all the action is seen from behind the controlled character, not requiring a complete simulation of the virtual subject. Put another way it consists merely in representing the character.

User-Player – Every subject using a system or a game program, namely the FPS, for which some technical skills are required for the interaction. Such condition of the subject turns him both a user and a player inseparatelly.
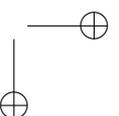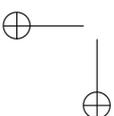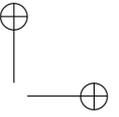
Videogames – Initially videogames were just applications for gaming consoles and game parlors, whereas computer games were designed for computer users only. However, today this distinction no longer makes sense because all videogames run on the same kind of platforms available of computerized hardware, whether its a computer with HD graphics card or a next-generation gaming console.

VR – Virtual Reality – Jaron Lanier's enterprise name that designed products for "Virtual Reality" game experiencing. Simulating the photographic images' realism, this 3D graphics system immerges the player by means of stereoscopic helmets, DataGloves and game commands, or on screens, to establish a believable simulation designed to allow interaction and obtain a response.

Walkthrough – The ability to walk on a place, a course, or the power to transpierce a game surface, surpassing spatial obstacles or unblocking puzzles.

Widescreen – A high width screen in hardware and a viewing mode in image software.

Wi-Fi – A "Wireless Fidelity" communication system that works out by high-fidelity radio waves, a revolution in data communication protocols among digital equipment which discards the use of cables and promotes online cable-less data transfers.

Wireframe – A framework made out of wires, a 3D lines structure over which textures are applied, so that the virtual space surfaces possess any form desired by the user. After the texture mapping, the rendering process puts the computer processing all changes to generate the final perfect imagery, already with lightning effects, shadows casting, embossed surfaces, dynamic textures, smoke, particles, and so on.
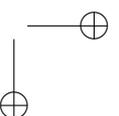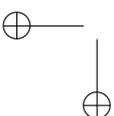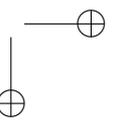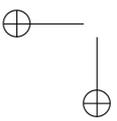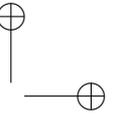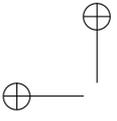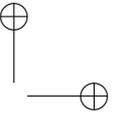
AFTERWORD

If, not that long ago, complaints could be made about the lack of Portuguese research – academically rigorous and accurate – on videogames, today that is a problem we may consider solved. Distrustful at first, our academia gradually realized that it could not keep ignoring a phenomenon so omnipresent and multifaceted that its analysis demands the attention of areas of knowledge as diverse as psychology, economy, sociology or communication sciences, yet so *sui generis* that a need arose to coin a name for it: "Ludology" (despite the fact that, strictly speaking, the term usually denotes just one of those multiple perspectives, the one in vogue in Europe, particularly in the northern countries, and also in South America, while in the United States the opposing narratologic viewpoint has prevailed).

Resuming our train of thought, we may acknowledge that almost four decades after the appearance of the first videogames, three decades after their take-over of the mainstream audience, and more or less one and a half after the awareness that a theory of effects is insufficient to fully embrace the complexity of the phenomenon, some research priorities began to change, even in a peripheral country such as Portugal. Step by step, a community of researchers is taking shape, disseminated by several Higher Education institutions – and thus, fortunately, above corporatist interests, because it is the common concern for Ludology that drives them. It is however increasingly imperative to reach a wider audience, either in order to acquaint it with the work of these national researchers – usually young, since the familiarity with videogames is mostly a generational issue (but not necessarily age-determined) –, either to bring some echoes of what is being done abroad on the field.

This work of Herlander Elias, originally in his Master's dissertation in Communication Sciences, argued in 2007 at the College of Social and Human
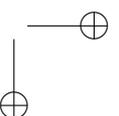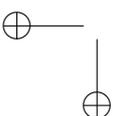
Sciences in the New University of Lisbon (FCSH-UNL), gives a significant contribution to the closing of both gaps. The style, predominantly journalistic – resulting from several years of professional work in the newsrooms of magazines specialized in videogames and in the information technologies – may seem too light-weighted for such academic purposes; in fact, it just proves that accuracy and lightness may be mutually compatible.

Videogames underwent a stunning evolution – in terms of their complexity, realism, etc. – since the pioneers *Space War* or *Adventure*, so much that today an entire academic research project may be devoted solely to one of its multiple genres: in this case, to "First Person Shooters", normally identified by the acronym "FPS". Reading the present work is enough to confirm how wise that choice was. As I have argued a few years ago, and as Herlander Elias also demonstrates, FPS became the most inclusive of the videogame genres, absorbing characteristics that formerly would have seemed extraneous to it. Besides, its sphere of influence is being extended to less ludic areas, such as the field of "graphical user interfaces". Due to the sophistication of software (the "reality engines") and its integration with the hardware (e. g., sound and graphical cards, force-feedback joysticks and joypads), the screen became a "good-enough" (if not preferable) substitute for a much promised but always postponed multi-sensorial virtual reality – as the author at a certain point claims, its shortcomings may be used, just like the hors-champ in cinema, to enhance the surprise element (or even anxiety for the player who is about to be surprised), a key-element in FPS games. Even if there were no other reasons – on those, we must let the pages that precede this afterword speak for themselves –, these would be enough to validate, on the author's side, the relevance of the chosen theme, and to expect, on the reader's side, a curiosity that will make him grab this book and carefully absorb its contents. I know, due to the privilege of having been one of its earliest readers, that those expectations will not be deceived.

Jorge Martins Rosa, Ph.D.
Invited Assistant Professor, Communication Sciences Department,
FCSH-UNL
Lisbon, Portugal
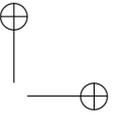
BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARISTARCO, Guido & Teresa (1985). *O Novo Mundo das Imagens Electrónicas*. Lisbon: Edições 70

AARSETH, Espen (2004). "Genre Trouble: Narrativism And The Art of Simulation" in WARDRIP-FRUIN, Noah & HARRIGAN, Pat (eds) (2004), *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, And Game*, pp. 45-55. Cambridge/Massachusets: MIT Press

ATKINS, Barry (2003). *More Than a Game – The Computer Game as Fictional Form*. Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press

AVEDON, Elliott M. and SUTTON-SMITH, Brian (1971). *The Study of Games*. New York: Wiley

BAKER, Robin (1993). *Designing The Future – The Computer Transformation of Reality*. Hong-Kong: Thames & Hudson

BAUDELAIRE, Charles (1993). *O Pintor da Vida Moderna* (1865). Lisbon: Vega

BAUDRILLARD, Jean (1996). *O Crime Perfeito*. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

BAUDRILLARD, Jean (1994). *Simulacros e Simulação*. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

BELLOUR, Raymond (2000). "Presenças Virtuais" in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de & COELHO, Eduardo Prado (Org.) (2000). *Tendências da Cultura Contemporânea*, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens nº28, pp. 349-363. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

143
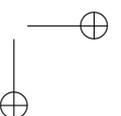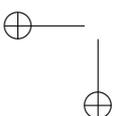
BENEDIKT, Michael (ed) (1991). *Cyberspace: First Steps*. Massachusetts, Cambridge: MIT Press

BITTANTI, Matteo (2005). *Gli Strumenti Del Videogiocare*. Milan: Costa & Nolan

BITTANTI, Matteo and MORRIS, Sue (2005) (Eds.). *Doom: Giocare In Prima Persona*. Milan: Costa & Nolan

BOLTER, Jay David & GRUISIN, Richard (2002). *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (1999). Massachusetts/Cambridge: MIT Press

BUKATMAN, Scott (1993). Terminal Identity: The Virtual Subject in *Postmodern Science Fiction*. London: Duke University Press

CAILLOIS, Roger (1990). ''Capítulo II – Classificação dos Jogos" in *Os Jogos e os Homens: A Máscara e a Vertigem*, pp. 31-57. Lisbon: Cotovia

CASCAIS, António Fernando (2005). ''Corpo, Extensio: Uma Cartografia Segundo HUGO" in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de & COELHO, Eduardo Prado (Org.) (2005). *Espaços, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº34/35, pp. 253-267. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

CASCAIS, António Fernando (2004). ''Entrar Pelos Olhos Dentro: A Cultura Visual da Medicina" in MARCOS, Maria Lucília & CASCAIS, António Fernando (Org.) (2004). *Corpo, Técnica, Subjectividades, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº33, pp. 127-155. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

CASTELS, Manuel (1999). *A Sociedade em Rede*. São Paulo, Brazil: Editora Paz e Terra

COMOLLI, Jean-Louis (1996). "Machines of the Visible" in *Electronic Culture: Technology and Visual Representation*, pp. 109-117. New York: Ed. Timothy Druckrey: Aperture Books

COTTON, Bob & OLIVER, Richard (1994). *The Cyberspace Lexicon*. London: Phaidon
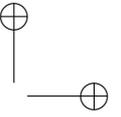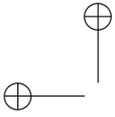
COUCHOT, Edmond (1999). ''Tecnologias da Simulação – Um Sujeito Aparelhado" in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de (Org.) (1999). *Real Vs Virtual, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº25/26, pp. 23-31. Lisbon: Cosmos

CRUZ, Maria Teresa (1997). ''Cultura, Tecnologia e Mediação" in INTER-@CTIVIDADES (1997). Lisbon: CECL (FCSH-UNL)

DELEUZE, Gilles (2004). *A Imagem-Movimento* (1983). Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim

DELEUZE, Gilles (1989). *Différence et Répetition* (1969). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France

DELEUZE, Gilles (1974). *Lógica do Sentido* (1969). São Paulo, Brazil: Perspectiva

DERRIDA, Jacques (1967). *De La Grammatologie*. Paris: Minuit

DERRIDA, Jacques (2001). *Papier-Machine*, Paris: Éditions Galilée

DERY, Mark (1995). *Escape Velocity – Cyberculture at The End of The Century*. New York: Grove Press

DERY, Mark (ed) (1994). *Flame Wars – The Discourse of Cyberculture*. Duhram: Duke University Press

DERY, Mark (2000). ''Introdução: Velocidade de Escape" in *Velocidade de Escape – Cibercultura no Fim do Século*. Coimbra, Portugal: Quarteto

ELIAS, Herlander (ed.) (1999).*Ciberpunk – Ficção e Contemporaneidade*. Lisbon, Portugal (Dist. Sodilivros)

ELIAS, Herlander (2009). *Cyberpunk 2.0: Fiction And Contemporary*. Covilhã, Portugal: LabCom/UBI

ELIAS, Herlander (2007). *Néon Digital: Um Discurso Sobre os Ciberespaços*. Covilhã, Portugal: LabCom/UBI
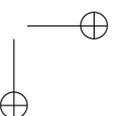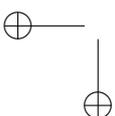
ELIAS, Herlander (2004). "Net Work on Network" in *Leonardo Journal of Arts, Creativity and Technology*, June Issue # 2004. Massachusetts: MIT Press

ELIAS, Herlander (2008). *O Videojogo e o Entretenimento Global: First Person Shooter*. Lisbon, Portugal: MediaXXI/Formalpress

ELIAS, Herlander (2002). *Performing Arts Beyond Shock in a Media Network Culture*, Kapitals Journal. Lisbon, Portugal: ACARTE-Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

ELIAS, Herlander (2006). *The Media-Optimized Society*. Lisbon, Portugal: MediaXXI/Formalpress

ESPERANÇA, Eduardo Jorge (2005). ''Representar os Novos Lugares" in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de & COELHO, Eduardo Prado (Org.) (2005). *Espaços, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº 34/35, pp. 101-109. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

FLUSSER, Vilém (1985). *Filosofia da Caixa Preta*. São Paulo, Brazil: Hucitec

FOUCAULT, Michel (1984). ''Espaços Outros" in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de & COELHO, Eduardo Prado (Org.) (2005). *Espaços, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº34/35, pp. 243-253. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

FOUCAULT, Michel (1987). *Vigiar e Punir: História da Violência nas Prisões*, 14ªedição. Petrópolis, Brazil: Editora Vozes

GALLOWAY, Alexander R. (2006). *Gaming – Essays on Algorhithmic Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

GIANETTI, Claudia (ed) (1998). *Ars Telemática – Telecomunicação, Arte e Ciberespaço*. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

GIBSON, William (1987). *Burning Chrome* (1985). New York: Ace Books

GIBSON, William (1998). Idoru. Lisbon: Gradiva
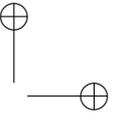
GIBSON, William (1995). *Neuromancer* (1984). London: Voyager/Harper Collins GIBSON, William (1988). *Neuromante*. Lisbon: Gradiva

HAYLES, N. Katherine (2004). "Metaphoric Networks in Lexia To Perplexia" in WARDRIP-FRUIN, Noah & HARRIGAN, Pat (eds) (2004). *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game*, pp. 291-301. Cambridge/Massachusets: MIT Press

HEIM, Michael (1998). *Virtual Realism*. New York: Oxford University Press

HERZ, J.C. (1997). "Chapter 6: Why Doom Rules" in *Joystick Nation*, pp. 83-91. London: Abacus

HUIZINGA, Johan (1980). ''Hommo Luddens – Natureza e Significado do Jogo Como Fenómeno Cultural" in *Hommo Luddens – O Jogo Como Elemento da Cultura* (1938), pp. 3-31. São Paulo, Brazil: Perspectiva

JOHNSON, Steven (1997). "The Desktop" in *Interface Culture – How New Technology Changes The Way We Create and Communicate*. New York: Basic Books

JUUL, Jesper (2005). *Half-Real – Video Games Between Real Rules And Fictional Worlds*. Cambridge, Massachusetts/London: MIT Press

JUUL, Jesper (2004). "Introduction To Game Time" in WARDRIP-FRUIN, Noah & HARRIGAN, Pat (eds) (2004), *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, And Game*, pp. 131-142. Cambridge/Massachusets: MIT Press

KERCKHOVE, Derrick De (2001). *The Architecture of Intelligence*. Switzerland: Bïrkhauser

KERCKHOVE, Derrick de (2004). ''O Senso Comum, Antigo e Novo" in PARENTE, André (Org.) (2004). "I – Novas Imagens, Novos Modelos", Imagem-Máquina – A Era das Tecnologias do Virtual (1993), pp. 56-65. São Paulo, Brazil: Editora 34

LabCom Books
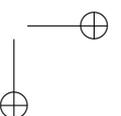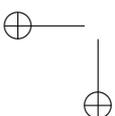
KING, Geoff & KRZYWINSKA Tanya (2006). *Tomb Raiders And Space Invaders – Videogames, Forms & Contexts*. London/New York: I. B. TAURIS & Co

KITTLER, Friedrich (1999). *Gramophone Film, Typewriter* (1986). Stanford: Stanford University Press

KRUEGER, Myron (1977). *Responsive Environments*, in AAVV (2003). *The New Media Reader*, pp. 377-391. Cambridge/Massachusetts: MIT Press

LAIDLAW, Marc (1994). "Virtual Surreality: Our New Romance With Plot Devices" in DERY, Mark (ed) (1994). *Flame Wars – The Discourse of Cyberculture*. Duhram: Duke University Press

LAUREL, Brenda (1993). "Engagement: The First-Person Imperative" in "Chapter Four – Dramatic Techniques For Orchestrating Human Response", Computers as Theatre, pp. 111-125. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley

LAUREL, Brenda (1993). "Virtual Reality" in "Chapter Six – New Directions in Human-Computer Activity", Computers as Theatre, pp. 184-188. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley

LEARY, Timothy (1994). *Chaos & CyberCulture*. Berkeley, California: Ronin

LISBERGER, Steven & DALEY, Brian (1982). *Tron*. Odivelas, Portugal: Europress

LOPES, Ruy Sardinha (1999). ''A Cultura Táctil e as Imagens Electrónicas" in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de (Org.) (1999). *Real Vs Virtual, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº25/26, pp. 359-364. Lisbon: Cosmos

LUZ, Rogério (2004). ''Novas Imagens: Efeitos e Modelos" in PARENTE, André (Org.) (2004). "I – Novas Imagens, Novos Modelos", Imagem-Máquina – A Era das Tecnologias do Virtual (1993), pp. 49-56. São Paulo, Brazil: Editora 34

MANOVICH, Lev (2000). ''A Vanguarda Como Software'' in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de & COELHO, Eduardo Prado (Org.) (2000). *Tendências da Cultura Contemporânea, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº28, pp. 421-441. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

MANOVICH, Lev (2001a). ''Espaço Navegável'', in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de & COELHO, Eduardo Prado (Org.) (2005). *Espaços, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº34/35, pp. 109-143. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

MANOVICH, Lev (2001b). *The Language Of New Media*. Cambridge: MIT Press

MARCOS, Maria Lucília (2000). ''Ligação e Interrupção'' in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de & COELHO, Eduardo Prado (Org.) (2000). *Tendências da Cultura Contemporânea, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº28, pp. 441-448. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

MARCOS, Maria Lucília (2004). ''O Rosto e o Resto'' in MARCOS, Maria Lucília & CASCAIS, António Fernando (Org.) (2004). *Corpo, Técnica, Subjectividades, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº33, pp. 235-247. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

MATEAS, Michael (2004). "Preliminary Poetics For Interactive Drama And Games" in WARDRIP-FRUIN, Noah & HARRIGAN, Pat (eds) (2004). *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance And Game*, pp. 19-33. Cambridge/Massachusets: MIT Press

McLUHAN, Marshall (1977). *La Galaxie de Gutenbergue* Vol.1. Paris: Gallimard

McLUHAN, Marshall (1977). *La Galaxie de Gutenbergue* Vol.2. Paris: Gallimard

McLUHAN, Marshall (1994). *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964). Massachusetts: MIT Press

McLUHAN, Marshall & FIORE, Quentin (1989). *War And Peace In The Global Village* (1968). London: Touchstone – Simon & Schuster

MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de & CRUZ, Maria Teresa (org.) (2002). *Crítica das Ligações na Era da Técnica*. Lisbon: Tropismos

MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de (1998). "Da Nova Mimesis Tecnológica" in GIANETTI, Cláudia (ed) (1998). *Ars Telemática – Telecomunicação, Arte e Ciberespaço*, pp. 179-237. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de (1999). "Fim da Mediação? – De Uma Agitação na Metafísica Contemporânea" in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de (Org.) (1999). *Real Vs Virtual, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº25/26, pp. 293-330. Lisbon: Cosmos

MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de (2005). "Introdução: Geografias – Imaginário e Controlo Da Terra" in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de & COELHO, Eduardo Prado (Org.) (2005). *Espaços, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº34/35, pp. 11-45. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de (1998). "O Controlo do Virtual" in *"III – Da Política", Traços: Ensaios de Crítica da Cultura*, pp. 214-226. Lisbon: Vega

MONFORT, Nick (2004). "Interactive Fiction as Story, Game, Storygame, Novel, World, Literature, Puzzle, Problem, Riddle And Machine" in WARDRIP-FRUIN, Noah & HARRIGAN, Pat (eds) (2004). *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game*, pp. 310-317. Cambridge/Massachusets: MIT Press

MOURÃO, José Augusto (2005). "Do Espaço Teológico ao Ciberespaço" in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de & COELHO, Eduardo Prado (Org.) (2005). *Espaços, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº34/35, pp. 55-71. Lisboa: Relógio d'Água

MULVEY, Laura (2000). "A Caixa de Pandora – Topografias da Curiosidade" in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de & COELHO, Eduardo Prado (Org.) (2000). *Tendências da Cultura Contemporânea, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº28, pp. 449-465. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

NEGROPONTE, Nicholas (1996). *Ser Digital*. Lisbon: Caminho
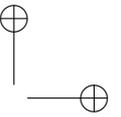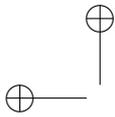
NEWMAN, James (2005). *Videogames* (2004). London/New York: Routledge

OTMAN, Gabriel (1998). *Les Mots de la Cyberculture*. Paris: Belin

PARENTE, André (Org.) (2004). *Imagem-Máquina – A Era das Tecnologias do Virtual* (1993). São Paulo, Brazil: Editora 34

PENNY, Simon (2004). "Representation, Enaction, And The Ethics of Simulation" in WARDRIP-FRUIN, Noah & HARRIGAN, Pat (eds) (2004). *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, And Game*, pp. 73-84. Cambridge/Massachusets: MIT Press

PINTO, Jorge Cruz (2005). ''O Espaço-Limite Da Arquitectura'' in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de & COELHO, Eduardo Prado (Org.) (2005). *Espaços, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº34/35, pp. 209-231. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

POSTER, Mark (2000). *A Segunda Era dos Média* (1995). Oeiras, Portugal: Celta Editora

RHEINGOLD, Howard (1996). ''Capítulo 5 – MUD e Identidades Alternativas'' in *A Comunidade Virtual*, pp. 183-218. Lisbon: Gradiva

RHEINGOLD, Howard (1997). *Realidade Virtual*. Lisbon: Gradiva

RIBEIRO, Luís Cláudio (2005). ''Um Jardim Abandonado Que Desbota'' in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de & COELHO, Eduardo Prado (Org.) (2005). *Espaços, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº34/35, pp. 293-301. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

RIEUSSET-LEMARIÉ, Isabelle (2004). ''Corpos e Imagens Digitais ou o Percurso do Corpo Para Além da Espectralidade'' in MARCOS, Maria Lucília & CASCAIS, António Fernando (Org.) (2004). *Corpo, Técnica, Subjectividades, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº33, pp. 105-127. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

RODRIGUES, Adriano Duarte (2004). ''A Experiência Técnica'' in MARCOS, Maria Lucília & CASCAIS, António Fernando (Org.) (2004).
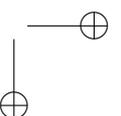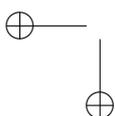
Corpo, Técnica, Subjectividades, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens nº33, pp. 37-49. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

ROSA, Jorge Martins (2000). ''Cibercultura «em Construção»'' in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de & COELHO, Eduardo Prado (Org.) (2000). *Tendências da Cultura Contemporânea, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº 28, pp. 319-335. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

ROSA, Jorge Martins (2000). *No Reino da Ilusão: A Experiência Lúdica Das Novas Tecnologias*. Lisbon: Vega

ROSA, Jorge Martins (2004). ''O Terceiro Incluído: A Subjectividade do Andróide na Ficção de Philip K.Dick'' in MARCOS, Maria Lucília & CASCAIS, António Fernando (Org.) (2004). *Corpo, Técnica, Subjectividades, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº33, pp. 209-227. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

ROSA, Jorge Martins (2001). ''Será a Imersão Inevitável? – Sobre a Convergência de Géneros nos Videojogos'' (1999) in *Comunicação e Sociedade (As Ciências da Comunicação no Espaço Lusófono)*, vol. 3, n.º 1-2, pp. 283-287. Braga, Portugal: University of Minho

SOJA, Edward (2005). ''Em Espaços Diferentes: Interpretando a Organização Espacial das Sociedades'' in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança De & COELHO, Eduardo Prado (Org.) (2005). *Espaços, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº34/35, pp. 301-313. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

STONE, Allucquère Rosanne (1995). *The War of Desire and Technology – at The Close of The Mechanical Age*. Cambridge/Massachusetts: MIT Press

TUCHERMAN, Ieda (2000). ''Entre Anjos e Cyborgs'' in MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de, A. & COELHO, Eduardo Prado (Org.) (2000). *Tendências da Cultura Contemporânea*, Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens nº28, pp. 157-173. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

TURKLE, Sherry (1997). *A Vida no Ecrã*. Lisbon: Relógio d'Água

TURKLE, Sherry (1984). *The Second Self*. New York: Simon & Schuster
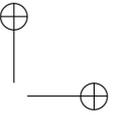
TURKLE, Sherry (1984). "Videogames And Computer Holding Power" (From The Second Self) in AAVV (2003). *The New Media Reader*, pp. 499-515. Cambridge/Massachusets: MIT Press

VIRILIO, Paul (1993). *A Inércia Polar*. Lisbon: Publicações D. Quixote

VIRILIO, Paul (1993). *L'Art du Moteur*. Paris: Galilée

VIRILIO, Paul (1991). The Aesthetics of Disappearance (1980). EUA: Semiotext(e)

VIRILIO, Paul (2000). *The Information Bomb*. London: Verso

VIRILIO, Paul (1994). *The Vision Machine*. Blomington: Indiana University Press

VIRILIO, Paul (2000). *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*. London/New York: Verso
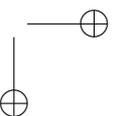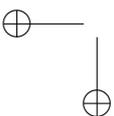
ONLINE DOCUMENTS

BARNET, Belinda (s.d.). *Infomobility and Technics: Some Travel Notes*, in *Ctheory: Theory, Technology and Culture*, Vol.28, Nº3 (2006)

[www.ctheory.net]

BELL, Peter (s.d.). *Realism and Subjectivity in First Person Shooter Video-games* (2007)

[http://gnovis.georgetown.edu/articles/pr009_Realism&SubjectivityF.pdf]

BITTANTI, Matteo (2006). *Do Game Designers Dream of Electronic Sheep?* (2007)

[http://mbf.blogs.com/mbf/files/DickWrightInProgress.pdf]

BITTANTI, Matteo (2006). *From GunPlay to GunPorn: A Techno-Visual History of the First-Person Shooter* (2007)

[www.uem.es/binaria]

BITTANTI, Matteo (2001). *Introduzione in Doom Generation* (2007)

[www.doomworld.com/10years/doomcomic/comic.php]

BITTANTI, Matteo (2006). *Giocando a Myst Nella Torre D'avorio: Tra Equivoci Narrativi e "Letture" Ludologiche* (2007)

[www.videoludica.com]

BITTANTI, Matteo (2006). *Press Start To Play: La Nu Culture Technoludica* (2007)

[www.mattscape.com/images/Press_Start_to_Play.pdf]

BITTANTI, Matteo (2001). *The Technoludic Cinema: Images of Video Games In Movies* (1973-2001) (2007)

[www.mattscape.com/images/TECHNOLUDIC_FILM.pdf]

BOLTER, Jay David (14.02.1997). *Digital Media And Cinematic Point of View in Telepolis* (2007)

[www.heise.de/tp/r4/artikel/6/6105/1.html]
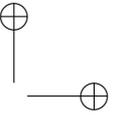
BRICKEN, Meredith (1995). *Virtual Worlds: No Interface to Design* (2007)
[www.hitl.washington.edu/publications/papers/interface.html]

CRANDALL, Jordan (1999). *Anything That Moves – Armed Vision* (2007)
in *C-Theory.Net*, Arthur & Marilouise Kroker (eds.)
[www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=115]

CROGAN, Patrick (2003). *The Experience of Information in Computer Games* (2007)
[www.msstate.edu/Fineart_Online/Backissues/Vol_17/faf_v17_n08/reviews/crogan.html]

CRUZ, Maria Teresa (2000). *Da Nova Sensibilidade Artificial* (2006)
[www.bocc.ubi.pt/pag/cruz-teresa-sensibilidade-artificial.pdf]

DERY, Mark (s.d.). *Marshall McLuhan: The Medium's Messenger* (2007)
[www.levity.com/markdery/mcluhan.html]

ELIAS, Herlander (2006). *Brand New World – O Novo Mundo da Anti-Publicidade* (2006)
[www.bocc.ubi.pt/pag/elias-herlander-brand-new-world.pdf]

ENGELI, Maia (s.d.). *Messages For A First Person Perspective* (2007)
[www.cosignconference.org/cosign2003/papers/Engeli.pdf]

ESKELINEN, Markku (2001). *The Gaming Situation* (2007)
[www.gamestudies.org/0101/eskelinen]

GIBSON, William (1985). *Burning Chrome*, Ace Books, Nova Iorque (2006)
[http://project.cyberpunk.ru/lib/burning_chrome]

GIBSON, William (1988b). *Neuromancer* (2007)
[www.voidspace.org.uk/cyberpunk/neuromancer.shtml]

GRAETZ, J. M. (1981). *The Origin of Spacewar, Creative Computing*, Agosto (2007)
[www.wheels.org/spacewar/creative/SpacewarOrigin.html]

LabCom Books
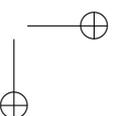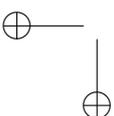
HEETER, Carrie (1992). *Being There: The Subjective Experience of Presence, Presence: Teleoperators and Virtual Environments*. Massachusetts (2007)

[http://commtechlab.msu.edu/randd/research/beingthere.html]

HEETER, Carrie (2001). *Reflections On Real Presence by a Virtual Person*. Michigan State University: São Francisco (2007)

[www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/abs/10.1162/105474603322391587]

LOMBARD, Matthew & DITTON, Theresa (1997). *At The Heart of it All: The Concept of Presence* (2006)

[http://www.ascusc.org/jcmc/vol3/issue2/lombard.html]

McLUHAN, Marshall (1994-98). *The Playboy Interview: Marshall McLuhan*. Playboy Magazine, Março de 1969 (2007)

[www.digitallantern.net/mcluhan/mcluhanplayboy.htm]

MIRANDA, José A. Bragança de (1997). *O Controlo do Virtual* (2007)

[http://ubista.ubi.pt/~comum/miranda-controlo.html]

NITSCHE, Michael (2005). *Games, Montage, and the First Person Point of View* (2007)

[www.lcc.gatech.edu/~nitsche/download/Nitsche_DiGRA_05.pdf]

SABO, Steven (2006). *Clan Culture: Il First Person Shooter Come Prassi Sociale Condivisa* (2007)

[www.videoludica.com/graphic/dynamic/books/pdf/18.pdf]

RHEINGOLD, Howard (1996). *Multi-User Dungeons and Alternate Identities* (2006)

[www.well.com/user/hlr/vcbook/vcbook5.html]

STEUER, Jonathan (1993). *Defining Virtual Reality: Dimensions Determining Telepresence* (2006)

[www.cyborganic.com]
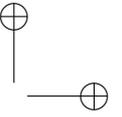
TAYLOR, Laurie (s.d.). *First Person Shooter* in Transizione: L'Eredità di Quake e Doom in BITTANTI, Matteo and MORRIS, Sue (2005) (Eds.). *Doom: Giocare In Prima Persona*. Milan: Costa & Nolan (2007)

[www.videoludica.com]

THOMPSON, Clive (2006). *The Glory of The Shooter*. Wired News. April 10 (2007)

[www.wired.com/news/columns/0,70612-0.html?tw=wn_index_2]

TURKLE, Sherry (1994). *Constructions and Reconstructions of Self in Virtual Reality: Playing in the MUDs*. Massachusetts (2007)

[http://web.mit.edu/sturkle/www/constructions.html]

YOUNG, Bryan–Mitchell (2005). *Riesaminando la storia di half-life dopo doom: un first person shooter con una buona trama?* (2007)

[www.videoludica.com/graphic/dynamic/books/pdf/15.pdf]

YOUNGBLOOD, Gene (1970). *Expanded Cinema* (2007)

[www.ubu.com/historical/youngblood/expanded_cinema.pdf]

WEB SITES
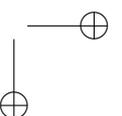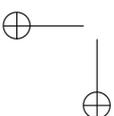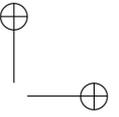
http://culturemachine.tees.ac.uk/Articles/CChesher.htm (2007)

www.cyborganic.com (2006)

www.fpscreator.com (2007)

www.gamasutra.com (2007)

www.gamepro.com (2006)

www.gamestudies.org (2007)

www.gametrailers.com (2006)

www.gamespot.com (2006)

www.half-real.net/gameoflife (2007)

www.ign.com (2007)

www.interact.pt (2006)

www.ludology.org (2007)

www.manovich.net (2005)

www.mattscape.com (2007)

www.rheingold.com (2005)

www.telepresence.org (2007)

www.thewell.com (2006)

www.uem.es/binaria (2007)

www.urbandictionary.com (2007)
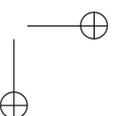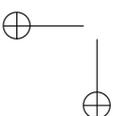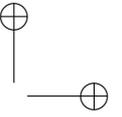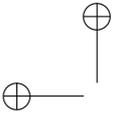
VIDEOGRAPHY

007 – Nightfire (Gearbox, EA Games, 2003; Platform: PC)

America's Army (US Army, US Army, 2002; Platform: PC/MAC)

Battlefield 1942 (Digital Illusions, EA Games, 2002; Platform: PC)

Battlefield 2 (Digital Illusions, EA Games, 2005; Platform: PC)

Battlefield 2142 (Digital Illusions, EA Games, 2006; Platform: PC)

Battle Zone (Atari, Inc, 1980; Platform: Arcade)

Bioshock (2K Boston, 2K Games, 2007; Platform: PC)

Black (Criterion Studios, EA Games, 2006: Platform: PS2)

Breakdown (Namco, 2004; Platform: XBOX)

Break Out (Atari, 1976; Platform: Arcade)

Call Of Duty (Infinity Ward/Activision, Inc., 2003; Platform: PC)

Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare (Infinity Ward/Activision, Inc., 2007; Platform: PC)

Counter-Strike: Source (Valve Software/Sierra Studios, 2004; Platform: PC)

Counter-Strike (Valve Software/Sierra Studios, 2000; Platform: PC)

Crysis (Crytek Studios, EA Games, 2007: Platform: XBOX 360)
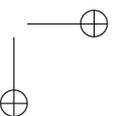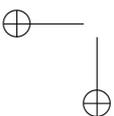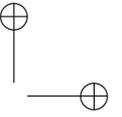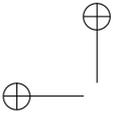
Driller (Incentive Software, Ltd.1987; Platform: C64/128)

Doom (ID Software, Inc, 1993; Platform: PC DOS)

Doom II (ID Software, Inc, 1994; Platform: PC DOS)

Doom III (ID Software, Inc/Activision, Inc., 2005; Platform: PC)

Duke Nukem 3D (3D Realms Entertainment, 1996; Platform: PC DOS)

Far Cry (Crytek/Ubisoft, 2004; Platform: PC)

FPS Creator (The Game Creators, 2004; Platform: PC)

GoldenEye (Rare/Nintendo America, 1997; Platform: N64)

Half-Life (Valve Software/Sierra, 1998; Platform: PC)

Half-Life: Blue Shift (Gearbox Software/Sierra, 2001; Platform: PC)

Half-Life: Opposing Force (Gearbox Software/Sierra, 1999; Platform: PC)

Half-Life: Team Fortress (Sierra, 1999; Platform: PC)

Half-Life 2 (Valve Software/Sierra, 2004; Platform: PC)

Half-Life 2: Episode I (Valve Software/EA, 2006; Platform: PC)

Half-Life 2: Episode II (Valve Software, 2007; Platform: PC)

Half-Life 2: Episode III (Valve Software, 2007; Platform: PC)

Halo – Combat Evolved (Bungie Software/Microsoft, 2001; Platform: XBOX)

Halo 2 (Bungie Software/Microsoft, 2004; Platform: XBOX)

Killzone (Guerilla Games/SCEA, 2004; Platform: PS2)

Kuma: War (Kuma Reality Games, Kuma Reality Games, 2004; Platform: PC)

Mirror's Edge (DICE, Electronic Arts, 2008: Platform: PS3)
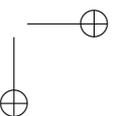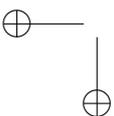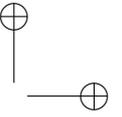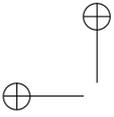
Pong (Atari, 1972; Platform: Arcade)

Prey (Human Head Studios, 2K Games, 2006: Platform: PC)

Quake (ID Software, 1996; Platform: PC)

Quake II (ID Software, 1997; Platform: PC)

Quake III Arena (Raster Productions, LLC/Sega of America, Inc., 2000; Platform: Dreamcast)

Red Steel (Ubi Soft, Ubi Soft, 2006: Platform: Wii)

Silent Scope (Konami/Konami America, 2000; Platform: PS2)

Tron 2.0 (Monolith Productions/Buena Vista Games, Inc., 2003; Platform: PC)

Unreal (Epic Games, GT Interactive, 1998; Platform: PC)

Wolfenstein 3D (ID Software, Activision, Inc., 1994; Platform: JAGUAR)

XIII – Thirteen (Ubi Soft/Ubi Soft, 2003; Platform: PC)
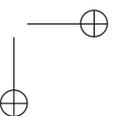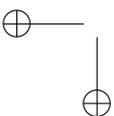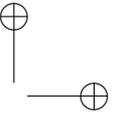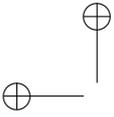
CAPTION:

Arcade
C64 – Commodore 64
C128 – Commodore 128
CBM – Commodore Business Machines
Dreamcast – Sega Dreamcast
GBA – Nintendo Game Boy Advance
Genesis – Sega Genesis
JAGUAR – Atari JAGUAR
MAC – Machintosh
N64 – Nintendo 64
NES – Nintendo Entertainment System
PC – Personal Computer com Windows
PC DOS – Personal Computer com Windows
Philips CD-I – Philips Compact Disc Interactive
PSP – Sony PlayStation Portable
PSX – Sony PlayStation
PS2 – Sony PlayStation 2
PS3 – Sony PlayStation 3
Super NES – Super Nintendo
Wii – Nintendo Wii
XBOX – Microsoft Xbox
XBOX 360 – Microsoft Xbox 360
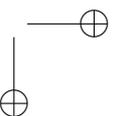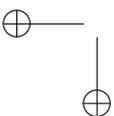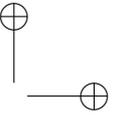
FILMOGRAPHY

Aliens (James CAMERON, 1986)

Alien 3 (David FINCHER, 1992)

Avalon (Mamoru OSHI, 2005)

Chungking Express (Wong KAR-WAI, 1994)

Duel (Steven SPIELBERG, 1971)

Doom (Andrzej BARTKOWIAK, 2005)

Elephant (Gus VAN SANT, 2003)

eXistenZ (David CRONENBERG, 1999)

Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within (Hironobu SAKAGUCHI, Motonori SAKAK-IBARA, 2001)

Game, The (David FINCHER, 1997)

Halloween (John CARPENTER, 1978)

Johnny Mnemonic (Robert LONGO, 1995)

Lawnmower Man, The (Bret LEONARD, 1992)

Man With a Movie Camera, The (Dziga VERTOV, 1929)

Matrix, The (Larry and Andy WACHOWSKY, 1999)
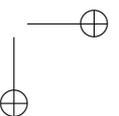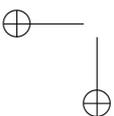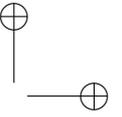
Matrix Reloaded (Larry and Andy WACHOWSKY, 2003)

Matrix Revolutions (Larry and Andy WACHOWSKY, 2004)

No Maps For These Territories – William GIBSON (Mark NEALE, 2003)

Panic Room (David FINCHER, 2002)

Rear Window (Alfred HITCHCOCK, 1954)

Shining, The (Stanley KUBRICK, 1980)

Strange Days (Kathryn BYGELOW, 1997)

Terminator 2 – Judgement Day (James CAMERON, 1991)

Tron (Steven LISBERGER, 1982)

Until The End of The World (Wim WENDERS, 1990)

Vertigo (Alfred HITCHCOCK, 1958)

X-Files – FPS Episode (Escrito por William GIBSON e Tom MADDOX, 2000)
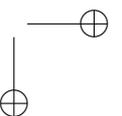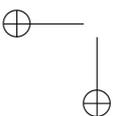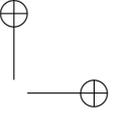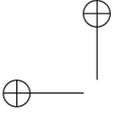
CHRONOLOGICAL APPENDIX

BATTLE ZONE

 (Atari, Inc, 1980)

 Platform: ARCADE

- Originally it was an arcade videogame.
- It was well-known or its mobile wireframe vehicles.
- Just a simulator of armored tanks warfare.
- The first public access globalized First Person Shooter.

DRILLER

 (Incentive Software, Ltd.1987)

 Platform: COMMODORE 64/128

- The earliest colored first-person enabled videogame.
- It was released as the first videogame with 3D opaque texturized universe.

DOOM

 (ID Software, Inc, 1993)

 Platform: PC DOS
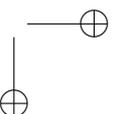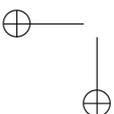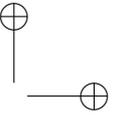
- A pioneer FPS which became notorious among personal computers.
- It had fantasized labyrinths and science-fiction scenarios.
- The game where different kinds of weaponry first appeared.
- *Doom* was contemporary of modems and the Internet.
- As a game it was responsible for both local networked and multi-player modes.
- Managed to generate international player communities.
- Featured 2D graphics in the characters and some 3D parts in the sets.
- In terms of architecture it abolishes some conventional spatial restrictions.
- Walls, floors and ceilings could be heterogeneous and multi-platform.
- *Doom* was the first to reveal exterior hazardous zones.
- The *Doom* communities established firstly the maps-levels of add-on gaming.
- 15 million shareware copies were sold.
- 150 thousand copies were bought directly to ID Software.
- Many considered it to be an instant best-seller.
- Cyberspace's first virtually distributed videogame.
- Elected the best 3D game of all time.
- It descends from *Battle Zone*.
- Features a notorious cyberpunk aesthetic.
- Even today *Doom*'s concept is so resonant that in its sequels fear still is the driving-force.

WOLFENSTEIN 3D

(ID Software, Activision, Inc., 1994)

Platform: ATARI JAGUAR
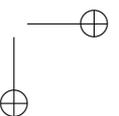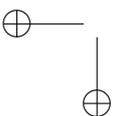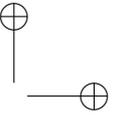
- Considered to be, during the 90s, the most famous FPS in the world, with 3D sceneries and 2D characters.

- The weapon was viewed from the center of the screen, as in Doom, in 2D.

- After *Wolfenstein*, polygons became fully textured.

- *Wolfenstein 3D* was made just in 2 months.

- One of the first games allowed the player to strafe.

- It resembled cartoonish images even in the gun blasts.

- In the same way as *Doom Online*, it changed the distribution process because it was published free as a shareware title.

DOOM II

(ID Software, Inc, 1994)

Platform: PC DOS

- *Doom II* improved Doom's graphic engine.

- Despite it was not fully integrated in 3D, it still managed to supply that illusion with versatile graphics.

- Like the first FPS videogames, *Doom II* was still only played through the keyboard.

DUKE NUKEM 3D

(3D Realms Entertainment, 1996)

Platform: PC DOS

- Pioneer FPS game is introduced as an blockbuster action movie.

- To compare with contemporary *Doom* games, it was still not fully in 3D.

- In terms of architecture *Duke Nukem 3D* cast the game out of the regular cube schematics.

- Provided circular body motion to the player-controlled character.

LabCom Books
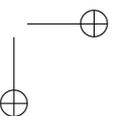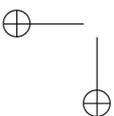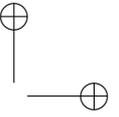
QUAKE

(ID Software, 1996)

Platform: PC

- The revolution happens again in *Quake*, to allow player to do everything in 3D.
- *Quake* brought the motion displacement system by keyboard commands and the sight system by mouse control.
- It starred as the first FPS prepared from scratch for networked gaming.
- Elevators and teleports make its architecture quite innovative.
- *Quake* age is that of the conventional 3D FPS by means of mouse and keyboard.
- Its powerful graphic engine was capable of generating 3D characters, particle effects, spaces and vehicles.
- *Quake* made the networked gaming popular for both local and global parties and allowed 16 players to play simultaneously.
- Was responsible for making ID software the biggest FPS enterprise in the world.
- Later it marked the launch of software applications for programming the game *Quake* in a code language called of "Quake C".
- It made possible to grow "Quake community" effectively, it has custom-made levels and modified games for exchange among fans.

QUAKE II

(ID Software, 1997)

Platform: PC

- *Quake II* increased the realism in FPS games with deluxe graphics.
- Thanks to OpenGL technology, *Quake II* showed 3D transparent water and multicolored lightning casting over objects.
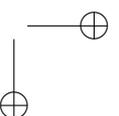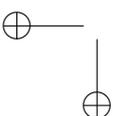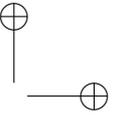
- It became the first FPS with an argument of its own.

GOLDENEYE

(Rare/Nintendo America, 1997)

Platform: NINTENDO 64

- *GoldenEye* is the official videogame of a famous James Bond's motion picture of the same name.
- It owed much of its originality to realistic sets, improved AI and objective-driven missions.
- Game's architecture replicated the film's places.
- *GoldenEye* brought the split-screen multiplayer mode to the FPS genre.
- "Deathmatch" was the most practical multiplayer mode.
- This game instals the FPS genre in gaming consoles.
- Became one of the best film transitions ever made into videogames.

UNREAL

(Epic Games, GT Interactive, 1998)

Platform: PC

- Thanks to a better graphic engine Unreal implements a new aesthetic in the FPS genre.
- What really matter was the action gameplay in beautiful sets and not the argument.
- His "Unreal engine" was so powerful that permitted the introduction of lights, reflections and shadings.
- The game environments were so ambitious in their fully-detailed closed spaces and wide atmospheric spaces.
- In some versions the game had an add-on with a map editor available for the *user-player*.

LabCom Books
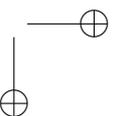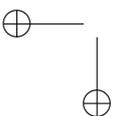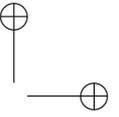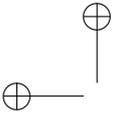
HALF-LIFE

(Valve Software/Sierra, 1998)

Platform: PC

- The only FPS elected as "game of the year" by all videogames magazines.
- Strong cinematic plays set up revolution on the FPS genre.
- It was pretty much based on the narrative structure, then the game allow the player experienced thrilling gameplay.
- Introduced NPCs interaction as a core element in the game.
- Along the levels there was no monotonous gameplay, each level was unique and did not match any pattern.
- The focus was upon the single player mode according to pre-established goals.
- *Half-Life* was so volatile in terms of game situations that it opened a path to user-modifyed versions like the famous *Counter-Strike*.

HALF-LIFE: TEAM FORTRESS

(Sierra, 1999)

Platform: PC

- The first network application relies on *Half-Life*'s graphic engine which the principle is based upon teamwork.
- *Half-Life* became as an addictive game during *Team Fortress* its first technically straight sequel, only before the mod *Counter-Strike* became officially a new multiplayer-based game.
- *Half-Life: Team Fortress* flags the appearance of the MMOFPS genre.

HALF-LIFE: OPPOSING FORCE

(Gearbox Software/Sierra, 1999)

Platform: PC
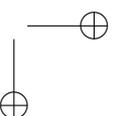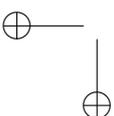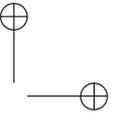
- *Half-Life: Opposing Force* makes available for the player to play the amazing *Half-Life* from a new perspective. If in *Half-Life* the player controlled Gordon Freeman, who has ran away from aliens and against the special armed forces troops, in *Half-Life: Opposing Force* he'll be able to play in the shoes of one of those soldiers.

- Strong narrative, interactivity, make *Half-Life: Opposing Force*, altogether with *Half-Life: Blue Shift*, a new kind of series of high-quality "add-on" applications that emerged based on Half-Life's graphic engine.

QUAKE III ARENA

(Raster Productions, LLC/Sega of America, Inc., 2000)

Platform: Sega Dreamcast

- Unlike *Quake II*, this third chapter of the *Quake* series exhibits an investment on arenas, that is to say, in closed places where players fight until they're exausted, instead of walking through game maps with variable architecture.

- *Quake III Arena* elevated the FPS quality in gaming consoles, still it was not argument-focused, for its inclination was more to networked gameplay so it required instantaneous action game modes.

SILENT SCOPE

(Konami/Konami America, 2000)

Platform: PS2

- First "shoot'em up" with a subjective view mode based on the sniper concept.
- A game which improves the scale of graphics towards realism in buildings and vehicles.
- The player would use a weapon with a built-in telescopic, aim to shoot criminals down or become a voyeur by observing the closer apartment windows.

LabCom Books
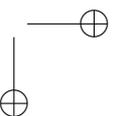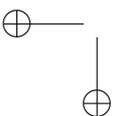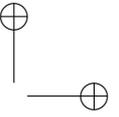
COUNTER-STRIKE

(Valve Software/Sierra Studios, 2000)

Platform: PC

- A cult FPS released after Half-Life that still has more online fans nowadays.
- Provided the FPS genre with more tactical and strategic elements for the first person perspective.
- It is known by its weapon scope and its specific situations that fits the online game.

HALF-LIFE: BLUE SHIFT

(Gearbox Software/Sierra, 2001)

Platform: PC

- *Half-Life: Blue Shift* was released after *Half-Life* and, altogether with *Half-Life: Opposing Force*, it completes the add-ons that permits to play the game, not under the point of view of the leading character, but instead as one of the other intervenient factions (police men).
- *Half-Life: Blue Shift*, as the name indicates, addresses one to blue shift, it means a change to the blue, given that it made possible to play with the cop cooperative NPC in an active form in the game. In this add-on the player experiences *Half-Life* as the cop, and not as Gordon Freeman, the protagonist.

HALO – COMBAT EVOLVED

(Bungie Software/Microsoft, 2001)

Platform: XBOX

- This blockbuster FPS provides already double weapon gameplay.
- *Halo* required that players should drive both terrestrial and airborne vehicles.
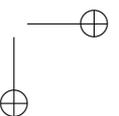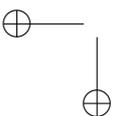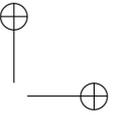
- In alternative the game permits switching between first and third person perspectives.
- *Halo* introduced science-fiction sets along with realistic and paradisiac sets.
- It presented deluxe visual cinematic sequences of FMVs.
- The gameplay modes available are teamwork with NPCs and online simultaneously.
- Realistic, wide, sunny exteriors and fully-detailed indoor architectures were available in *Halo*.

AMERICA's ARMY

(US Army, US Army, 2002)

Platform: PC/MAC

- The first designed, conceived and published FPS exclusively under the authority of the North-American U.S. Army.
- A game that serves the purpose of recruiting young men to join the army strategically.
- Conceptually it is designed for network play only, even though it is possible to play off-line for training levels.
- America's Army is based on accuracy situations, in terms of aiming skills, opportunities to open fire and camouflage tactiques.
- It's undoubtedly a realistic type of FPS, relying on actual military strategies and that simulates contemporary theaters of war.
- The RPG system on it leads the player to control a soldier and evolve in its ranking score, either in its life as a soldier, or in instantaneous action situations.

BATTLEFIELD 1942

(Digital Illusions, EA Games, 2002)

Platform: PC
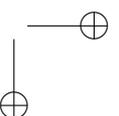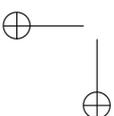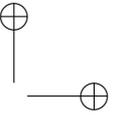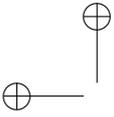
- *Battlefield 1942* is an innovative game standing out due to its multiplayer mode.

- Immensely big sceneries show an ambitious design.

- It features immediate action situations in cartoon style.

- Unique in how it lets the player to choose any computer-controlled character and where they wish to stand on the map.

- One of the key points is to try to gather platoons among the multiplayer action chaos to achieve victory upon the enemy.

007 – NIGHTFIRE

(Gearbox, EA Games, 2003)

Platform: PC

- A new FPS officially based in Ian Fleming's James Bond character.

- High-quality graphics and awesome representations make it a sort of "playable film".

- It features a captivating argument and shooting sequences, riddles and fast car pursuits.

- It is known as a virtual remake of 007's commonly dramatic stunts.

CALL OF DUTY

(Infinity Ward/Activision, Inc., 2003)

Platform: PC

- The most spatially vast, realistic and addictive FPS about the World War Two.

- Performs a simulation on the "D Day", the disembark of the allied troops in Normandie beaches.

- *Call of Duty* cannot hide its major inspiring source: Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*.
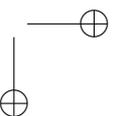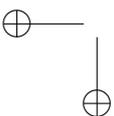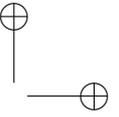
- An attempt to play a version of an already existent film, with an identical narrative and resembling scenic points, though the first person perspective.

XIII – THIRTEEN

(Ubi Soft/Ubi Soft, 2003)

Platform: PC

- *XIII* is a new type FPS because it features comics' visuals language.
- The game presents "cel-shading" graphics to provide a cartoon appearance.
- Stands on a strong narrative component and draws the player into sudden action.
- It is based on the Belgium author Jeanne Van Hamme's comics.
- *XIII*, the game, follows the same logic as the comics before it, by means of flashbacks, under which the player gets to know the previous story still untold.

TRON 2.0

(Monolith Productions/Buena Vista Games, Inc., 2003)

Platform: PC

- After the release of the movie based on a videogame *Tron 2.0* features the videogame world in its virtual excellence following the fiction realm of the previous film.
- *Tron 2.0* is a game that teleports the player into the computer world through Alan Bradley's eyes.
- More revolutionary light effects and good graphic engine surpass the special effects displayed on the film.
- It demands powerful sound and graphic cards hardware.

LabCom Books
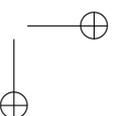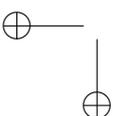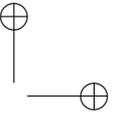
COUNTER-STRIKE: SOURCE

(Valve Software/Sierra Studios, 2004)

Platform: PC

- A new version of *Counter-Strike*, the FPS that began as a "Mod" of *Half-Life* and it benefits with *Half-Life 2*'s graphic engine abilities.

- This time a FPS based in strategic elements gets deluxe graphics combined with new and photorealistic architectures.

- The game exhibits technical improvements in networked play allowing players to control a soldier in anti-terrorism combat faction or, on other side, a terrorist.

KUMA: WAR

(Kuma Reality Games, 2004)

Platform: PC

- A FPS is inspired on the TV channel news reports format on real war stories, namely CNN's news format.

- *Kuma: War* is an FPS in which the player can play several levels, explore many game maps simulating army troops deploying situations in Iraq, Kwait, Afganistan, among many other destinations.

- As an FPS it improves "reality gaming", since all its virtual environments recreate places, situations and events that really happened, so fiction is not what holds the argument in the game.

- The idea behind *Kuma: War* is that it serves as an attempt to make in gaming what had already happened on "Reality TV", only this time players can experience simulations of situations which belong to History.

BREAKDOWN

(Namco, 2004)

Platform: XBOX
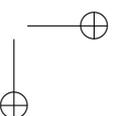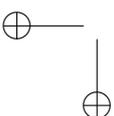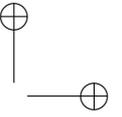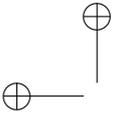
- A groundbreaking FPS exclusively exists in gaming consoles.

- *Breakdown* is also know as a "First Person Fighting Game".

- Some of the many improved features were using objects, accessories, fighting and shooting in the first person.

- One of the interesting "add-ons" was how hands and legs could be moved by players.

- The leading character in the game could drink and even talk under the perspective of its eyes.

FAR CRY

(Crytek/Ubisoft, 2004)

Platform: PC

- After the release of *Halo*, *Far Cry* is the first FPS to get the FPS genre from the ordinary condition of science-fiction, closed, underground, gothic space.

- This game inserts the paradisiac places, common in tropical islands, in the FPS genre as a technical challenge to next-generation gaming where places even have massive areas of vegetation.

- Its visual splendor, the photorealism, it is only possible thanks to *CryTek Studios*' *CryEngine* software.

- Most advanced AI deals with group tactics and automatically requests for backups troops by sea, land or air.

HALO 2

(Bungie Software/Microsoft, 2004)

Platform: XBOX

- Well-succeeded *Halo* sequel presents exuberant visuals and even wider environments.

- More cinematic videos turn the game into the playable part of a film.

LabCom Books
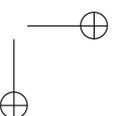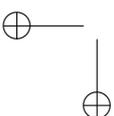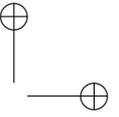
- The player assumes the role of a genetically modified soldier known as Master Chief.

- In this sequel players can get the weapons from foes by lying on the ground.

KILLZONE

(Guerilla Games/SCEA, 2004)

Platform: PS2

- The most immersive FPS made in Holand by a software house that whorships the genre.

- *Killzone* is a FPS of great graphic apparatus, revolutionary in terms of photography aesthetic.

- Along the game the leading character keeps on changing, among a scope of four characters available, each one with a very distinctive style.

- How the characters did climb up or down ladders in the game was one of the best and peculiar recreations of a real subject moving.

- One of the best and peculiar recreations of a real subject moving is the action for characters who can climb up or down ladders in the game.

- Concerning architecture, *Killzone* was famous by introducing foggy white light effects used with a graphic engine designed specifically for this game.

HALF-LIFE 2

(Valve Software/Sierra, 2004)

Platform: PC

- Right after *Halo* and *Far Cry*, the *Half-Life* series had to be even more avant-garde; this is why *Half-Life 2* dethrones all genre conventions.
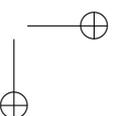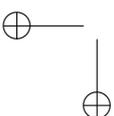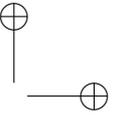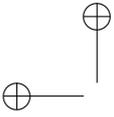
- It became the first FPS whose gameplay experience, so much cinematic, makes players remember what they have done and shared online.

- Again it was elected as the best FPS of the world, for putting together all good qualities of next-generation games supplied with audiovisual top effects.

- Because it was ahead of its time, *Half-Life 2* employs all 3D graphics techniques supported by the computer, such as shadows, 3D textures, smoke, fog clouds, light, staged accidents, gigantic and different maps.

- A strong AI component turns the game into a unique experience sprinkled with behavior details in characters with many different heights.

- NPCs interact with us as if we were inside the game, staring at us all the time, regardless to where we head into.

- Holding everything is the grand narrative which carries the player easily into a virtual universe, seducing him to continue also in the sequels.

- It just the game where the interactive characters are most perfect ever seen, with lips movements synchronized with speech recognition software.

BATTLEFIELD 2

(Digital Illusions, EA Games, 2005)

Platform: PC

- A multiplayer FPS enables MMOFPS features.
- *Battlefield 2* introduces huge graphic environments as its predecessor but in a more refined graphic engine.
- The game provides immediate action sequences, now photorealistic.
- Through a more sophisticated interface the game still permits the player to play with any character standing anywhere on the map.

LabCom Books
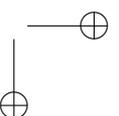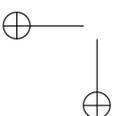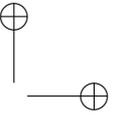
- Unlike its predecessor, the game focus contemporary warfare gear, and not World War II weaponry.

DOOM III

(ID Software, Inc/Activision, Inc., 2005)

Platform: PC

- After *Half-Life*, *Doom III* was the most expected, yet the scariest, videogame.

- It's a game that does not have quiet periods, of not much of an action.

- The game's AI reflects the strategy to surprise us constantly, taking into account that foes come out of everywhere, appearing before us to eliminate us.

- The first FPS entirely made in high-resolution video-quality footage in a hyperreal fashion.

- *Doom III* provides immersion in its virtual horror ground, thanks to the graphic realism.

- In *Doom III* fear is the weapon of the hostile environment way before the attacks.

- Everytime a cinematic sequence is triggered as we move from a first person perspective into a third person perspective, and then back again.

- There is fear and the tension of choosing to switch on the light instead of using the firearm, since we can only choose one thing at a time.

- Armies are not the focus to defeat here, there is a direct combat between us and a monstruous adversary; confrontation is personal, a pure hunt between hunter and prey, predator and victim.

- *Doom III* has mystery to unfold; one needs to keep an eye on PDAs, computers, acces cards, unblocking codes, talk and interact with survivors.
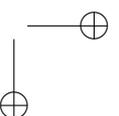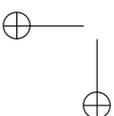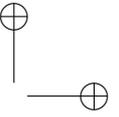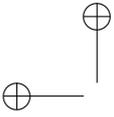
- Ths FPS is the first game to process lightning and shadows in real-time 3D images, because of its cutting-edge graphic engine.

- Images showing on computer screens and other hardware found in the facilities are amazingly in detailed.

BATTLEFIELD 2142

(Digital Illusions, EA Games, 2006)

Platform: PC

- After the success of the *Battlefield* series' previous games, this chapter displays a science-fiction scenario, providing robotics, "mechs" and spaceships.

- The game explores the latest graphic cards rendering deluxe graphics to make phantasy scenarios look believable.

- Still continues targeting large-scale networked game play in the MMOFPS mode.

BLACK

(Criterion Studios, EA Games, 2006)

Platform: PS2

- A FPS that stands apart from the many due to its obvious fetish 3D guns.

- The sonic parts, gestures and graphics are ver well enhanced.

- *Black* recreates merely every action movie clichés and imports them into the game as situations of the game; moreover, it transforms that in gameplay.

- Its strong factor is the graphic engine, in *Black*, all there on stage is breakable, easy to shatter and can be destroyed in 3D since every object enables realistic explosions.

- Explosions and the choreographies of the adversaries are highly cinematic.

LabCom Books
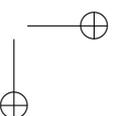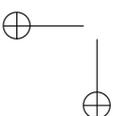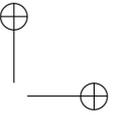
- The sceneries in this FPS remake environments full of dust, trash, debris, fire, glass, metal and smoke trails, for instance.

PREY

(Human Head Studios, 2K Games, 2006)

Platform: PC

- Prey fits in the same audiovisual level as Doom III, still it does not remain only as such, because it adds to the dark places a phenomenal lightning system.
- In this FPS the player don't travel only in a horizontal way through the sceneries, since he can also magnetically walk over walls and on the ceiling, given that the player is out of the ground.
- Another item to mention, considering the power of its graphic display, is the simulation of the leading character's supernatural powers. The player can get out of the body of the character in a spiritual and phantasmatic manner.

RED STEEL

(Ubi Soft, Ubi Soft, 2006)

Platform: Nintendo Wii

- A groundbreaking next-generation FPS, available for the Nintendo Wii gaming console, full of dynamism and featuring new elements.
- Red Steel is new in its approach, given that the game controller permits the player to move as the controller detects his arm movements and translate it into the gameplay.
- One of the new functions introduced is the chance to use a firearm or sword at the same time with the analogue controller.
- The new hand position seen in the first person that allows a new type of subjectivity representation in the game, where the hands do not move just in one field, they're dynamic and perform many combinations.
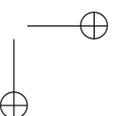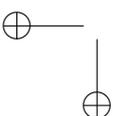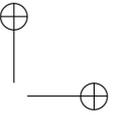
- In Red Steel the player feels more within the game, takes into account that the images also enable blurring vision every time there is a damage or a nearly death situation, in case one tries to shoot something out.

- During the game one may twist completely the wrist, shooting with a firearm and blocking the attacks with another, being each one controlled by an analogue Wi-Fi controller.

CRYSIS

(Crytek Studios, EA Games, 2007)

Platform: XBOX 360

- After the enormous success of *Far Cry* and its sequels, Crytek created an even better graphic engine that made exterior environments evry impressive in a next-generation gaming console, in terms of videography and physics simulation quality.

- Its advance in audiovisuals allowed 3D rendering with high-resolution photography maps.

- The richness of the sceneries was in the digital landscapes of forest, including air humidity, multiform and heterogenous configuration vegetation due to wind currents.

- Amazing lightning effects and sound effects make Crysis a deluxe FPS unveiling a new path to the FPS: as an audiovisual experience that is able to compete with filmmaking.
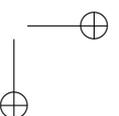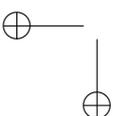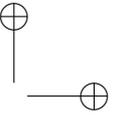
ALSO BY HERLANDER ELIAS

Cyberpunk 2.0 – Fiction And Contemporary (2009). Covilhã, Portugal: LabCom Books (online) – University of Beira Interior

First Person Shooter – O Videojogo e o Entretenimento Global (2008). Lisbon, Portugal: MediaXXI-Formal Press

Néon Digital: Um Discurso Sobre os Ciberespaços (2007). Covilhã, Portugal: LabCom Books (online) – University of Beira Interior

The Media-Optimized Society (2006). Lisbon, Portugal: MediaXXI-Formal Press

Ciberpunk: Ficção e Contemporaneidade (1999). Lisbon, Portugal: Herlander Elias (Ed.), Dist. Sodilivros
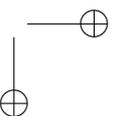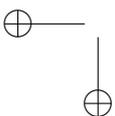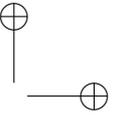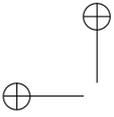
ABOUT THIS BOOK

Herlander Elias has a trajectory in Communication Sciences including mostly Journalism and Academic Research. On the academic and scientific domain this Communication Sciences Master's Dissertation of his stands out, in the expertise of "Contemporary Culture And New Technologies", thus entitled "First Person Shooter: The Subjective cyberspace" (2007). This Dissertation, that consists on an essay on the next-generation videogames, as relevant new media, had its conclusion with its public defense in September 10th, 2007, in the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas at the University Nova of Lisbon (New UNL). This public defense of Elias' Master Dissertation was chaired by António Fernando Cascais (supervisor Ph.D.), Óscar Mealha (major Jury Ph.D.) and Jorge Martins Rosa (secondary Jury Ph.D.).