FINDING ONE'S PLACE IN THE COMPLICATED WORLD OF ADVENTURE:

A Cross-Media Analysis of the Individual's Position in the Tintin Comics *Les 7 Boules de Cristal* and *Le Temple du Soleil* and the Videogame *Shadow of the Colossus*

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APPROACHING ADVENTURE IN COMICS AND GAMES

The modern perception of the adventure genre is one of ambivalence. Academia still holds individual works of the genre in the highest esteem. Epics such as the *Odyssey* and the *Epic of Gilgamesh* are not thought of just as exemplary pieces of ancient fiction but as foundational texts of Western culture. Even *Beowulf*, a work that did not enter in to the public or academic conscience, until the 19th century, has heavily influenced both popular and theoretical discourse. These works, however, only represent a small fraction of the genre's cultural influence on culture. No matter where one looks – whether in ancient Greece, the Middle East or Africa – one will find tales of adventure as author Paul Zweig details in his work, *The Adventurer*.

The adventure story is one of exploration; in traveling beyond the horizon, to a new land, the adventurer sees the world in a new light. Through the transgression of the border between the civilized world of everyday life into the wild unknown, the adventurer sheds the coils that restrain his true self. For Zweig, not only are adventure tales, "the oldest, most persistent subject matter in the world," but they are what he believes engendered the art of narrative itself as "man risking his life in perilous encounters constitutes the original definition of what is worth talking about" (6). Despite the genre's ubiquity and its cultural impact, as the rise of the modern novel - a form which lends itself to reflection rather than action - indicates, stories of exploration are no longer what is worth talking about. We champion self-understanding that is achieved not through the filling in of blank spots on the map but through revealing the intricate web of everyday relationships, and one's place within it (Zweig 12). The landscape of the modern story is not a physical but a social one.

The introspective narrative, however, has not eliminated the adventure tale, only relegated it to the realm of "a second-rate literature, appropriate for pulp magazines and low-grade movies" (6). It has thrived in its new home, and while it may not have a high cultural status the genre enjoys an unrivaled popularity across media. No matter the form, the genre offers an escape from the banality of everyday life. It is "an anarchic dream of heroic energies" (Zweig 14), in which the "minute rhythm of common events" are cast aside in "exaltation of bizarre circumstances" (Zweig 15). It is no wonder that new media latches on to the genre. Due to the derision of the hegemonic order, media always spends its nascence at the same cultural level of the adventure tale. Only once a medium has shifted its focus from exploration to introspection does "high" cultural accept it. Both comics and videogames have spent much of their history exploring this genre, yet they have not been satisfied with remaining in this lower position. Works in both genres have used the backdrop of adventure to demonstrate their medium's ability to create stories of introspection in spite of this second-rate subject matter.

Through a cross-media analysis of *Les 7 Boules de Cristal* and *Le Temple du Soleil*, a two-part story in the Belgian comic series *Les Aventures de Tintin* and the videogame *Shadow of the Colossus*, this thesis will argue that these works manipulate fundamental elements of their medium to intertwine introspection into the action-oriented tales. The works achieve this duality in positioning the individual in both a distant and close relationship to their diegesis. In expressing to the individual the fictional world, while simultaneously implicating him or her within it, these works place the individual in the role of spectator and participant. While the works constantly shift emphasis from one to the other, the individual is always both. The works do not champion one over the

other; instead they reveal that both introspection and exploration are not antithetical but complementary. Without one, understanding of the other remains incomplete.

As W.J.T. Mitchell argues in his work *Picture Theory*, underlying all cross-media comparisons is the danger of effacing the differences between the media in order to find their similarities. Instead, he proposes, "the first place to look for the appropriate description language for analyzing the formal heterogeneity of a representation itself, and in the institutional metalanguage- an immanent vernacular, not a transdiciplinary theory – of the medium to which it belongs" (100). This paper asserts that cross-media analysis is not only possible but beneficial. In the identification of moments of intersection between the media simultaneously reveals how they diverge. In his discussion of the relationship between image and text, Mitchell indirectly offers an avenue for analyzing the two-part Tintin story and *Shadow of the Colossus*. He states, "The image/text is not a template to reduce these things to the same form, but a lever to pry them open" (107). This paper will follow his lead and in its analysis of how each work expresses the dichotomies inherent in each medium will elicit how they intertwine introspection into a genre whose very nature appears antithetical to this understanding of the self.

This paper will move between the two media, beginning with how the works use the inherent dichotomy of the adventure tale between the civilized world and that of the wild unknown as an introduction to their diegesis, and the base through which they interweave a multiplicity of dualities into the fictional space, and in the process blur any distinction. In the second half, the paper will elicit analysis how the works uses these complicated spaces and the relationships within them to position the individual both within and without their diegesis, evoking an explorative curiosity in the individual,

while also revealing its potential dangers without the accompaniment of reflection on his or her actions.

ESTABLISHING SPACE: A COMPLICATED MATTER

The Worlds of Text and Images in *Les Aventures de Tintin*

An avid reader of *Les Aventures de Tintin* would expect *Le Temple du Soleil*, the second half of a two-part story, to dive headfirst into a tale of adventure, as the first volume of the two, *Les 7 Boules de Cristal*, sets the stage perfectly for a journey into the strange and unknown. *Le Temple du Soleil*, however, resists fully immersing the reader into an adventure tale. Instead, it reestablishes a tension present in *Les 7 Boules de Cristal* between the wild, unknown world of adventure and the known world of civilization. Together, the two works use this dichotomy as a base, intertwining others dualities such as image and text, and action and language with the two realms. This process blurs the line between these oppositional forces and ultimately, the reader's position to the work, as he or she becomes both a distant viewer of and an active participant in the diegesis of the two works.

Through its representation of Europe and South America, *Les 7 Boules de Cristal* establishes the fundamental dichotomy of the two works. The story begins after the return of seven explorers from an expedition into the heart of Peru. There, the explorers discovered an Incan site filled with ancient artifacts and a well-preserved mummy; all of which they bring back to the European world. Yet, these items were not all that they carried home, and the story begins as a mysterious disease strikes the seven explorers one-by-one, leaving each in a bizarre coma. Rumors begin to swirl of an ancient Incan

curse, and sensing a world-class mystery, the young boy reporter, Tintin, decides to investigate. As the story progresses, strange, seemingly supernatural occurrences cause all involved to question whether or not the curse actually exists. The real action begins, however, when Tintin's absentminded friend, le Professeur Tournesol, stumbles upon an Incan artifact and is kidnapped moments later. Tintin, along with his snow-white canine companion, Milou, and his alcoholic friend, le capitaine Haddock, give chase. After many twists and turns, their journey takes them to the docks of Saint-Nazaire where they discover Tournesol and his kidnappers are already travelling across the Atlantic on their way back to Peru. The volume ends with the Tintin, Milou, and Haddock flying by seaplane over an expanse of ocean, wondering what they will find when they land.

One possibility is that they will find nothing at all, as the first volume positions Europe as the material world and South America as an immaterial one. As renowned Tintinologist, Michael Farr relates in his comprehensive study of Hergé's works, *Tintin: The Complete Companion*, the first volume of the story uses its European setting to establish the two worlds as antitheses. Summarizing the strange, almost mystical events of the first volume, Farr states, "The stifling heat, the dark brooding skies that envelop Professor Tarragon's suburban villa, the fireball unleashed by the storm and its destruction of the mummy of Rascar Capac, thus fulfilling an Inca prophecy, seem to confuse reality with the supernatural" (115). Farr's description indicates the first volume's positioning of Europe as the world of everyday, and the Incan artifacts as its disrupters. Primarily atmospheric phenomena, the artifacts' effects have an intangibility that contrasts with the physicality of the European landscape. As Tintin and the others only see its effects, but not how it creates them, the South American presence is notably

absent. In the very air itself, the invisible force seems all-powerful, and nothing appears to be able to stop it. It can even enter into the immaterial world of dreams; one night Tintin, Haddock, and Tournesol all dream that the Incan mummy enters their bedrooms, smashes a crystal ball, and fills the room with a blue, magical cloud. In its connection with the ethereal and immaterial realms, the South American presence appears to lack physicality. An invisible, unknown force, to the investigators, its powers seem limitless, and South America is not just the immaterial opposite of the material Europe, it is Europe's antimatter. Not only do the Incan artifacts affect the explorers who brought them back, they distort the entire European landscape. Like matter and antimatter, when separated, the Europe and South America can co-exist, but when they transgress the border between them, i.e. the Atlantic Ocean, and come in direct contact, a rupture occurs in the very fabric of reality.

Yet, the first volume resists sliding completely into the fantastical. "As usual with Hergé," notes Farr, "anything at all fantastic is more than compensated by the realism of his detail. Car models types… are meticulously observed and reproduced; the part and docks of Saint-Nazaire… accurately and atmospherically portrayed" (116). Farr's observation reveals that, for *Les Boules de Cristal* and the entire comic world of Tintin, reality is in the details. By intricately depicting hallmarks of the Western, industrialized world, e.g. automobiles and transatlantic travel, and in resisting visually portraying the Incan presence, e.g. the unseen kidnappers and the mysterious disease, the first volume firmly roots the technological European world in the visual and the mystical South America in the unseen realm of imagination. In detailing Europe, the first volume gives

the continent definition. It is knowable and understandable. In the absence of detail, South America remains undefined, and without shape or form, it is a void, blankness.

The final panel of *Les Boules de Cristal* not only reaffirms this perception of South America but adds to it as well. The majority of the seaplane is inside the frame, flying over an endless blue Atlantic. One of its wings, however, is outside of the frame, as if the plane is flying right out of the panel into the whiteness of the page. The volume ends with Tintin, Milou, and Haddock not only crossing the border between Europe and South America but between the realm of visual representation and the undepictable realm of the unknown.

However, to Tintin, the well-seasoned adventurer, the differences between the worlds go unnoticed. As the seaplane embarks on its voyage to Peru, Tintin tells Haddock he is confident that upon arriving they will be able to contact the police and find Tournesol quickly. Tintin does not see Peru as the Other; he expects to find the same world of law and order even after crossing the sea. Le capitaine Haddock, though, is hesitant, remarking, "Je me demande si tout ira aussi bien que vous le supposez…" After the previous events, Haddock senses that what lies on the other side is a world completely alien to them, and even before arriving, he questions whether or not they can rely on their intuition in the face of the unknown. His speech ends in an ellipsis; he is at a lost for words. The ending of the first half of the story not only presents South America as undepictable but indescribable as well.

Yet, the opening of *Le Temple du Soleil* appears to contradict this conception of the continent. Seemingly, it establishes South America as a defined region. The second-half begins, not with a continuation of the narrative, but with the presentation of a geo-

political map. The first panel of the second volume not only domesticates the continent and the country of Peru, but intertwines, respectively, two competing elements of the comics[1] medium - text and image – with the ordinary world of civilized "reality," and that of the strange, unknowable world of the supernatural.

The first panel of *Le Temple du Soleil* acts as a microcosm for the rest of the work, creating a hierarchical and seemingly antithetical relationship between text and image. Visually, the panel separates itself from the others, as its blue color scheme contrasts with the brown and yellows of the rest of the page, and featuring none of the characters nor progressing any of the plot, the panel appears to be outside of the entire narrative. Contextually, it functions as an interlude between the two volumes; spatially, it acts as bridge, connecting them not through a continuation of action but through a continuation of location. The Peru, which the geo-political map presents, is not that different from the world Tintin, Milou, and Haddock left at the end of the first volume. Here also, civilization appears to reign supreme. The fact that the map is a geo-political one automatically creates the impression that Peru is a civilized country. While geo-political maps do locate an area's physical position, more importantly, they locate its social one. With political borders dividing and defining South America; the map establishes that the continent is by no means a "dark" one. In fact, it is one that is colorfully filled. The combination of political boundaries and individualized colors cements South America as a visually representable land; it is not the unseen force that disrupted the European reality.

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[1] The singular word, "comic" often modifies the form in which it is presented, e.g. "comic" books and "comic" strips. These phrases are usually shortened and the "comic book" simply becomes a "comic." The plural "comics" does not refer to a specific object but the medium as a whole. For a fuller discussion of the difference see *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* by Scott McCloud, one of the foundational works of comics studies.

The continent still has some mystery. Dashes compose the borderlines, and in conjunction with dull colors and similar shades, most of the countries seem to blend together. The political overlay is not as impermeable as it first appears. Peru, on the other hand, distinguishes itself with bright red coloring. It stands out against the others, and through negation gains definition. In comparison, the rest of South America appears amorphous: a place that even the concreteness of visual depiction cannot solidify. Yet, on further analysis even Peru remains undefined through pictorial representation. Featuring a map of an entire continent, the first panel is limited in the amount of visual detail that it can provide. Even with a dot locating the city, in which the adventurers find themselves, the pictorial aspect of the map cannot pinpoint exactly where the narrative of the second half begins. Language, however, can.

At the top of the panel, a yellow text box reads: "À Callao, chez le chef de la police," and below, the map features a point with the label "Callao." The two reaffirm the narrative's setting, and it seems that the verbal and the visual are working in unison to locate the story. Yet, in the repetition of the verbal labeling, the map becomes nothing more than an illustration to the text box. Accustomed to reading left to right, top to bottom, the text box's central, top position ensures that it is the first object in the panel that a Western reader would view. The reader's first entry into the volume is through language, and it is the verbal, not the visual that gives the more precise description of how the narrative will continue. Not only does it name the city, but it identifies the building as well. The map, in comparison, seems inadequate in its representation. If a reader were unfamiliar with the region, without the textual labels of "Callao" or "Pérou" or even "Amérique du Sud," the map would impart little information about the story's

location. Left verbally unstated, the narrative's setting would be undefined. Peru, as are the other countries, would be an unnamed land.

This opening panel establishes that language gives definition, while pictorial representation resists it: a counterintuitive concept as language is the more abstract form of the two. Yet, in its use of both, the comics medium is well suited to demonstrate how language's abstraction privileges it over pictorial representation in relaying objective information. In the foundational text of comics theory, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, comic artist Scott McCloud argues that appearance and its effect on meaning is central to the difference between text and image. For text, "meaning is fixed and absolute. Their appearance does not affect their meaning because they represent invisible ideas" (28). Independent from their visual presentation, or style, text appears impersonal, universal.[2] No one person owns a word, and as an intangible idea, a person can do little to affect its shape. For pictorial representations the inverse is true; "meaning is fluid and variable according to appearance" (28). Divorced from personal style, text imparts a sense of objectivity, while each picture reveals the hand of its artist. The pictorial aspects of the map in the first panel appear subjective. An artist chose the dull colors, the dashes in the borders, and their hand drew particular political divisions on to

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[2] Of course, that is not to dismiss the nature of written language. As W.J.T. Mitchell argues in his work, *Picture Theory*, "Writing, in its physical, graphic form, is an inseparable suturing of the visual and the verbal, the 'imagetext' incarnate" (95). Comics are one of the few media that acknowledge and routinely play with this aspect of written language. This ability to manipulate the reception of text stems from the medium's oft-referenced autographic nature. In each stroke, in each letter, the hand of the writer makes its presence known, which as Hilary Chute and Marianne Dekoven relate, "is an important part of the rich extra-semantic information a reader receives" (*MFS* 768). Yet, in adding an obtrusive pictorial component to select text and not the rest, comics often efface the visual component of its default text, as the remainder of yellow text boxes in *Le Temple du Soleil* demonstrates. The text in subsequent boxes is in cursive. Appearing handwritten, these boxes seem to be the opening of journal entries, imparting a subjective feel to the rest of the narrative. In comparison, the textual relation of location in the first panel appears even more objective.

South America. The textual labels on the map appear more concrete, especially in contrast to the colors that bleed across the unconnected borderlines. Unslanted and blocky, the labels on the map are even more objective than the text inside the box, which imparts information about the story itself. The labels on the map are completely separate from the narrative. Nothing that Tintin, Milou, or Haddock do can affect them. These labels and these names are absolute. Through language, they gain definition, not geographically, but politically. Language civilizes the continent, while pictorial representation leaves it undefined.

In its separation, the first panel resists flowing into the narrative. It demands attention and through its spatial position it connects the setting of the first volume with that of the second. Europe and Peru are not the different worlds that the first volume implied. The first panel also introduces a new understanding of the function of text and pictorial representation, connecting them respectively with civilization and the unknown. This connection seems to contradict the conclusion of *Les 7 Boules de Cristal*, which portrays the unknown as both indescribable and undepictable. Instead of undermining the first volume, as both an interlude and a bridge, the first panel of *Le Temple du Soleil* reveals the ontological similarity between text and image. Both are abstractions, thus both can never fully represent an object. Removed from the actual experience, what they depict is nothing more than a description. Separated, however, they can accomplish what a single form of abstraction cannot. Manipulation of their relationship and function can create the illusion that one, both, or neither can impart definition. To establish the European setting of the first volume as reality required a complementary relationship between the verbal and the pictorial work. Because comics are a visual medium, setting

the second volume in South America required a change in the relationship. If nothing were to change, the majority of *Le Temple du Soleil* would be nothing but blank pages. The map acts not a rejection, but as a recalibration of the functions of text and image in the following volume. Language retains its position as the mark of civilization, while pictorial representation comes to represent the world of adventure.

The rest of the first page reaffirms and nuances these connections, as it links them to the narrative elements themselves. The first page primarily connects them through its symbolic positioning of characters, specifically the chief of police and Tintin. On the first page, the former embodies the domestic sphere of language while the latter embodies the wild realm of action. These connections are no more defined than in the middle panel, which draws attention to itself more so than any other panel in *Le Temple du Soleil*.

The page itself emphasizes this panel in several ways. The first is the panel's size, which is by far the largest on the page. This spatial dominance automatically draws attention to the panel and reinforces its importance. The second occurs through the page's panel layout, which features only three rows. While the number of columns on a page fluctuates throughout the work, all the other pages feature four rows instead of three. With three columns as well, the construction of the first page positions the fifth panel as the central one: a location that, because of the four-row layout, no other panel in the work occupies. Two other emphases come from within the center panel itself. The first is the direction of the character's attention. Just as the panel itself draws the reader's eye, Tintin draws all the eyes within the narrative. The chief of police, Haddock, and Milou are all looking directly at the young reporter, whose movement cuts across the center of the panel. Because of the other characters, at first, it seems that Tintin is the panel's focus,

yet his position resists this attention. Unlike the chief and Haddock, Tintin's face is turned from the reader. His facial expression obscured, all the reader sees is his back, which covered by his typical brown suit, offers little insight into the character's state of mind. Even Milou, whose back is also to the audience, displays emotion through his speech bubble and his halo of water beads, a cartoon indicator of surprise. The position of the panel has already funneled attention to its center. Yet, the majority of Tintin's body does not occupy this space; it is in the right half of the panel. Except for motion lines slicing through the air, beads of sweat flying off Tintin's head, and the curl line that represents the fall of the chair, the center of the panel is noticeably blank. Thus, the focus of the entire page, and the opening of the second volume is not the young reporter; rather it is his actions.

The most noticeable aspect of Tintin's actions is their absence, which visually disrupts the flow of the opening page. In all the other panels, the speech bubble – the comic embodiment of language – dominates the frame. It is by far the most prevalent visual aspect of the page and comes from only one source: Callao's chief of police. Throughout the first page, the chief is a longwinded character, but it is no more prevalent than in the first three panels of narrative. In all three, his speech bubbles take up nearly the entire upper half of the panel, and like the text box in the map, they are the first objects that the reader comes across. In these panels, the images do not even seem illustrative, but decorative. No action occurs in these three. In the first, the chief learns that Haddock and Tintin have arrived and he tells his secretary "Faites entrer…" In the second panel, they are already seated. Between these two panels, the ellipsis, in trailing

off his speech, is the only thing that imparts a real sense of movement. In the beginning, the narrative progresses only through text.

Not only does the spatial position of the speech bubble within the panel place text as the dominant form in this setting, but its size does as well. The chief's speech bubbles do not simply rest at the top of the page they are an oppressive force, pushing everything below it down. The only word that any of the characters can fit in is "Parfaitement:" Tintin's answer to the chief's asking for agreement. With such a long word in response – Tintin could have easily said "oui" or "d'accord" to the chief's "C'est bien cela?" – it is as if the chief's speech is squashing all other forms of verbal communication. He fills the air with both smoke and words, choking off the breath of everyone else in the room. Visually, the connection between the smoke and words runs deeper as the smoke line rises from his mouth and becomes lost in the speech bubble. The chief is not simply a person who likes to talk; he is language incarnate. The material representative of the immaterial, he transforms invisible speech into visible smoke. With his hair slicked back, his prominent bow tie, and his cigarette inside a fashionable holder, he is not just a representative of language but also the epitome of Europeanization. Language, in its concreteness, has domesticated this space and all of the people within it.

When Tintin leaps up unexpectedly, his action disrupts the whole atmosphere of the room of words. As a man of language, the chief cannot understand its antithesis: action. His speech bubbles become nothing more than blank puffs of smoke. Action engenders absence in this panel, as there is no verbal response to Tintin's movements. All that fills the speech bubbles of the other three are the most pictorial forms of text: punctuation. Yet, even in punctuation, the chief indicates his inability to understand

action. The chief's speech bubble contains an exclamation point, a passive response, while Haddock and Milou's contain question marks. The former, representing surprise, is passive and purely reactive. The latter, representing inquiry, while not aggressive per se, is proactive. Milou and Haddock understand something is amiss but do not know what, while to the chief, Tintin's action is indecipherable. The chief does not understand Tintin's movement nor does he understand its impetus.

In the sixth panel of the narrative, Tintin points out the veranda where he saw the Indian spying on them. Positioned directly behind Tintin, Haddock shares the same perspective as the young reporter, and in not contradicting Tintin's observation appears to share the same vision. The chief, to the left of Tintin comments "Vous aurez mal vu…" upon reaching the window, indicating that he cannot "see" what Tintin and Haddock see. Even though he is from Peru, because he is Europeanized, this presence is an Other and is just as unperceivable to the chief as it is to his counterparts across the Atlantic. This reintroduction of the invisible force that disrupted the landscape of Europe in the previous volume, only two panels after Tintin's movements disrupt the environment of the room, intertwine the concepts. The unknown communicates not through words but through actions.

In the subsequent panels, the chief, as the physical embodiment of language and the civilized world, tries to reestablish its presence and to dissipate the effect that action has had on the room. In the second to last panel, with his hand behind Tintin and the door behind Haddock and Milou, he has not only turned them away from the unknown world outside the headquarters but is effectively blocking them from it. His speech bubble further impedes them from their goal. It not only obscures a large portion of the outside

but the text itself surrounds the chief and Haddock's head. They are both trapped, and Haddock more so than the chief. While the chief's head is between two words, Haddock's splits one, placing him inside of the word, and it is not just any word. To the left of his head is the syllable "mon-" and to the right "de." Haddock is not inside a word; he is trapped within the world of language itself, which as the combination of the syllable "mon" and the hyphen indicate, was no accident. Language is claiming him for its own. Though, in fact, it's a reclaiming as Haddock has always been in the clutches of language. At the end of *Les Boules de Cristal*, Haddock can only use language to conceive the world beyond the Atlantic, drawing a blank just before the plane flies into the whiteness of the volume's final page. In both the end of the first volume and the beginning of the second, language not only fills a space but creates its own, and those trapped within it, can only conceive of the world through it. It becomes their background, obscuring the world behind them and affecting the world in front of them.

However, language is not the only way through which characters conceive of the world in *Les Aventures de Tintin*. Language is not the background for all the characters in the first panel; Tintin is notably below the chief's speech bubble in all of the panels. While he does use language, Tintin does not fall prey to it, remaining out of reach of its influence. Instead, as the center panel of the first page indicates, he converses primarily through action, not language. Thus, his perception of the world is fundamentally different and ruptures the ordinary, standard view of the world. Set not just in the civilized world, the second volume pictorially presents these distinct perceptions of the world in a manner different than the first. Whereas *Les 7 Boles de Cristal* manipulates detail to either

reestablish the civilized world or indicate the intrusion of the unknown, *Le Temple du Soleil* manipulates the perception of depth within a panel.

There are two dominant forms of pictorial representation in *Le Temple du Soleil*, according to French essayist Jean-Marie Apostolidès. In his work *The Metamorphoses of Tintin*, he argues that the first is a flat, fresco-like, style and the second is one that utilizes perspective. To elicit the function of these styles, he looks to literature, and states, "if the fresco is the visual equivalent of the epic, perspective is that of the novel" (150). Before, in the fresco style, the objects were of the most importance in a panel, but "when perspective is introduced into the picture," notes Apostolidès, "the individual elements are in relation to the context pictorially represented" (148). Perspective emphasizes spatial relationships between objects, not the objects themselves. The world of perspective is a contextualized world; objects do not stand on their own but in relation to one another. Apostolidès observations echo the ones Zweig in *The Adventurer*. In his discussion of the simultaneous fall of the adventure genre and rise of the modern novel, Zweig identifies the focus of the modern novel not on exploration of the unknown but the understanding of one's position within "the social world of relationships" (12). Unlike the adventurer, the novel protagonist seeks not to transgress borders but to find his or her place within them, a reaffirmation of "the essentialness of ordinary life" (12). "Outside the framework" argues Zweig, "the individual is lost and must live with the fear that there is nothing for him to become" (12). The action that defines the adventurer's life cannot be tolerated in the social environment as too much movement disturbs the status quo, thus the life of the novel protagonist is markedly sedentary (12). The focus of the modern novel is introspection, not exploration.

Movement between the fresco style panels and those with perspective allows *Le Temple du Soleil* to visually indicate whose perception of the world dominates the panel. In moments of action and exploration, the panel becomes flat and the objects themselves are its focus. Understanding relationships between objects does no matter because the adventurer comes to understand the world not through context but through contact. For the adventurer, "every action" argues Zweig, "is a way of conversing with the world, a way of teaching and learning" (20), which the fresco-style in *Le Temple du Soleil* visually demonstrates. "The exterior world," notes Apostolidès, "features more prominently precisely when Tintin has to contend with it more directly" (149). Verbal language is antithetical to how the adventurer understands the world because it creates distance between the subject and the object, which perspective replicates in its illusion of depth. The fresco-style is how the adventurer conceives of the world and perspective is how those ensnared in language see their surroundings.

In its manipulation of depth *Le Temple du Soleil* can manipulate the position of its reader. In changing its representation of perspective, the work changes the reader's perspective as well. When the panel is fresco-like, the reader sees the world as Tintin does, not through language, but through action. In these panels, the reader does not feel distant from the diegesis, with objects in the foreground of the panel, it is as if in touching the surface of the page, the reader is touching the objects themselves. In creating the illusion of direct contact, the fresco-style transforms the reader into an explorer and he or she enters into the realm of the unknown. In the panels with perspective, the reader remains firmly rooted in the realm of language; he or she sees the world through the eyes of the chief and Haddock. Objects seem unreachable as they become smaller and smaller

the farther they are in the background. The reader can only understand them in relation to his or her position, focusing attention back to the reader and not the objects themselves, creating moments of introspection. Through these manipulations, *Le Temple du Soleil* moves the reader in and out of the diegesis. At times, the reader feels distant from the work, a passive spectator; at others, he or she feels in direct contact with it, an active explorer of the work itself. Yet, these positions are never completely separate as every panel has both a foreground and a background. Not just between panels but within each panel, the reader is constantly moving between worlds, transgressing the borders between text and image, the seen and unseen, civilization and the unknown. Occupying the same space, these dualities are never truly separate. Within each frame, while it may seem like the reader is either far from the action or in the thick of it, he or she is always both.

The Space Between Story and Game in *Shadow of the Colossus*

Like the two-part story of *Les 7 Boules de Cristal* and *Le Temple du Soleil*, *Shadow of the Colossus* is not a tale just about adventure. While exploration is at its heart, introspection is a core element of the game experience, and similar to the two Tintin works, *Shadow of the Colossus* uses the dichotomy between the knowable world of civilization and the unknown world of adventure to move between these two types of action. Also like the two-part Tintin story, *Shadow of the Colossus* intertwines the two realms with two seemingly incompatible aspects of its medium: narrative and ludic experience. The game's opening seems to affirm narrative as an aspect of the ordinary experience of reality, and ludic experience as one outside the confines of civilized behavior. Yet, upon further analysis, instead of clarifying these distinctions, the opening

of *Shadow of the Colossus* only complicates them, and as the lines between narrative and game elements blur, so does the role of the player. Like *Les 7 Boules de Cristal* and *Le Temple du Soleil*, through this intertwining of dichotomies, *Shadow of the Colossus* places the player both at a distance and in direct contact with its diegesis.

Like the opening of *Le Temple du Soleil*, the opening of *Shadow of the Colossus* resists fulfilling the expectation that it will dive headfirst into adventure. The game experience begins not with gameplay, but instead with an extended cinematic that roots the player firmly in the role of a distant spectator. The first view the player has of the work's fictional world is a wide-shot of a sky with swirling clouds of purple and blue. For a moment, the shot lingers on the heavens before a bird flies into the shot, and the camera follows the winged creature as it descends into a deep ravine that cuts through the landscape below. In tandem, the bird and camera move from side to side through the fissure until a young man traveling upon a horse comes into view. The bird swoops past the two, just missing them, and although it flies on, the camera stays with the rider and his horse, who are traveling along a path that hugs the canyon wall.

After the bird departs, the two encounter a gap, which halts their progress. There is no room to turn back, however, as the route is barely wide enough for them to even move forward. The drop to their left is hundreds of feet and ends in a raging river. After a few steps back, the horse sprints forward and leaps across the gap. It does clear the distance, and as the rider and his horse, scramble to gain the other side, there is a moment of fear. It seems that the adventure may be over before it ever truly begins. This moment seems indicative of a journey that is filled with danger. This occurrence, however, is an isolated one, and the cinematic continues without any further incidents, cutting between

shots of them walking through silent forests and open plains. There is serenity in these moments presenting a calm before the storm. Periodically the two stop to gaze at a looming structure in the distance. Each time it is a little closer and the camera angle a little lower, increasing its dominance of the shot. Finally, the two emerge from a forest and encounter a wall that stretches far off into the distance. Covered in moss and with trees almost growing at its base, the wall is a ruin, long abandoned to the will of nature.

Again the two halt, but this time a gap comes to their aid. The two enter through a narrow opening in the wall and find themselves high above a land with a varied topography. It is a self-contained world with forests, plains, deserts, cliffs as far the eye can see. Yet, the distance is not all that far, as these features quickly become indistinct. Although the sun is absent, there is a soft, white brightness, and in its haze, the landscape melts together. There is no horizon as even the line between sky and ground blurs in this light. One feature does stand out. In front of the two, sharp against the misty backdrop, is the towering castle that they have been following on their journey. It is larger than ever, and all that separates them from it is a long bridge. As the two begin to cross, the camera swings wide, revealing how large the bridge is and how small they are in comparison. The rider and his horse are almost lost in the shot and, after what seems to be an eternity, they arrive at the castle and begin their dizzying descent down a circular staircase.

At the bottom is a long hall, featuring sixteen statues of bizarre humans and animals, which leads to an altar. Large arches behind the altar reveal the two are no longer high above the land; they are almost on the ground. The young boy loosens the straps on an unnoticed bundle on the back of the horse and carries it to the altar. With flourish, he pulls off its covering to reveal a pale, lifeless girl in a simple white dress.

From above, the disembodied voice of the god Dormin begins to speak. It tells of how for eons it has been trapped within these forbidden lands; its full power sealed away long ago within sixteen enormous beasts. Part animal and part earth, these colossi are scattered across this world, waiting in their own domains. To bring the girl back to life, the voice informs the young boy, he must defeat all sixteen: a task with unforeseen consequences. With that the cinematic comes to a close. The player gains control over the unnamed boy, often referred to as Wander, and mounting the horse, Argo, travels forth into the forbidden lands.

From a ludologist perspective, this opening sequence is not only an irrelevant but extremely frustrating feature of *Shadow of the Colossus*. More than twelve minutes long, the opening cinematic attempts to inject narrative into the game substantially delays, what a ludologist would argue, the fundamental aspect of the work: game play. Similar to how some conceive of text and image in comics, for the staunch ludologist, game play and narrative are incompatible elements.[3] Narrative, in comics, goes unquestioned, particularly because there is no doubt about who is in control of what is and what is not visually represented. For games, though, the debate rages whether or not the author or player has a more vital role in creating the arch of the game experience. Ludologist argue that because the author has no control over how the story unfolds outside of non-controllable moments such as cut-scenes, during game play, the game has no narrative.[4] While not arguing that an opening cinematic does not present narrative, from the

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[3] Espen Aarseth is one of the staunchest. In his chapter of *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game*, a collection of essays on game studies, Aarseth compares narration and game play to oil and water (51).

[4] Aarseth is adamant about this distinction, which he uses to help form his conception of games as simulations, which he conceives as "the hermeneutic Other of narrative" (52). For a less antagonistic ludologist approach to narrative in games, see Jesper Juul's essay, "Games Telling Stories?"

ludologist perspective, it has little to do with the player's experience during game play. To dismiss the opening sequence of *Shadow of the Colossus*, on these grounds, however, would limit understanding of the work as the cinematic does not delay the core aspect of the work but introduces it.

It is easy to compare the opening of *Shadow of the Colossus* to an establishing shot in a movie because they use the same medium, yet another layer of meaning accompanies a game cinematic. As media theorist Henry Jenkins argues, "the heavy-handed exposition that opens many games serves a useful function in orienting spectators to the core premises so that they are less likely to make stupid and costly errors as they first enter into the game world" (126). Like an establishing shot, the opening sequence introduces the space in which the narrative will occur. Yet, during these moments, although an individual is a spectator, the act of turning on the game has already placed he or she in the ludic mode. The individual understands that he or she will not always be watching the cinema, and that the space he or she is viewing will not always remain at a distance. Eventually the spectator will become the player and will draw on what he or she learned from the opening cinematic in order to smoothly transition into the game experience. The anticipation of game play intertwines the narrative in the opening cinematic and all subsequent game experience. As Jenkins indicates, this link is a natural occurrence in most games with an opening sequence, but the opening cinematic of *Shadow of the Colossus* symbolically deepens this connection, as it establishes an intimate relationship between the game designers and the player: one that continues not just in the cinematic, but throughout the entire game experience.

From the first shot, the cinematic heightens ludic anticipation. In lingering on the sky, the entire game experience is on hold. The camera and the player are waiting for initiation, and not just from anywhere but from the heavens themselves. When the bird flies into the shot and the camera follows it into the ravine, the player's position shifts substantially. With a creature in front, the player is no longer just a disembodied eye because although this third person perspective is still a part of the non-intractable cinematic, game fluency of this perspective blurs the distinction between the two media. He or she is no longer viewing the landscape from a distance; with the bird, the player dives into the world that the game designers created. A creature of the sky, untethered to the landscape yet flying between the cliff walls, the bird – as they were once thought of in Ancient Greece[5] - acts as an intermediary between the ethereal heavens and the physical world, between the creators and their creation. It does not gently transition the viewer from spectator to player, but thrusts them directly in, colliding narrative construction and game experience in one spectacular movement. As a vessel of the designers, the bird only introduces the player to the game world, but does not allow them to engage with it. When it swoops past the horse and its young rider, and the camera shifts focus, it appears the player will finally have control, yet the cinematic continues, dashing the hope of game play, heightening its anticipation. In the wake of this manipulation of ludic expectation, the rest of the opening becomes laborious, particularly as there is little action beyond the pair traveling after Argo jumps the small gap. Without any other incidences, the cinematic resists teaching the player how to not "make stupid and costly errors" (Jenkins 126). All it shows is the two walking, yet in extending this aspect to near frustrating

[5] While the game is of Japanese origin, it features many elements of Western adventure tales. A young boy, with the aid of a magical sword and his trusty steed, travel to the ends of the earth to save the life of the woman he loves.

levels, the game, as Jenkins might state, orients the player to one its core premise: the journey through space.

The player reenacts this aspect of the opening cinema at least sixteen times as he or she travels from the towering castle to each new colossus. While the scenery may change as the player rides to different areas of the landscape, the sense of endless distance and isolation that the cinematic establishes does not. It is an integral part of the game experience as the player spends just as much time, if not more, traversing the landscape, and the effect is manifold. David Ciccoricco argues that traveling across the landscape in *Shadow of the Colossus*, "makes you think about what you've done after you've done it while, experientially, it may seem as though you're not doing anything in terms of a material outcome in the gameworld" (n.p.). The game experience does not simply become an inversion of the opening cinematic; instead it recreates the sensation of it. Although play is occurring, the player feels as if her or she is in a passive position in relation to the game world. Instead of the spectator slipping into a ludic perception of the cinematic, the player slips into a cinematic perception of game play. The player watches him- or herself move through this landscape, surrendering the sense of narrative control and a sense of activity causing reflection on both past and future action.

In these moments, the cinematic establishment of authorial presence returns to prominence. Just as Argo and Wander travel along a narrow path inside of a ravine, the player moves not across a landscape, but through it. Although the forbidden lands, filled with plains and deserts, feels open, complete freedom is illusory. In sculpting the landscape of *Shadow of the Colossus*, the hand of the game designer influences player movement. While the light from Wander's sword may be the most obvious authorial

guide of player action, every cliff, every bridge, and every temple affects movement. Often a bird similar to the one in the opening sequence will follow the player as he or she rides over an open expanse, a reminder that the player cannot move across the game world. Yet this authorial control is not restrictive but enriching. As Ciccoricco identifies, this seemingly passive element allows players time to reflect on the game experience. In moving to new areas of the game world, however, the player never transforms back into a spectator. In the ludic mode, exploration remains at the forefront of these moments, but it does not entirely exclude the hallmark of passive media: introspection. In both the opening cinematic and during game play, the individual assumes the role of player and spectator, complicating the distinction between game and narrative experience.

The opening cinematic further complicates this dichotomy between the narrative and the game world by first connecting the former with the familiar, civilized world and the latter with the supernatural, unrealistic realm of the unknown. Through opening with and presenting the narrative through cinema before game play begins, the two media appear to be stand-ins for the aforementioned dichotomies. Its plot already predetermined, the player cannot interact with the world that the opening introduces.

The cinematic medium alters the experience of moments that occur frequently in the game. When Argo jumps the small gap, in the opening cinema, it is much different than when he jumps in the game world. As Argo scrambles up the edge to avoid falling into the canyon there is a momentary sense of danger, as the physics of this digital world seem to correspond to the physics of its analog counterpart. The linearity of cinema deepens this emotional reaction; if the horse were to fall, his death would, like in the analog world, be a true end. During the opening sequence, there is no restart button, and

like in the analog world of experience, cinematic actions have permanent consequences. Thus, in using the media of film to introduce the lands outside of the forbidden realm, the opening sequence seems to establish a firm distinction between film and game, narrative and ludic experience, and the familiar and unknown.

As it does with the cinematic, time plays a key role in affirming the connection between the forbidden lands of *Shadow of the Colossus* and the games, and of their separation from the realistic world in the opening cinematic. The primary setting, the only one in which the player has any control, features one of the fundamental hallmarks of game worlds: the suspension of the rules of times. In the forbidden lands of *Shadow of the Colossus,* clouds swirl in the sky, yet rain never falls; the sun hangs overhead, yet it never sets. The forbidden lands, however, are not frozen in time; otherwise, interaction would be impossible. Even in the stillest of moments, the wind blows, small animals scramble about, Argo neighs and Wander breaths. This magical land has its own temporality.[6] However, the difference between an unmediated experience of time and the one in the game world is not what distinguishes the cinematic and ludic experiences. Like games, film has its own disjointed temporality.[7] The difference arises in linearity, one of the fundamental rules of time. In the forbidden lands, entropy has little influence; actions have no true permanency, as the player always has the choice to begin the game anew. Even death is not an end in *Shadow of the Colossus*.[8] The setting of the forbidden lands

[6] Juul expands upon this subject well in his essay "Introduction to Game Time."
[7] For a fuller discussion of how cinema has effaced the uniqueness of its temporality from moviegoer conscience see Tom Gunning's essay, "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant Garde."
[8] Without the monetary component of arcade gaming, dying has assumed new meaning in the console era. Even on consoles, though, death usually entails complete removal from the game world. *Shadow of the Colossus* mitigates these ruptures of the ludic experience by making death a rare occurrence. Falling almost never results in the full depletion of Wanderer's health and with a self-replenishing health meter even substantial injury only requires the player's patience, not only allowing the player to remain immersed

also contributes to this distinction between it and the world of linear experience. Encircled by a vast mountain range, cut off from the world from which Wander came, the forbidden lands exemplify the magic circle of play.[9] Instead, in the forbidden lands, the player is free to experiment, free to make a decision that he or she would not in the linear world. Although counterintuitive, the enclosed forbidden lands are liberating. Freedom comes not solely in the exploration of the designed landscape, but in the ability to explore the possibilities of an action; without permanent consequences the magic circle offers a haven from the concreteness of the outside world. There are no conclusions as every time the gamer reenters the forbidden lands, new possibilities present themselves. Spatially, the forbidden lands are defined, but in their temporal endlessness they remain never completely knowable.

Yet, just as the opening cinema reveals that the freedom to move across the landscape is illusory, it also establishes symbolically that the magic circle is not impermeable. The wall, while extending far off into the distance, has an opening wide enough for anyone to enter into the mystical land; unlike the gap Argo jumps, the wall does not present any challenge to Wander and Argo's progress. The first is horizontal, the second is vertical, falling is now entry and moving through does not lead to danger but a haven. As an inversion, it seems that the world beyond is inverted as well, but there is

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within the game world but also giving him or her time to reflect on his or her failure. This mitigation of constant movement in and out also helps maintain the distinction between the game world and the outside realm, as continual transgression of a border undermines its ability to separate two areas.

[9] A concept, which was first introduced by Dutch historian, Johanna Huizinga in his 1938 work *Homo Ludens*, and is now often used in game studies to represent how play creates a separate realm from the ordinary world. Attempting to breakdown the divide between ritual and play, Huizinga argues, "L'arène, la table à jeu, le cercle magique, le temple, la scène… ce sont là tous, quant à la forme et à la fonction, des terrains de jeu, c'est-à-dire des lieux consacrés, séparés, clôturés, et régis à l'intérieur de leur sphère par des règles particulières " (27). The "forbidden lands" that the player enters and interacts with through Wander and Argo is "des lieux consacrés, séparés" par excellence.

one more difference between the two: the gap Argo jumps formed naturally, the opening in the wall is man-made. Even with a wall, the forbidden lands are never closed off from the rest of the world; vegetation growing over and through the structure, nature makes no such distinction.

The separation between the outside world and the game world is not inherent but one of semantics. Even after Wander and Argo pass through the wall, even after they cross the expansive bridge, the cinematic continues. Not only does narrative affect the player's spatial movement, as it is inseparable from the landscape, but it affects the player's understanding of their temporal movement as well. Just as the individual is both player and spectator while watching Wander and Argo travel during the cinematic and while moving across the game space, during the cinematic moments inside the game world the individual occupies both roles. If the forbidden lands were completely impermeable, if actions had no true lasting effect, introspection would have no place in them. The symbolic imposition of cinema's linearity into the game world reflects how the magic circle truly functions. While it may be designated as a haven for exploration of possibilities, transgression of its borders does not erase past experiences. The player enters the game world with his or her experiences from the outside, and exits into the outside world with the experiences that occur within the game. Without a firm distinction between these two worlds, reflection accompanies every one of the player's actions. He or she is always both spectator and player.

Similar to *Les 7 Boules du Cristal* and *Le Temple du Soleil*, in *Shadow of the Colossus* neither the two worlds nor the two roles are truly separate. Even during cut-scenes, the individual is never completely a spectator. When Wander returns to the castle

after defeating a colossus, a cut-scene begins and Dormin tells of the next colossus. During these linear moments of narrative, the player has limited control over the camera. Although restricted, an individual can play with the camera angle, exploring other aspects of the space while the cinematic continues. Exploration remains subservient to introspection as no matter where the player moves the camera, Dormin's voice is still audible and the subtitles are still visible. The game places the player at a distance from its diegesis, but still allows them to interact with it. In both *Shadow of the Colossus* and the two-part Tintin story, the distinctions serve not to separate the concepts, but to highlight one over the other.

INTERACTING WITH SPACE: THE DUAL ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The Dangers of Unguided Interaction

When compared to the video game player, the comic reader seems to have a substantially lower level of participation within the work. The nature of the comics medium makes reader interaction with the work appear illusory, a simple manipulation of perspective. The reader may believe he or she is in direct contact with the work, but unlike the videogame player who can explore the game world and affect its presentation, the reader cannot alter the work's representation of its diegesis. The player can change what is on the screen, but the reader has no power to change what is on the page. Yet, the reader's participation in the diegesis of *Les 7 Boules de Cristal* and *Le Temple du Soleil* is not merely an illusion. Through the manipulation of the medium itself and through one of the series primary, but often over looked characters, Milou, the two-part story, and particularly, *Le Temple du Soleil* not only expresses its diegesis to the reader, but

implicates him or her within it. Although these two elements reaffirm the individual's dual role as both a passive viewer and an active participant, they both work to undermine the latter and emphasize the former.

Within the comics medium, there is a clash similar to the one in *Les Boules de Cristal* between the European "reality" and the supernatural force from South America. As McCloud often repeats in *Understanding Comics*, the medium is one of presence and absence. This duality arises most often through the creation of the panel itself. In designating where a panel is, the comic frame also creates the space where it is not. Just as it manipulates levels of detail, *Les Boules de Cristal* uses the spaces that the frame creates to align Europe as the knowable world, and South America as the unknown. Europe exists inside the panel, the realm of the visual, while South America exists outside of it in the void. Yet, as the effects of the unseen South American presence on the European landscape indicate, this blankness is not merely a by-product, but an active force within the narrative. In fact, this space between panels, referred to as the gutter, is essential to the medium's creation of narrative progress.

Even in unison, panels never show the entirety of an action. As the middle panel of the first page in *Le Temple du Soleil* illustrates, panels can only depict indications of motion. The disruption of language that Tintin's movement causes emphasizes his action, yet the panel is nothing more than a snapshot. In the previous panel featuring Tintin, the young reporter is seated, yet in the next his chair is already halfway out of the frame and he is almost to the door. The start and end of any action occurs between the panels, thus the majority of a comic lies not in the visual realm of the panel but outside, but in the white parts of the page. As a void, the gutter is fillable, a blank canvas on to which the

reader draws the rest of the story. Like the player of *Shadow of the Colossus*, throughout *Les 7 Boules de Cristal* and *Le Temple du Soleil*, the reader plays within the landscape that the comic artist creates. Like the cliffs, bridges and temples of *Shadow of the Colossus*, the gutter directs but does not dictate how the narrative unfolds. McCloud refers to this process of narrative completion in comics as "closure" or the act of "observing the parts but perceiving the whole" (63).[10]

Like *Shadow of the Colossus*, narrative fragments compose the comic landscape, yet as McCloud's term suggests, there is a fundamental difference in the comic reader's sense of his or her participation compared to that of the player. When traversing the landscape of *Shadow of the Colossus*, the player has an illusory sense of freedom of movement. While traversing the comic landscape, because of the gutter, the reader feels an inverse but just as illusory sensation. Although the gutter offers room for reader participation, visually, it is a tight fit. In its literal narrowness, the gutter reduces the reader's conscience realization of how much of the story they create. In its visual restriction, the gutter obscures the expansion closure engenders; reader interpretation opens up, not closes the diegesis of a work, extending the fictional world beyond the limits of the medium. Narrative gaps between panels are often huge, yet the gaps present on the page are not; the visually narrow gutter creates the illusion that the 'work' required to 'jump' from one panel to the next is minimal.

The ending of *Les 7 Boules de Cristal* uses the typically narrow white spaces to emphasize the otherness of South America. The only panel in its row and with a circular

[10] The roots of McCloud's concept undoubtedly lie in the literary theory of reader-response. Every work requires the reader to complete its diegesis. While an author can construct the framework of a fictional world, the reader must use his or her own experiences to make it habitable. Closure is not particular to literature because, as McCloud notes, it transcends media itself. Individual experience is limited and thus incomplete. To conceive of the world as whole requires "an act of faith based on mere fragments" (62).

instead of rectangular frame, the construction of the final panel, out of which the seaplane flies, allows for more whiteness on that page than in any other of the work. Devoid of the concreteness of text and image, *Les Boules de Cristal*, ends completely in the imagination of the reader. As the first in a two-part series, ending with such an obtrusive gutter leaves sparks reader interest for the next volume. The reader is not used to such an open gutter, and doubts his or her ability to successfully close it; it is the ultimate comic cliffhanger, ensuring that the reader obtains the next volume to finish the story. With its three rows instead of four creating a large portion of whiteness at the top of the page, the opening of *Le Temple du Soleil*, continues to drive the reader's desire to return to the narrative safety of large panels and narrow gutters. Yet, this large gutter is not completely blank, featuring in its middle the text "Le Temple du Soleil" and an Incan symbol inside a frame. Much larger, in bold and above the symbol, the text in the white above the panels, like the text in the map below, reaffirms its dominance over pictorial representation. Yet, while the text exists free in this space, a frame encapsulates the symbol linking it to the panels below. The text, unframed appears lost, while the pictorial representation has a designated position. Not only does the top drive the reader to the safety of the standard comic page layout below, it foreshadows how the work will represent the undepictable Incan unknown.

Analyses of *Le Temple du Soleil*, proposes many different points at which Tintin, Milou, and Haddock leave the civilized world and enter into the wild realm of adventure. Apostolidès argues that it happens when Tintin, Milou under his arm, jumps from a runaway train as it crosses a river (167). Others propose this transgression occurs when the three cross the bridge at dawn the morning after their experience with the train or

when they pass through the waterfall that hides the entrance into the Incan temple. It is even arguable that the trio enter the realm of adventure as early as the second page where they are finally free from the language-filled police headquarters, a symbol onto itself of the law and order that defines civilization. While these places in the narrative do represent a transgression of the boundary between civilization and the wild, there is an other place that not only drastically changes the world within which they find themselves, but once again manipulates the gutter to represent the unknown.

After the adventurers have left the police station, jumped from the speeding train, and crossed the bridge at dawn, they find themselves crossing the Andes. Rocky with little grass, the land which they climb p is a desolate one; finally after several incidents, they reach the previously far off snow-capped peaks. At first, while this land is covered in snow, blue sky fills the middle of most panels, and then Haddock, the man trapped by language, lets out a loud "TCHOUM" and the world comes crashing down upon the gang (30). Text and image, the detailed and the undepictable, the known and the unknown, all collapse into a whiteness that dominates the landscape for the next two pages. The thin black lines of the frame and speech bubbles do little to stop both textual and pictorial representation from bleeding into the gutters.[11] The realm of the unknown consumes the page; the characters, who have donned brightly colored ponchos, are all that stand out, and in contrast with their new winter attire, the other discernable features of the landscape, such as rocks and even the contour lines of the snow, fade into the background. On these two pages, with the narrowness of the gutter no longer restricting

[11] McCloud plays with this image often, describing the gutters as the veins of a comic and closure as its blood (73).

interpretation, the reader's imagination can run wild; yet similar to the ending of the first volume and beginning of the second, this openness is disconcerting.

This moment reveals that, like games, comics also manipulate perception of narrative possibility through their temporality. Games present their experience as non-linear and filled with an endless amount of possible actions. With the reset button, the forbidden lands of *Shadow of the Colossus* erase all memory of past deeds. To satiate players accustomed to this world without consequences requires the game to create the illusion of freedom in narrative construction. For comics, because they present themselves as linear, this freedom has an adverse effect on the reader. Choice in narrative construction appears to undermine the structure of storytelling itself; with an endless amount of possible narratives, the story will never be complete. Yet, the player's choice of action is not endless, and although counterintuitive, the inverse is true of comics. In the gutter, the possibilities of narrative construction are infinite, as no two readers will ever fill the blank spaces on the page in the exact same way.

For Haddock, the infinite whiteness is unbearable. Without separation of text and image, of the depictable and the undepictable, his world is without form or substance. Without a frame of reference, he is lost on the page like the title at the beginning of the work. He latches on to the only distinct objects he sees, the Indians who have been following them. Yelling, he runs toward them, but as a man of language, his attempt at action ends in disaster as he trips and forms a human snowball, which quickly gains size and speed, rolling down the hill. All the characters become caught in these unstoppable snowballs. The final panel of the page ends with the white snowballs containing the gang's pursuers toppling off a brown and gray cliff into an abyss. Not only does the

narrative of the page drive the characters and the reader back to the realm of visual representation but shows the danger of its complete absence. When the Indians fall over the edge, they are no longer visible, consumed entirely by the whiteness of their snowballs. They have disappeared completely, lost in the possibilities of the gutter.

Two pages later, the gang find themselves in an alien environment: a lush, primordial jungle filled with dangers. Filled with layers of greens and browns, it is as oppressive an environment as the police headquarters, but here pictorial representation dominates the speech bubble, whose whiteness seems out of place. Once again, in the gutters, the two-part series has recalibrated the functions of text and image. As the framed Incan symbol foreshadows at the beginning of the work, the unknown is depictable but it is unlike anything else that the two-part story has framed.

While the bright colors of the characters' ponchos distinguish them as they move across the unrepresentable border between the civilized world and that of adventure, one character seems absent during this transgression: Milou. Tintin's loyal companion is present and active during these pages, finding Haddock after the avalanche and his captain's hat after the snowballs, yet just like the black lines of the gutter and speech bubble, Milou's outline does little to stop him from disappearing into the whiteness of the snow. However, instead of diminishing Milou's significance, the collapse of these distinctions is indicative of the true nature of the young reporter's snow-white canine. Milou is not just an animal sidekick that helps Tintin; he transports the reader into the adventure.

Milou encapsulates the comic medium, as he is both presence and absence. This duality is most prominent in his visual design. By no means is Milou an amorphous

character; black lines give his body distinct parts and his facial features, while simplistic, are enough to express emotion and personality. His outline keeps him intact, unified; nothing breaches it. Wherever he is, he carves out his own space, securing his physical presence inside the panel. Yet, inside his own body is absence: one that, as the pages in the snow reveal, is akin to that of the gutter. Evoking closure, Milou's whiteness, invites the reader into the panel. McCloud, in his chapter the "Vocabulary of Comics" argues this is an ability of every cartoon. Each acts as "an empty shell that we inhabit which enables us to travel in another realm. We don't just observe the cartoon. We become it!" (36).[12] Closure, then, occurs with all the characters every one in *Les Aventures de Tintin* has a cartoonish style, which extenuates them in contrast to the series realistic backgrounds, as McCloud later notes (42). Milou's whiteness, however, sets him a part. His visual similarity to the gutter connects him to the unseen in a way none of the other characters can replicate.

Yet, Milou's whiteness is different from that of the gutter or even of the speech bubble, because he does not just have a physical presence on the page, but a diegetic one as well. Throughout *Le Temple du Soleil*, he reaffirms his connection to the realm of the gutter within narrative space through his role as the finder of the unseen. Undoubtedly, his affinity for tracking is an inherent trait of his canine nature – Tintin has Milou find their kidnapped guide, Zorrino, by having Milou sniff the Peruvian boy's hat. As the scene in the snow demonstrates, his ability extends beyond that of his species. After the snowballs, Milou finds Haddock's hat while Haddock is present, a reversal of the

[12] McCloud succinctly describes this phenomenon as "amplification through simplification." Unlike a detailed image, the simplicity of an icon ensures that it is easy to mentally reconstruct, while at the same time creating room for the viewer to fill it with a multiplicity of meanings. This duality, McCloud argues, is what makes icons iconic (30).

tracking process (34). His actions following the avalanche, at the beginning of the scene, illustrate the true nature of his ability. As Tintin pulls Zorrino out of the snow, Milou's eyes, composed of two straight lines, squints directly at the white snow (31). Without any article of clothing to sniff, he finds Haddock, whom the snow has consumed entirely in a manner similar to the Indians as they topple off the cliff. He looks directly into the absence, the gutter that has spilled into the panel, and sees the unseen. He is the reader par excellence, a connection that he solidifies throughout the series as the only character to break the fourth wall. Milou never verbally addresses the reader, yet often, when Tintin speaks while looking in a direction off the panel, Milou will respond while looking out of the panel. As his comments often undermine Tintin's in these moments, it is as if Milou is acknowledging to the reader the absurdity of the comic situation. Occupying both physical and narrative space inside the panel, Milou acts as the diegetic representative of the reader.

Milou's position not only allows the reader to enter the diegesis but also transforms him or her into the adventurer par excellence, Tintin. On his own, Milou cannot engender this metamorphosis. While his whiteness and cartoon nature do create a space within the narrative for the reader to enter, his outline is canine. Visually, he resists this complete emptying because not only is his outline non-human, but his outline creates a defined space. Unlike the gutter, which surrounds the entire page, Milou only occupies a small piece of each panel. His narrative background also keeps the reader from completely filling his or herself into Milou. By *Les 7 Boules de Cristal* and *Le Temple du Soleil*, Milou has already gone on eleven different adventures with Tintin. His personality well established, Milou is not simply an empty shell but a character with defined thoughts

and a long history of actions. Like the panels that create the gutter, the past guides reader's closure of the white space inside of Milou. Through Milou's connection with Tintin, however, the reader finds human form within the comic and thus becomes an active participant within the diegesis.

Apostolidès spends much of *The Metamorphoses of Tintin* analyzing the relationship between the young reporter and Milou, tracking its evolution over the twenty-four volume series. While it changes drastically, Apostolidès identifies one aspect that remains consistent. He defines their relationship throughout the series, as "opposite and complementary at the same time" (47). They are yin and yang, with Milou representing the feminine[13] and Tintin the masculine aspects of the concept. Alongside these genders are the other complementary opposites, which *Les 7 Boules de Cristal* and *Le Temple du Soleil* establish only to complicate.

Again, it is the middle panel of the first page of *Le Temple du Soleil* that reveals a core aspect of the two works, illustrating, through the positions of the characters, the relationship between Milou and Tintin. Within the panel, the room is split into two groups: one of language and one of action as the chief and Haddock are in the left half and Tintin and Milou occupy the right. The direction of their faces further cements this grouping as the chief and Haddock are visible, and Tintin and Milou's are turned toward the background. With the door also occupying the right side of the panel, the young reporter and his canine companion are ready to move away from the oppressive police headquarters and to move towards the waiting world of adventure, and so is the reader as

[13] Apostolidès connects Milou with the feminine aspect of the Taoist concept in several ways, but the most notable is the innumerable times he is emasculated through violence directed at his occur to his tail. Almost without fail, in each volume his tail is stepped on, caught in a door, or some other similar event befalls it. (48).

he or she looks through Milou's white body and into the panel. With his back to the reader, Milou is not confronting but extending the reader. However, while linked through their position in space, in this panel Milou and Tintin are not simply one mind in two bodies, and neither are the reader and Tintin. While both the boy reporter and his canine companion face away from the viewer, they are looking in opposite directions; Tintin toward the upper right of the panel, Milou to the upper left, their gazes intersect, but continue on in different directions, illustrating their complementary and oppositional relationship. Milou's reaction to Tintin's movement further emphasizes the dual roles he plays in relation to the young reporter. Although his back obscures his facial expression, Milou's speech bubble containing a question mark and a halo of water beads indicates that he shares the surprise of both Haddock and the chief of police. Relying on a form of verbal expression, instead of action, Milou is not the adventurer par excellence that Tintin is, yet neither is he Haddock nor the chief. Unlike the two men of language who remain trapped in the room - one behind a desk, the other in his seat - Milou is in the position to follow Tintin to the window and into the world of adventure.

Milou's verbal reliance in this panel does not mean that language has ensnared him as it has Haddock. In the bottom-middle panel of the page, both Tintin and Milou remain below the chief's speech bubble. Both with their left foot forward and a slight lean, they are ready to escape, while Haddock's head is not only trapped, but his hands are locked behind his back as if he is handcuffed. While Milou's first instinct is to communicate verbally, he is ready to spring into action with Tintin's guidance. The first page reveals that Milou is not simply yin, language, or even absence, but an intermediary step between the worlds.

His readiness to follow Tintin into the unknown indicates that adventure allows Milou to overcome his oppositional position to the young reporter. When there is no adventure, the two remain disjointed and in confrontation. When the two are idle, Milou often disobeys Tintin. Locked in the Incan prison, Milou rips a newspaper from the young reporter's hands, and despite his calls and pleas, it is a whole row of panels before Milou listens to Tintin. In stealing the newspaper, Milou robs the young reporter of a part of his identity. Without adventure to unite them, Milou becomes similar to the South America in *Les 7 Boules de Cristal*. His oppositional relationship to Tintin becomes disruptive, destroying who and what his friend is.

When there is adventure, however, the two unite. "In the face of the enemy, or simply strangers," notes Apostolidès, "the two comrades act as one with two bodies – one human, one animal" (50), such as when, after escaping the runaway train and leaving the police station, two men attack Tintin (*Le Temple du Soleil* 19). Milou first acts as Tintin's eyes, warning him of the wall to his back, and then, he acts as Tintin's fist, biting the man who is sneaking up on the young reporter. In these moments, they become extensions of each other. Yet, adventure often deepens this connection beyond the one mind, two bodies. In moments of extreme danger, the two collapse into one entity.

This condensation of the two characters into one occurs twice in *Le Temple du Soleil*. The first happens when the two jump from the runaway train as it crosses a bridge. Falling into a river, for a panel, it appears they did not survive (15). On the following, page, however Milou's head pops out of the water, and he cries "Tintin!... Où est Tintin!" echoing the thoughts of the reader. In the next, panel, Tintin's head pops up directly under Milou, lifting the canine out of the water, revealing that he is safe. Milou, sprawled

on top of Tintin's head, and falling off in the next panel, does not seem connected. Because of the nature of the comic page[14] the later panel cannot help but inflect upon the earlier one. The reader not only reads each panel, but the entire row, and the knowledge that Tintin is underneath Milou, pushing the canine's head above water, condenses the two together. This panel reverses the roles between the two, Tintin, unseen, is yin, Milou, visible, is yang. Milou becomes the adventurer half of the two, and as the reader's representative, so does the reader. This moment is fleeting, however, and as Milou falls off Tintin's head and the reader continues to the next row, the distance between the reader and the adventurer returns.

The second condensation, and by the far the more profound, occurs when a giant condor attacks the group (27-30). The incident begins as Milou stands on top of a rocky outcropping, looks out of the panel, and proclaims "Moi, j'aime voir les choses de haut!" (27). His own daring to seek out adventure excites Milou, a triumph he shares not with the other characters but with the reader; for a moment, the reader and Milou are venturing without Tintin into the unknown. However, this action leads to disaster; in the background of the panel, unbeknownst to Milou, a condor is swooping towards him. He has spent the entire work seeing the unseen, but now, he is blind to the danger headed straight for him. Only the reader occupies the position of watcher, and in overstepping his role, Milou has not only placed himself in danger, but ruptures his position as an intermediary between the diegesis and the reader. In this moment, the reader feels distant from the work, as Milou's position requires that he lose his dual awareness of his position

[14] Unlike in film, which replaces one frame with another, in comics, because multiple frames are present on the page at once, many non-linear relationships form between them (McCloud 7). The comic reader is always conscience of the panel's position on the page, even when his or her focus is within the panel, a double awareness that reaffirms the reader's dual perception of being both close to and distant from the work.

in both the medium and the story, and become fully immersed in the diegesis.[15] When the condor flies off, Milou disappears from the reader's view completely, and the reader becomes firmly situated in his or her role as distant spectator.

With Milou gone, the reader can only watch as Tintin attempts to rescue his, and the reader's, best friend. In these moments, the reader is left not only to wonder about the safety of Milou but the implications of his unguided transgression into the realm of adventure. Without Milou, Tintin's action causes the reader to reflect; his exploration engenders reader introspection. Eventually, Tintin reaches Milou, finding him unhurt and sitting in a pile of bones. He responds to Tintin's exclamation and question marks, with a sarcastic, "Ah! c'est toi ?... Tu sais, ils ont un garde-manger magnifique, ces oiseaux-là !" (28). Milou has once again returned to his position oppositional position to Tintin, whose halo of water beads indicate action while Milou's only indicate surprise. Milou remains sedentary, as Tintin places the canine in a makeshift knapsack before rappelling off the cliff.

During the escape, the only visible part of Milou's body is his head, as it sticks out of Tintin's pack. Similar to the previous condensation, in the moment of action, Milou has lost complete use of his body. He is not built to participate in adventure and often only engages with it from a verbal position. Although he does save characters throughout the series, his role in these rescues is primarily as a locater. He finds and relates where others are, but usually it is Tintin who saves them. Soon after these

[15] Apostolidès indirectly indicates this necessity, when he identifies that "the exterior world features more prominently precisely when Tintin has to contend with it more directly" (149). Action defines the adventurer, as Zweig notes, but to interact with the world requires direct contact with it. Milou's self-awareness of his comic nature, which deepens his connection with the reader, often places him outside of the diegesis, creating a distance that eliminates the possibility of direct engagement with the environment.

moments, Milou often undermines his own participation in the heroics, In *Le Temple du Soleil*, Milou's "Wouah! Wouah!" leads Tintin to a hog-tied Haddock (23). In following Milou's barks, Tintin is able to save Haddock, something Milou himself could not do. He can only stand by and wait for Tintin's help. Immediately after, Milou does take action and chases a lizard that was in Haddock's clothes. Milou's attempt is not only unsuccessful, but it ends with him running headfirst into a rock, reaffirming his inability to be the adventurer par excellence. He can only point to action, but not fully participate in it.

Only in sharing Tintin's body can he be a part of the action. In the most intense panel during their encounter with the condor, as the bird grasps Tintin's head in its claws, Milou disappears completely, which has a lasting effect on the understanding of the rest of the scene. Even Apostolidès forgets Milou's presence, focusing only on the connection between Tintin and the condor. He argues, "Becoming one with the condor, [Tintin] falls from the sky before the very eyes of his flabbergasted companions. Half man, half bird, in this scenario he incarnates the Bird-God (*Démon-Oiseau*) one of the divinities of the pre-Incan pantheon" (52-3). Apostolidès makes no mention of Milou despite that in the panel that Apostolidès refers to, not only is Milou's head visible, but he speaks as well. Yet, without a body, Milou, and the reader remain separate from this interaction.

Just as the scene in the snow cautions the reader against unstructured diegetic creation, this scene warns the reader against unguided action. Milou is not an adventurer, and neither is the reader. While he or she can engage with the work through the gutter and Milou, the reader will always be at a distance. While *Le Temple du Soleil* affords the reader an understanding that he or she is not just a passive viewer, but also an active

participant in the diegesis, it positions itself as the arbitrator of this interaction. Without the panel, without Tintin, the reader could never find his or her way through the treacherous realm of adventure.

Understanding the Implications of Interaction

Because the videogame player can directly affect the game environment, his or her interaction with the work is fundamentally different than that of the comic reader. Instead of entering the adventure through indirect methods, such as the gutter or characters like Milou, from the moment the player gains control, *Shadow of the Colossus* implicates the player into its diegesis. During gameplay, the player is always the adventurer; he or she is player is always in direct contact with the game's fictional world, yet as the game's opening cinematic establishes the individual is also a spectator of the movement through it. While the individual occupies these dual roles throughout his or her experience of the work, like *Le Temple du Soleil*, *Shadow of the Colossus* highlights one and undermines the other. In *Shadow of the Colossus*, however, the two are reversed, as the game works to emphasize the individual's role as player and minimize his or her role as spectator. While this hierarchy does efface the limitations of the medium,[16] unlike in *Le Temple du Soleil*, it functions not to dissuade the individual from occupying a distance from the work, but instead to place importance on these moments. Through the playable character of Wander and his horse Argo, *Shadow of the Colossus* further reveals itself not

[16]While in all media an individual is physically distance from the work, the videogame interface makes this space more noticeable. Compared to most works that require an individual to hold them in his or her hand, there is no physical contact with the display system itself. This distant form of interaction occurs with several media, e.g. film, television, or even theater, but because the videogame controller provides tactile awareness of a physical connection with the work, the player is always conscience of his or her body's distance from the site of input and the site of output, which keeps the videogame player from ever becoming the disembodied cinematic eye.

just as a game about exploration of and interaction with a forbidden land, but the implications of acting on the perception that it is a separate world.

Dissimilar to the distant relationship between the reader and Tintin in *Les 7 Boules de Cristal* and *Le Temple du Soleil*, the player and Wander are intimately connected. This reversal in the relationship between the individual and the adventurer comes from the nature of the videogame medium itself, which through its interactivity, not only automatically emphasizes the role of the individual as player, but also interweaves with the relationship between the player and his or her playable character. Because of the videogame medium, the player and Wander are always in close contact with one another, a relationship more akin to the one between the reader and Milou. Yet, in many ways, the relationship between the player and Wander is an inversion of the one between the reader and Milou. This reversal is most prominent in the player's investment of him or herself into Wander, which is much more substantial than the one that occurs between the reader and Milou.

Visually, this difference seems to be counterintuitive. With his white body, Milou appears to invite much more closure from the reader than Wander, who has a wide-ranging color scheme, does from the player. Milou is the diegetic representation of the gutter, as the snow scene in *Le Temple du Soleil* reveals. The player, however, does not inhabit Wander primarily through closure. Because the majority of the game is in a third-person perspective, Wander acts as an extension of the player, similar to how the reader moves through Milou's back in the middle panel of the first page in *Le Temple du Soleil*, the player moves through Wander and into the game's diegesis. Unlike Milou, this extension occurs throughout most of the game and mitigates the distance between the

player and Wander, a distance the Tintin series reestablishes every time Milou looks out of the panel. Because the player spends so much time in the third-person view, he or she learns little about Wander through his facial expressions. Unlike Milou, who often looks out directly at the reader, there is little to no eye contact between Wander and the player. In never confronting Wander, the player does not conceive of him as an opposite, an Other, only an extension of the self. More so than Milou, who cannot enact the reader's wishes but only voice them, Wander acts as the player's diegetic representation, allowing he or she to interact directly with the game world.

Visual closure occurs as well with Wander, though not to the degree that it does with Milou. Wander has much less of a cartoonish style than the characters of *Les Aventures de Tintin*, yet he is not photorealistic.[17] [18] Although his features are sharp and angular, imparting a definition that the round faces of Tintin and of his friends lack, Wander's face is smooth and unmarked. In lacking detail, his face allows for amplification through simplification; not only is it easy to recall, but it also allows the player, through closure, to bring Wander to life in a manner entirely different than when he or she moves the controller.

After each colossus, the amount of closure that Wander requires of the player increases as each time the game returns to the castle. The dead girl, Mono, has more color

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[17] In both digital animation and robotics there is an avoidance of photorealism because of the phenomenon known as the "uncanny valley." The closer a replication visually resembles its living counterpart, the less a person can use closure to efface the incongruities in the depiction. Often, this inability not only causes rejection but revulsion. For a great example, watch one of Pixar's earliest shorts, *Tin Soldier*.

[18] Graphical limitations also attribute to less detailed rendering as Will Wright creator of *The Sims* series relates n his response to Ken Perlin's chapter in *First Person*. "By purposefully making the Sims fairly low-detail and keeping a certain distance from them," Wright describes, "we forced the players to fill in the representational blanks with their imaginations (an amazingly effective process which is well-covered in Scott McCloud's (1993) *Understanding Comics*)" (13). Closure turns graphical limitation into a strength.

while Wander is paler. These cut-scenes are the few times that the player confronts Wander, but instead of asserting Wander's personality, like when Milou looks out of the panel and comments on the comic medium itself, these moments strip more and more of Wander away. The deterioration of Wander's face exemplifies McCloud's repeated image of closure as blood that injects life into a work. Each time Wander's face confronts the player, it is drained of more color, requiring the player to fill it in with more of him or herself. When the cut-scene is over, and the camera returns to a third-person perspective, the player has invested even more of him or herself into Wander.

These investments serve not to deepen the relationship between the player with Wander, but to show how he or she is destroying it. While these cinematic moments are part of the linear progression of *Shadow of the Colossus*, the work deemphasizes its role in their creation, creating the sense that this draining is a result not of its diegetic guidance but of the player's active participation within the diegesis. When the camera pans across the Wander's face, it reveals to the player the effects of his or her actions. Like Milou, the player's transgression into the world of adventure has unforeseen consequences and breaks the connection between the individual and his or her diegetic representative. Dormin's warning during the opening cinematic is not to Wander but to the individual watching. Because each cut-scene inevitably occurs as the player progresses through the game, in the act of playing the individual robs Wander not just of his identity but of his essence, transforming Wander into nothing more than a shell.

At first, the non-visual closure of the narrative in *Shadow of the Colossus* effaces this effect. Again, in this form of closure the position between the reader and Milou and Wander and the player is inverted. While Milou has a long narrative background before

either *Les 7 Boules de Cristal* or *Le Temple du Soleil*, Wander's history remains clouded in mystery. Beginning *in media res*, the opening cinematic offers little information about the events that led to Wander and Argo entering the forbidden lands. Even his name goes unmentioned throughout the game.[19] This resistance to character back-stories, particularly of playable ones, is a common occurrence in video games because of the fundamental aspect of the medium: player choice. Because the medium allows for a multiplicity of narratives, between players, Wander will never interact with the environment in the same way. Because past decisions influence future choices, the more personality a playable character has, the less the player feels freedom in his or her own actions.[20] A detailed back-story for the playable character appears counterintuitive to gameplay; as Ciccoricco argues, "the playable character is not cognitively equipped to draw on a 'personal' narrative memory; for this, he or she needs you as much as you need them (n.p.). Since, during gameplay, the character has no choice in his or her action, it would seem that a long back-story is superfluous. Its manipulation, however, can emphasize the game's core premises, and *Shadow of the Colossus* uses a minimal character history to evoke player reflection.

In relation to its substantial length, there appears to be a notable incongruity in the amount of information that the opening cinematic of *Shadow of the Colossus* provides about Wander. This cinematic resistance to impart character exposition, however, moves understanding of the character into the game world. While the third-person perspective

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[19] "Wander" is a fan-designated name, which derives from the game's original title in Japanese, ワンダと巨像, officially translated as *Wander and the Colossus*. The unnamed character is also referred to as Wanderer or even Wanda, a transliteration of the name in the Japanese title.

[20] For a in-depth discussion of how narrative identity affects player choice see Jos de Mul's essay, "The Game of Life: Narrative and Ludic Identity Formation in Computer Games."

effaces much of Wander's personality, it is not to the degree of playing in first person. In his piece, "Story Mechanics as Game Mechanics in *Shadow of the Colossus*," Ben Sherman identifies that much of Wander's characterizations are not explicit but subtly "implied through experience rather than through cut scenes" (n.p.). To recognize his nuanced movements, such as his gangly walk, ineptitude with his sword, or clumsiness when mounting Argo, the player must be aware of Wander not just as an extension of the player but as a separate individual. Closure, however, collapses this distinction; from these fragments the player identifies during gameplay, he or she can create a background for the character. In conjunction with his or her own narrative identity, the player forms a ludic identity, which he or she uses to determine future action.[21] In watching and interpreting how Wander expresses his or her input, the individual once again inhabits the dual role of spectator and player. Occurring during gameplay, these moments are ones that emphasize exploration but also require introspection. Through using Wander to interact with the game world, the player comes to know the playable character better, yet this new understanding comes from the player's reflection on Wander's reaction to his or her input. Because of the amount of narrative closure that these moments require, and the player's own actions, through Wander's actions, the player comes to know him or herself even better than he or she does of Wander. In deemphasizing Wander's past narrative, and only alluding to it during game play, the game brings the player's present story into sharper focus. Because he or she is so invested in breathing life into Wander, the player constantly watches not just Wander interacting with the game world, but also him or herself. The more he or she strips away Wander's personality and replaces it with his or

[21] De Mul's essay also describes how the player creates and utilizes an overarching "ludic" identity, as he terms it. For more discussion on how a player maintains a meta-identity not only during gameplay but also in everyday experience, see Sherry Turkle's work, "Computer Games as Evocative Objects."

her own, the more the player watches not Wander but his or her own self. As the game progresses, the player reflects more on both how, through his or her actions, he or she changes the game environment, and how those actions change him or herself as well. This slow increase in self-observation reveals *Shadow of the Colossus* is a game not about the growth of the character, but the growth of the player.

The game's control system exemplifies this emphasis on player, not character development. At the onset, all of Wander's moves are available to the player, and when he or she begins, the control scheme appears rather simplistic.[22] Complexity comes not through upgrades, event-triggered or otherwise, but though pre-existing combinations. With only compound game mechanics the game uses Wander to once again position the individual as player but also as spectator. Similar to watching his idiosyncrasies to understand his character, during gameplay, the player must be aware of Wander as an individual and as an extension of self in order to learn his abilities. In revealing the range of movement within the game world that is possible with Wander, the player reassesses how he or she can navigate the space.

Like in Le Temple du Soleil, the primary way through which the individual learns of his or her possibilities in the game world is through confrontation with danger. Unlike the incident with the condor in *Le Temple du Soleil*, *Shadow of the Colossus* encourages the player to seek out adventure, reaffirming the individual's role as active participant in the creation of the world's diegesis. Player growth occurs most often through direct interaction with the game landscape as new environmental challenges, usually in the form

[22] *Shadow of the Colossus* has only a few fundamental move sets, which can be broken down into five different actions: move, jump, attack, hold and call. To move – both Wander and the camera – the player uses the right and left joysticks respectively, to jump: the triangle button, to attack: the square button, to hold: the R1 button and to call: the x-button.

of colossi, require a revelation in the control scheme in order for the player to overcome them. Often this process is trial-by-error, in failure – a luxury that the magic circle seems to afford – the player can learn from his or her mistakes. In these moments, the game forces the player to rebuild his or her mental maps of both the game space and of gameplay.[23] Simultaneously reconstructed, the boundaries between the maps blur and narrative and gameplay collapse, but instead of creating the sense that the player is meeting the game designer, it creates the sense that the player has replaced the designer. Now a mental construction formed from his or her actions, the prerendered game space now belongs to the player. *Shadow of the Colossus'* encouragement of diegetic possession is an inversion of *Le Temple du Soleil*, and comics in general which seek to hide reader participation in the story creation through discouragement of interaction. In hiding its own role in narrative creation, *Shadow of the Colossus* shifts possession of the story arc from itself to the player, creating the illusion that it is solely the player's actions that cause the game, even the cut-scenes, to unfold as they do.

The relationship between the player and Argo further implicates him or her in the narrative creation of the game. Like Milou, Wander's animal companion acts as an intermediary for the player and the game world, acting both as an agent within the diegesis but also as a reminder of the nature of the medium itself. Argo engenders this meta-awareness, through his position as a part of the world outside of the game. As his struggle to cross the small gap in the opening cinematic establishes, Argo's is bound to laws of physics similar to the analog world. Unlike Wander, who seems to float when the player makes him jump, Argo has a sense of weight. Landing on the ground triggers a

[23] For a fuller discussion of how players learn during games, see Juul's discussion of chunking and repertoire in the "Rules" chapter of *Half-real*.

much stronger haptic response than when only Wander falls, causing the player to feel the impact. Unlike Wander, as well, Argo's movements appear more naturalistic, mimicking those of his analog counterparts. When traversing the forbidden lands, his realistic movement clashes with the game world, one in its soft, white light appears ethereal. Riding through the landscape not above it; Argo reaffirms its concreteness. His heaviness grounds the player and through his impact with the landscape, shatters the illusion of a world without consequences.

Argo acts as bridge between the outside world and the one inside of the game. In the opening cinematic, he is the one that the individual watches interact with the environment, as Wander sits on his back. Because most of the shots are of the two in profile, the horse's size dwarfs Wander; Argo is the focus outside the forbidden lands. Inside, however, the third-person perspective obscures him. At this angle, Wander's back covers most of Argo and the horse becomes simply an extension of its rider, and thus the player. He becomes not a character, but a mode of transportation. Many who write about *Shadow of the Colossus*, indirectly reveal this stripping of Argo's personality. Similar to Apostolidès description of the encounter with the condor, when writing of the player's isolation when moving across the landscape, many fail to mention the presence of Argo; he become nothing more than a game mechanic. This transformation occurs through closure as the third-person perspective only provides a fragmented view of the horse. When riding, the player does conceive of Argo as a separate being, but sutures him into the player's understanding of Wander. It is as if Wander has sprouted four extra legs; seemingly a new ability. In these moments, Argo becomes nothing more than a

compound game mechanic.[24] Like Milou, when Argo becomes involved in the action of the game, in direct contact with the diegesis, his presence fades away.

Just as the player's play slowly subsumes Wander, it also erases Argo personality. Yet unlike Wander, Argo can separate from the player. Like Milou, he can confront the player and reestablish himself as a distinct entity. In conjunction with his connection to the linear realm of consequences, interaction with Argo reminds the player that his or her actions have a lasting impact. In gameplay, this occurs when the player overestimates the possibilities of Argo, or fails in controlling him correctly. In the openness of the landscape, the player can play with Argo, and test the horse's limitations through jumping off of an obstacle. With Wander, falling are moments of pure ilinix.[25] Because of Wander's connection to the ethereal game world, there is little worry about the impact, just pure enjoyment of the sense of falling. With Argo, however, if the height is too far, he collapses, throwing Wander and severing the connection between he and the player. Similar to the cut-scenes after defeating a colossus, the individual's relationship shifts from observation of subject to object. Walking back to Wander with a notable limp, Argo confronts the player with his or her actions. Although the game world not only allows for

[24] The importance of the third-person perspective in this effacement of Argo's individuality is no more evident than during the battle with the twelfth colossus. During the encounter, the player must "ride" a gigantic quadruped that shares many similarities with Argo, particularly its positions as an intermediary between worlds. Dormin describes the creature as a "A paradise floats upon the lake, a silent being wields thunder, a moving bridge to cross higher ground." Within the beast is a multiplicity of dualities. The control scheme further connects Argo and the colossus, as the player hits the creature to make it move, similar to the slapping of Argo, and although Argo is not present, the x-button does not cause Wander to whistle, as with other colossi, but to call Argo's name. It is as if Wander is bestowing the horse's name onto the colossus. Yet, the beast resists becoming an extension of Wander and thus the player, as the Wander pales in comparison to the size of the beast.

[25] A term French sociologist Roger Caillois's uses to label his fourth type of game, which he describes as "une tentative de détruire pour un instant la stabilité de la perception et d'infliger à la conscience lucide une sorte de panique voluptueuse… qui anéantit la réalité avec une souveraine brusquerie" (68).

this to happen, but invites this form of play with its many hills and sand dunes. It is the player's fault for taking advantage of the possibility.

This effacement of the game's participation in guiding player action is no more evident than in the cut-scene before the player reaches the final colossus. Once again, a gap that must be crossed confronts Wander and Argo, but as it appears in the game world, and not a cinematic, there is little reflection about the impact of jumping it. As soon as the player does, the game switches to a cut-scene that does not allow for manipulation of the camera. During this moment, *Shadow of the Colossus* firmly positions the individual as spectator, and he or she must watch as Argo bucks Wander forward just before he falls into the canyon far below.

Despite occurring during a cinematic and not gameplay, the permeability of the worlds connects the player's actions in the game world to their results in the cinematic one. Because the game expresses this moment through film, not only does it have finality, but it also ensures that the player does not see Argo as an extension of the self. In the cinematic, Argo regains his personality, but the quick succession between the two media blurs their separation, and the player's experiences with Argo in the game bleed into the cut-scene. Although pre-rendered and unavoidable, the player cannot help but feel responsibility for Argo's fall. In this moment, the game emphasizes the danger of believing one has full control over a situation. While an individual may start an event through his or her action, its completion is out of his or her hands.

TRANGRESSING THE BORDERS

In the interweaving of dichotomies, *Les 7 Boules de Cristal*, *Le Temple du Soleil* and *Shadow of the Colossus* both recognize the existence of the distinction and undermine it. For the two-part comic story, when placed within the same space, text and image, language and action, the everyday and the strange all collapse upon each other. In *Shadow of the Colossus*, narrative and ludic experience bleed into one another. Play impacts the world outside the magic circle as much as the outside world affects play.

In conjunction, these works help elicit not only the position of the individual in relation to them, but the individual's role in all media. The comic or game experience is both passive and active, but as with all distinctions, these two positions are never separate from one another. While the elements of the comics medium emphasizes the reader's role as spectator, it never eliminates his or her participation. Neither can the interactive medium of games place the player in a position of constant action. While ludologist use the medium's interactivity to separate it from its predecessors, games require passive moments in order to impact its participants. These works not only understand that this duality co-exists in their medium, they use that knowledge to reveal to the individual what the implications are of perceiving only one of these positions.

In ensuring that introspection accompanies exploration, the two works transform the adventure tale into a cautionary one. For *Les 7 Boules de Cristal* and *Le Temple du Soleil*, without guidance, exploration can be disastrous. Pure action, without forethought only works for the characters of a linear work. Tintin can be the adventurer par excellence because he is not writing the story. As soon as Milou, and the reader try to enter into the world of adventure, they find themselves blind to what will happen next. For *Shadow of the Colossus*, diving headfirst into action can be just as dangerous.

Because of the nature of games, however, reaction dominates reflection. In establishing space for introspection, *Shadow of the Colossus* emphasizes its importance, undermining the element that most individuals use to distinguish the medium from its predecessors.

These works do not simply blur the distinctions between the multiplicity of dichotomies inherent in their medium and the adventure genre. Instead, they confront the individual with his or her perception of them as separate. The works play with this distinction, complicating the individual's understanding of the concepts. It is easy to compartmentalize the world, to see distinct objects, which may come into contact but depart intact. In recognizing and at first, emphasizing the separations between the objects, their collapse becomes even more devastating. The condor's attack and Argo's fall reject the notion that the split between worlds is concrete. Only when the individual approaches a situation with the understanding of his or her multiplicity of positions can he or she choose the right course of action. No matter how the individual interacts with the world, his or her own position is not singular. Even when in contact with one object, there is a multiplicity of relationships between the two. Just as the comics and game media do not contain one element, neither does the individual, nor unlike Espen Aaserth's assertions that these elements are like oil and water, within one space, they inevitably collapse into one.

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