

Death, a minor annoyance or an invitation to play?

Games involve a lot of death, it's hard to play them without encountering death in some format. But what does death mean in the context of games? This paper seeks to explore death firstly as a concept internally in games, then use the works of Heidegger and Sartre to explore the phenomenological aspects. Does death bring structure to the magic circle? Can we play games more authentically when there is the possibility of ejection from the game?

Introduction

This exploration will start with how death functions as a process in current digital games and examine its effects. Secondly, and in the main part, I will explore the relationship between two major proponents of existential phenomenology and the alternate realities of game worlds. I will discuss the relationship between death and permanent death, the relationship between Huizinga's (2000) concept of the magic circle and pervasive games, how traditional phenomenological existentialism can be applied inside the magic circle and bring in the works of Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre as ways to think about existence and non-existence inside games.

One might expect a study of death in games to be morbid, but this is not intended to be about the sticky factuality or gory depictions. Instead it will be more about living and reality, through the lens of existential thought. In games, death is not the fatal end that it is in the world outside of the experience of play, however it is universally present. Death in gaming is not a good reflection of what death means to us in "real" life. Are there parallels between "real" life and life in the magic circle?

Violence and death are well represented in current video games and there appears to be an industry trend towards greater realism. In this paper I am interested in what death means in game play terms, not the way the transition between life and death is depicted. It's not my place here to discuss the depiction of violence in video games or the connection between violence and death, that isn't the goal of this exploration.

Death in games

The idea of death is a common one in play. It figures in early childhood even when children don't yet have a full understanding of its meaning. Playground games are reflections of the culture around them, and as death is an ever present partner to life, so death appears in play. Children play games that simulate or symbolise activities where death might occur, either playing at soldiers, cowboys, or further back as knights, carrying out a dialogue with the broader culture, exploring and defining themselves in relation to it. Death in more structured games is first and foremost a continuation of this cultural rhetoric and representative of the grounding of play in society.

Even though in the frame of the game it still has cultural relevance, death is not dealt with fully, it is usually a symbol for certain rules or game mechanics, rather a full realisation of death's fatal implications. In digital games this approach to death is continued, in most cases it is merely an annoyance and some form of dislocation of the avatar. The form of this minor annoyance the player may experience is different from game to game. It can take the shape of going to the back of a queue, lying on the ground pretending, returning to a save point, re-spawning, losing experience points or how fast you need to go through the coins in your pocket.

Outside of games though, death is more than just a speedbump. Depending on your outlook it can either be the end of existence or a transition to the next. In either of these scenarios there is a parallel with stepping into and out of the magic circle of play. So can being ejected from a game be compared to death?

Initially this research started out looking at death in the context of Role Playing Games (RPGs) has expanded in an attempt to generalise the findings and look at death, and what it represents across other game and play types. In many RPGs, both earlier Pen and Paper (PnP) types and more recent online versions, death is ever present, but often not very permanent. Due to the fantasy nature of these worlds death is often an inconvenience not the end of a character. Players can be resurrected or revived. Players have even had to invent a new word, *Permadeath*, to fill the linguistic gap left by the devaluation of so called normal death (Wikipedia, 2008). If the impact of death has become reduced and is escapable, then there must be the death that exists that is the total loss of one's character.

Death appears obviously or symbolically in games other than RPGs. In traditional board games like chess we see pieces taken or 'killed' and finally the king taken in a symbolic 'killing'. In the play of make believe violence, cowboys and indians, WWII, etc, death is also very present. However, even though it is present in non-digital games, it is not nearly as common as it is in commercial computer games, where it is nearly ubiquitous.

The commonality in all these games is that player death is related to the idea of risk, payoff and punishment. Death (of the character or avatar) is the natural punishment for players taking risks in a game situation. In these games can be examined as if they were systems of uncertainty or chance as Salen & Zimmerman describe in their book on game design (2003, Ch 15). In RPGs and similar games these minor deaths are a consequence of losing and so are similar to losing a stake in gambling. The reward is not monetary in real world terms, but is instead in-game achievement.

All games can be seen as these systems of uncertainty where the players are taking risks, gambling their characters deaths, money (gambling or in old style video arcades) or more generally time. A closer look at character death, losing in a playground game, or more formal types of game, means that ultimately the player has contributed or lost time when they lose and not received the payoff of winning in return, whatever that payoff might be. Even if someone is gambling, the money they have is effectively a representation of time in some form, i.e. the time required to make or win money. So time becomes a universal currency for risk in games. Death subsequently loses its full meaning and becomes a player speedbump; usually reduced to slowing down progression or development.

In games death seems to have a number of repercussions. The main aspect I wish to keep a hold of is the aspect of time. I will come back to this in more detail when discussing Heidegger. Apart from time impacts there are other effects. The main one being emotional attachment or identification with a character or avatar. If a character suffers *permadeath* it is lost forever. This might appear most obvious in RPGs, where the concept of permadeath has originated, but it could be equally applicable to any situation where a player may have built up an emotional attachment to an avatar. These are very important aspects but beyond the current scope of this paper.

In the commercial games industry there is constant discussion around death. Both in the balancing of risk, reward and payoff as well as around the implementation of *permadeath*. The goal of keeping a game fun, whilst the balancing of risk versus player skill and the matching it with the appropriate in game punishment, is one of the most important in game design. Even though the debate often crops up, permanent character death is generally seen as a very bad idea by designers (Wikipedia, 2008) and players alike, even if it is only seen by players as a loss of time investment (Eve Online Forums, 2008). Even though most game designers are against the idea of *permadeath* and are ultimately in the business of creating creating saleable games (Glaser, 2004), some are still intrigued by the concept and are attempting to create commercial games where there is the opportunity for greater risks and greater rewards in an attempt to combat the issues around Massively Multiplayer Online (MMO) game grinding (Thomas, 2007), or “the fact that the whole experience is vacuous begins to nag at them” (Bartle, 2003, p431).

Examining death from outside and mechanistically we see that there is an intrinsic connection between lost time and death. That time becomes like a currency in games and death the symbolic loss of this with no other reward. However what is happening on the outside is not the same as the experience of what is happening, phenomenologically, inside the reality of the magic circle.

The reality of the magic circle

Just as there is no formal difference between play and ritual, so the 'consecrated spot' cannot be formally distinguished from the play-ground. The arena, the card-table, the magic circle, the temple, the stage, the screen, the tennis court, the court of justice, etc., are all in form and function play-grounds, i. e. forbidden spots, isolated, hedged round, hallowed, within which special rules obtain.

(Huizinga, 2000, p10)

It is interesting that Huizinga brought his idea for the magic circle of games over from thinking around ritual spaces, where it was literally a circle for the performance of magic. He draws parallels between games and rituals and basically equates them as places beyond everyday reality, what he describes as "non-serious." In this they are very similar to Foucault's *Heterotopia* (1967), other spaces that exist of activities that cannot be performed in the space of the everyday.

It is curious to note how much more lenient society is to the cheat than to the spoil-sport. This is because the spoil-sport shatters the play-world itself.

(Huizinga, 2000, p11)

These magic circles become other realities, which is quite obvious in the case of computer games, where everyday reality is replaced with the simulation of fantasy worlds, but this is the case whether we are talking about persistent synthetic worlds or single player games, physical or digital. People can readily navigate these alternate worlds in the same way they can tell the difference between so called real life and fiction. TV, movies or books create other worlds that the reader can appreciate, but be aware that they are of a different order of reality. Even with a higher level of interactivity and control, games do not become separated entirely from our own realities, they do not become entirely immersive simulations. We do not freely give ourselves up to some immersive, digital equivalent of Descartes' evil devil.

Whereas most games sit comfortably inside these magic circle and there is a clear separation between some form of real life and game existence, there are games that push the envelope and explore the boundaries. Pervasive gaming is about blurring these boundaries between real life and game life. Probably the one linking thing in pervasive games is this pushing at the boundaries of the magic circle (Benford, Magerkurth & Ljungstrand, 2005; Montola, 2005; IPerG, 2008).

Many of the suggestions and thoughts I will present from here onwards may not be particularly applicable within the context of commercial games. However, pervasive gaming is by its very nature experimental and toys with the boundaries between everyday reality and the reality of the magic circle. So within this field there may be room to explore conclusions drawn from phenomenology.

Phenomenology and reality

Phenomenology is, at its heart, the study of consciousness and its relation to reality. It is an attempt to use consciousness as a tool to study consciousness itself, through our own personal experience of it, i.e. the phenomena of our own consciousness or awareness. In this it is a little like looking at your eyeball in a mirror to try to understand how it works on the inside, using only your eyeball itself, you can see your own eyeball, but the only way to do that, is that there is a reality outside the eyeball that is allowing you to do this (in this case a mirror). Phenomenology is not concerned with appearances, but instead is attempting to reach a deeper understanding of experience by brushing away accepted descriptions and existing institutions. It is inherently descriptive and not analytic (in the philosophical sense), unlike the majority of western philosophy from the early Greeks onwards. With that, its descriptive nature and some of the slipperiness and obscurity of the writing that discusses it, phenomenology has ended up with plenty of critics and detractors who have either failed to understand it or attempt a critique it within a different frame of enquiry. Sartre himself sometimes described this as *philosophical anthropology*, that it is a study of what it is to be human using philosophical thought.

The following sections will try to explain some of the concepts in Heidegger's and Sartre's thought, and derive perspectives on game play within the magic circle. In no way can this paper present the breadth of either body of work or attempt a critical approach. This will try to present a few basic ideas very simply and in isolation from the structure of their work. To try to get further into this, books from the *Writers and Readers* series (Palmer, 2001; Lemay & Pitts 1994) or internet sources (Korab-Karpowicz, 2005; Onof, 2004) can be good starting points.

Both authors I will be drawing upon are concerned with the concept of being, that is existing as a conscious entity in some form or reality. Reality, and our presence in it, is paramount for both authors, and it is unquestionably real in the way we experience it. For both authors, this is the *facticity* of being and reality (*being-in-the-world* for Heidegger or *being-for-itself* for Sartre). In his later life Heidegger said that it was surprising that so much time had been spent on metaphysics and questioning the very existence of reality when philosophers should have moved onto more serious thinking.

So if the ludic magic circle, which is a reality for us in some way akin to the larger reality, is there an equivalent to the *beingness* of reality inside the reality of the game? Is there a *being-in-the-game* in the same way that there is a *being-in-the-world*?

Heidegger and *being-in-the-game*

Death pervades Heidegger's writing, the inevitability of both existence and death are the two things that he struggles with throughout his magnum opus, *Being and Time* (1996).

There are three connected concepts that I will take from Heidegger and translate into ludic equivalents. These are *dasein*, *being-in-the-world* and *being-towards-death*. It should be noted that Heidegger was fond of making up new words for his new concepts.

Perhaps this quote from Schopenhauer, translated by Fingarette (1996, p144) brings some light to the direction the Heidegger was going when he started thinking about his concept of *dasein* and its relationship to death.

Were it the thought of our nonbeing that made death seem so frightening, we ought to shudder, too, at the thought of the time before we ever came to be. For it is incontrovertible that the condition of nonbeing after death is no different from that before birth. Therefore the one can be no more lamentable than the other. We do not grieve at all that an eternity has gone by during which we did not yet exist. After this momentary and ephemeral interlude, an eternity will again go by; but this we find hard, indeed unbearable.

This nicely illustrates that in our experience of it, there is a directionality to life. That being is about being towards the future, not being towards the past. Our lives are in the future and the past for us is only what the past means in the future.

Core to Heidegger's philosophy is the idea of *dasein*, a word previously used by German philosophers to mean 'existence' or 'presence' but taken literally by Heidegger as 'being there.' *Being-in-the-world* is the concept of *dasein*'s, or human, relationship to the surrounding world. In Heideggerian thought this relationship is not one of subject being conscious of object, but instead a holistic, intentional relationship between us and everything else in it. His idea is that we don't have little pictures of things in our heads, instead we are in a state where we make constant use of the world around us for our own goals.

If the reality of the magic circle is parallel to our wider world, then we can translate *dasein* to be *player*, and *being-in-the-world* to be *being-in-the-game*, and end up with a mini, Heideggerean reality for the world inside the magic circle. In this world, we as *players* have a relationship to the game that makes us inseparable from it. *Being-in-the-game* brings with it all the possibilities that the game can bring.

The *player* cannot exist outside the the game, they are in the Heideggerian terminology *thrown* in the the game, though this is where the parallelism breaks down because the *player* is choosing to play, not stuck with the *facticity* of existence in the game, in the same way that we are stuck in everyday reality. This choice element I will pick up again in the next section on Sartre as his point of view seems more relevant.

Which leads to *being-towards-death*, another of Heidegger's central concepts. *Being-towards-death* is the relationship that *dasein* has towards its demise. For Heidegger, time is the only dimension of *dasein*'s life. Time is much more important than space, because time is what *dasein* must experience in its life and the future is what *dasein* is always travelling towards. The future contains the possibilities that are *dasein*'s life. Death in this case is therefore the end of all possibilities and the end of *dasein*'s timeline. As Heidegger says, death "is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of *Dasein*" (1996). Death is a finitude, it temporally structures life and possibility, so our existence is radically structured by our limits (Carel, 2006).

For Heidegger the experience of anxiety is associated with conceiving of death. Anxiety is what we feel when we are confronted with the closing down of all options; the possibility that we have no more possibilities.

But in anxiety there lies a possibility of a disclosure which is quite distinctive; for anxiety individualizes. This individualization brings Dasein back from its falling, and makes manifest to it that authenticity and inauthenticity are possibilities of its Being.

(Heidegger, 1996)

An authentic *being-towards-death* is an acceptance of this absolute possibility and a life lived such that *dasein*'s relationship to it is not structured by the society around it. It is anxiety, understood and confronted, that means that *dasein*'s death can become personal and life personally meaningful (Carel, 2006).

This then, is the crux of this argument. Within the reality of the game, within the magic circle, can the *player* have something like an authentic *being-towards-death*, in the same way that *dasein* can do in the world outside the magic circle? Can we have an attitude towards death, or some other representation, where death is the finality of play? Is an untimely ejection from a game the only way to replicate this *being-towards-death*?

Using this as a starting point there are two main areas that can be used from Heidegger's thinking on death as either a method for understanding game play or for designing games. Firstly, as an overall structuring of the game experience time, secondly through the feelings of anxiety in the face of death as a loss of possibilities with respect to a character or avatar.

Structuring of time in the magic circle can be just like that of structuring time in our larger lives. Death, the end of the game, or some other inevitable game mechanic, can play a role in structuring the game itself.

Most single player digital games are finite, they have a clear end. However the way these are usually structured means that the end is telegraphed, communicated clearly, for narrative purposes or just because it has followed predictable story lines. On top of that there is usually the possibility of re-entering the game by going back to saved games, collecting more stars or repeating it on a harder difficulty setting. Most importantly though the player has complete control over their own time. Not only can they play when they want but they can also usually go backwards through time to whatever type of save point is in that game, or even completely restart. In this the player's experience is not structured by time, but instead they structure their own time. However they are not impervious to time as a punishment, even if their experience of death or loss is not an overall structuring of their game experience.

Contrast that with the persistent worlds of Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPG) and there is a very different view. In this case the player still structures their time, but in a very different sense. Probably the least important aspect of time for MMORPGs is that the game world is persistent and players can drop in and out at any time. These worlds may be persistently present, but they are also persistently the same. Probably the most important is that there is no *permadeath*. Death is, as discussed above, a time loss but although *permadeath* is not present as a major structuring of the limits of the player's existence, death does provide some fine grained structure in this time loss, there is some form of ebb and flow.

Some of the best examples of games with an inevitability to them are board games. Many critically acclaimed games in this genre have a finiteness to them, and are designed to bring themselves to a close in a fixed period of time. In this the players can see their inevitable end and must structure their decisions and relationship to the game around that. The end of play is very real and final; there is an urgency to the play in these games that is based on the relationship to the game itself rather than an emotional reaction to it as a representation or simulation.

Another aspect of the relationship to death in Heidegger's philosophy is the mood of anxiety that we are confronted with when we conceive its reality. This anxious feeling is due to our sudden perception of the limits of our existence and the reduction in possibilities left to us. Game design can bring this feeling of anxiety, the feeling that choices will be reduced, that there is a future where no choices may be made. Maybe, rather than time loss being the punishment associated with death, that instead there might be a reduction in player potential; a freezing out of choices as a way to apprehend some form of temporary death. Here an approximation of death can be played out through rules, rather than through narrative elements. One thing to bear in mind here though is that design is intended to be to create fun, so there must be a balance between the reduction in player choices and overall game fun.

Using Heidegger means that the magic circle becomes finite, for the players there should be an inevitability about the end of it. The reality of the end may well exhibit itself in anxiety, the feeling that there will be a point after the game where the game won't be played. Hopefully for the players this will make them play in a more authentic fashion. This gives a structuring for the magic circle, but does not shed light on what happens, in more detail, inside the circle. There are other philosophers who can help with that.

Sartre and the freedom to play

Sartre was a big fan of Heidegger and his approach to phenomenology and philosophy. His early existentialist writing built on and changed Heidegger's philosophy. Sartre worked on his primary work *Being and Nothingness* (1993) during World War Two. Sartre, like Heidegger was firstly concerned with the concept of being. His take on it was slightly different, in no small part due to the differences between the backgrounds of the two. Heidegger came from a rural, middle class background, and conceived of his philosophy as that of the common, rural man. Sartre was entirely more urban, set against the turmoil of World War Two, his philosophy was written and set in the cafes and restaurants of Paris.

In this section I will present two aspects of Sartre's writing, that are significantly different enough from Heidegger's to warrant further inspection. These are his interrelated concepts of *nothingness* and *freedom*.

For Sartre, *nothingness* is an almost tangible part of reality and it is a central part of being. Although reality is as it appears, we as beings can imagine what is also not there, and it is not the positive figure of what we imagine, but instead the not being of what we have imagined in the world. To use Sartre's example, if I go to a cafe to meet a friend and they are not there, I don't perceive the friend I expected in the world, I conceive of their absence. Thus for every thing or action we think about that is not present in the world, we conceive of this as a *nothingness*, or an unrealised possibility. Out of *nothingness* comes

all the possibilities of that *nothingness*, i.e. everything that is not present. Thus we are faced with all the possibilities that could happen; being is to be confronted by possibilities.

Nothingness translated into games becomes something akin to all the possible moves or actions you could take, but haven't yet. On top of that, the very fact of having possibilities means you must use them. If Sartre were forced to take a game metaphor it would be that you are forced to take a turn; you have to play.

Leading on from nothingness, and intrinsically related, is Sartre's next concept is *freedom*, which became his life's theme and the central existential pillar that he kept returning to. What *freedom* is in his sense is that if you are presented with all the possibilities that *nothing* brings, all the multitude of choice, then you can choose any of these. Sartre's point of view is that you have complete free will and can make any choice that you want when presented with a situation. There is nothing stopping you from taking weird and wacky actions.

This has some interesting ramifications on game design. At first we see that *nothingness* is the phenomenological reality of choice in games, being able to understand the actions or moves not yet taken, to understand the risks involved and be able to make decisions. *Nothingness* gives the player *freedom*. There is a decision space surrounding the player, however this needs to be visualised or communicated appropriately in the game.

In this the choices made and the risks taken are directly related to a perceived future goal or payoff, and then in games this is usually balanced against some form of punishment or loss, in many cases death. So Sartre's *freedom* gives us the choice to take death as an optional punishment if we chose to take on risk.

Sartre also says that when presented with a situation where there is seemingly no choice, or a choice has been made for you, then you can always end your own life. This is the final or ultimate choice he gives as a way out. There is no time where someone else can force you to do something that you don't want to do because suicide is a way to flex your free will.

So what is the equivalent of suicide within the magic circle? This is the option for the player to completely opt out if they have no other choice. Many computer games do give this, but it is interesting to see that some games, board games or card games for example do not give players the option to take this ultimate choice. The player is locked into the magic circle by social pressure to stay a player, even if for some reason they do not want to be. Exits from the magic circle without disrupting the game would seem to be vital to allow for players to play authentically, because a choice to leave is an authentic one, but playing without choice is not.

Sartre's work suggests that players have or should have very real choice in their actions with respect to risk and that ultimately they should also have the option to leave the magic circle voluntarily without reprisal. That there should be a large amount of *nothingness* around the players to give them possibilities, choice and *freedom*. These fit together in an interesting way with the adaptation and adoption of Heidegger's thinking. Whereas Heidegger's is about the structuring of existence, insights from Sartre seem to point to how to navigate and manage one's game play in relation to risk, reward and death.

Conclusions and Further Research

Sartre's focus on *freedom* and personal choice along with Heidegger's larger ontological picture of being provide interesting material with which to examine Huzinga's magic circle. Together they present us with an approach that focuses on the temporal limits of the magic circle and the effect this has on the attitude with which players make choices.

I think Heidegger's *dasein* brings interesting perspective on the concept of the player and the player's *being-towards-death* shows that the player's main relationship to the game is a temporal one.

This fits in very well with the concept of death and loss in games being based on a currency of time. Just as time plays an important role in Heidegger's philosophy of being, it also has an important role in a parallel phenomenology of play and players. At a wider level this temporal finitude is related to the overall magic circle, but at a fine grained level there is a flux based on risk, payoff and punishment. Sartre's *freedom* provides us with a way to play authentically amongst the choice given by all these possibilities.

There were many areas of both philosophies that I did not touch upon and I believe would be fruitful in future research. Further investigation into their phenomenological ontologies with a view to relating it to the magic circle and games would throw up interesting results. Both philosophers progressed into interpersonal relationships and the social world, the death of the other, not just the death of oneself. There were also two Sartrean concepts that follow on closely from *nothingness* and *freedom*. They are his ideas of *anguish* and also of *pre-thetic* and *reflective* consciousness.

Finally to sum up, let's bring together some of the ideas for game experimentation that these conclusions all suggest. As I have said earlier the standard notion of game loss is loss of time, but here are some other options, alternatives or explorations of the design space.

- Create games:
 - with a inevitable finality about them
 - which give the player feelings of anxiety about the possibility of less of no choices later on in the game
 - that have mechanics that simulate death via a lack of possibility rather than a loss of time
- Show possibility in the magic circle via emptiness
- Players must act
- Give players an easy exit in games when they want to stop playing
- Make leaving a game part of the game mechanic

Pervasive gaming is a natural place to experiment with notions of reality and the space inside and out the magic circle. It is already a area of gaming which is, by its nature, constantly experimenting. So perhaps this form of gaming can break away from traditional forms of death symbolism and mechanic.

References

- R. A. Bartle (2003). *Designing Virtual Worlds*. New Riders.
- S. Benford, C. Magerkurth, P. Ljungstrand (2005) 'Bridging the Physical and Digital in Pervasive Gaming.' in *Communications of the ACM* Vol 48, no 3.
- H. Carel (2006). *Life and Death in Freud and Heidegger (Contemporary Psychoanalytic Studies 6) (Contemporary Psychoanalytic Studies)*. Rodopi.
- H. Fingarette (1996). *Death: Philosophical Soundings*. Open Court Publishing Company.
- M. Foucault (1967). *Of Other Spaces*. Accessed 27/03/08 from <http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>
- M. Heidegger, (1996). *Being and Time*. Blackwell Publishers.
- J. Huizinga, (2000). *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. Routledge.
- IPerG (2008) 'Design Space' from the IPerG web site. Accessed on 27/03/08 from http://www.pervasive-gaming.org/design_space0.php
- W. J. Korab-Karpowicz (2005). 'Martin Heidegger' in *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Accessed on 27/03/08 from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/h/heidegge.htm>
- E. C. Lemay & J. A. Pitts (1994). *Heidegger for Beginners (Writers and Readers Documentary Comic Book)*. Writers & Readers Publishing.
- G. Mcculloch (1994). *Using Sartre: An Analytical Introduction to Early Sartrean Themes*. Routledge.
- M. Montola (2005) Exploring the Edge of the Magic Circle: Defining Pervasive Games
- C. J. Onof (2004). 'John Paul Sartre' in *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Accessed on 27/03/08 from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/s/sartre-ex.htm>
- D. D. Palmer (2001). *Sartre for Beginners (Writers and Readers Documentary Comic Book)*. Writers & Readers Publishing.
- H. Rodriguez (2006). 'The Playful and the Serious: An approximation to Huizinga's Homo Ludens'. *Game Studies: The International Journal of Computer Game Research* 6(1).
- K. Salen & E. Zimmerman (2003). *Rules of Play : Game Design Fundamentals*. The MIT Press.
- J-P. Sartre, (1993). *Being And Nothingness*. Washington Square Press.
- J. Stenros, et al. (2007). 'Pervasive games in ludic society'. In *Future Play '07: Proceedings of the 2007 conference on Future Play*, pp. 30-37, New York, NY, USA. ACM.
- K. Thomas (2007). *Conquest Online - Death Study*. Unpublished game design document.

Wikipedia (2008). 'Permanent Death' in *Wikipedia*. Accessed 27/03/08 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Permanent_death

J. D. Glater (2004). '50 First Deaths: A Chance to Play (And Pay) Again' in the New York Times. Accessed on 27/03/08 from <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C05EFDA123FF937A35750C0A9629C8B63>

Eve Online Forums (2008). *What Death Penalty?* Accessed on 27/03/08 from <http://myeve.eve-online.com/ingameboard.asp?a=topic&threadID=699785&page=1>