There's No Place Like Home
Dwelling and Being at Home in Digital Games

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More than four decades after the text adventure game *Adventure* (Crowther/Woods 1976) began with the player "standing at the end of a road before a small brick building," the adventure game *Everybody's Gone to the Rapture* (The Chinese Room 2015) opens with the player still standing at the end of a road before a small brick building, at the start of a wandering journey around the landscape of an English country town to which she does not belong. Again and again, whenever the player is granted an embodied standpoint in the virtual environments of digital games, the standpoint is outside the place of habitation, looking in. We take our first steps as strangers in a strange land, filling the shoes of a rogue's gallery of exiles, amnesiacs, castaways, escaped prisoners, explorers and conquerors, all of whom have, in their various ways, been uprooted and taken out of place. We are visitors in a place that is not ours (Murray 1997, 107) – we orient ourselves, explore, roam and, having found our way, journey towards our goals.

Based on this observation, the very idea of dwelling in the gameworld and of being 'at home' in a videogame might appear strange. Nevertheless, we find ourselves lingering on a bench in *Life Is Strange* (Dontnod Entertainment 2015), resting at a bonfire in *Dark Souls* (From Software 2011), returning to the decks of the *Normandy* between missions in *Mass Effect* (BioWare 2007) or to our bombed-out shelter in *This War of Mine* (11 Bit Studios 2014), gathering materials to build a stronghold in *Minecraft* (Mojang 2009) or decorating and furnishing our rooms in *Animal Crossing: New Leaf* (Nintendo EAD 2012 [hereinafter *AC:NL*]). Such examples suggest that, running parallel to the (literal) setting-into-motion of the existential form of the journey, a less foregrounded but complementary mode of spatial practice is brought into play in our experiential engagement with the virtual worlds of videogames.

The approach I shall follow to the understanding of space is phenomenological, drawing in particular on discussions of spatiality by Martin Heidegger, Gaston Bachelard, Yi-Fu Tuan, Christian Norberg-Schulz and Edward S. Casey. On the basis of Heidegger's (2004b) argument that dwelling is the basic condition of human being-in-the-world, I will introduce Casey's (1993, 133) distinction between

two modes of dwelling, which he terms the *hestial* and the *hermetic*. Hestial dwelling refers to the centered, inward-gathering dwelling of the domestic sphere, focused upon the image of the home (Rybczynski 2001, 62), while hermetic dwelling accounts for the outward-looking, decentered mode of spatial being defined by movement and wandering. I shall make the argument that, to date, critical engagement with the experience of game space has tended to focus on the hermetic dimension of dwelling, understanding gameworlds primarily in terms of paths of traversal, and predicating the player's spatial practice on the presupposition of constant movement (Aarseth 1997; 2001; Nitsche 2008; Wolf 2011; Calleja 2011; Gazzard 2012).

Through a focus on *AC:NL* and *Minecraft* as case studies, I shall make the case that the player's spatial being-in-the-gameworld has room for the practices of hestial dwelling, including the lingering pause that halts the onward journey and the activity of *building* in place. This shall then lead me to a consideration of the home as the locus of hestial dwelling, and to the ways in which the notion of home is brought to bear upon the player's being-in-the-gameworld. I shall highlight a set of salient features of the image of the home, in its intertwined architectural and existential dimensions: namely, the setting-down of a *center;* the demarcation of the binary opposition of *inside* and *outside*, together with the significance that comes to be attributed to each; the idea of the home as *continuity* and as a site of *repetition*; and the idea of the home as a *private* sphere, a cradle of identity and selfhood.

Implicit in the argument is the idea, suggested by Eugen Fink (2016, 21), that play stands over and above the other existential phenomena of human being-in-the-world and brings them into view – a point Sebastian Möring (2013, 118) has rendered even more explicit, saying that "play is a specific way of engaging with Being or with one's existence, since it makes some essential laws and structures of Being experienceable."

Elsewhere, I have made the case that this is due to the double phenomenology of ludic engagement (Vella 2015, 55-72). When playing, we take on a subjective standpoint internal to the gameworld, as a ludic subject, and retain a simultaneous standpoint as players at a remove from the gameworld. This double perspectival structure establishes the formal conditions for a ludic aesthetics founded on the bringing-into-presentation of the existential practices that constitute the player's being-in-the-gameworld (Vella 2016, 82). The claim I wish to make, then, is that when games invite us to pause, linger and dwell in the places they present to us, what is happening is not simply a repetition in the gameworld of the spatial practices of emplacement by which we engage with the world. It is a bringing-into-presentation of these practices in the aesthetic mode, allowing us, as players, to experience, engage with and interpret our own practices of dwelling.

Two Modes of Dwelling

For Heidegger (2008, 26), human being – as *Dasein*, literally 'being-there' – is emplaced being; it is being-in-the-world. And to be in the world, according to Heidegger (2004b, 349), is to *dwell*: "the way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth, is *buan*, dwelling. To be a human being […] means to dwell." Dwelling, then, is "a basic condition of humanity" (Norberg-Schulz 1985, 12). It is a two-way process – by dwelling, not only do we demarcate and internalize a particular locus, rendering it visible as a *place* and granting it a particular meaning in experience. At the same time, a place gives shape to our dwelling within it, and to our being: "when we identify with a place, we dedicate ourselves to a way of being in the world" (ibid.).

We are never so thoroughly *in place* as when we are at home. Witold Rybczynski (2001, 62) notes that the notion of 'home' "connotes a physical 'place' but also has the more abstract sense of a 'state of being.'" A home is not just a location – for which the word 'house' would suffice – but the existence we have in that place, a 'being-at-home.' Anchored as it is in the home, however, dwelling is not a unitary phenomenon. There are as many ways to dwell as there are places, or, to trace the process in the other direction, there are as many existentially significant places are there are ways to dwell. Every home sets in stone its particular way of dwelling. Nor do we always dwell at home. At times, the call of the road must be heeded, and we inhabit temporary dwellings along the way as we map out a transitory being in unfamiliar spaces. If we can be *at home*, it is only because we can be, at other times, *not at home* – which, of course, entails not the absence of an existential engagement with the place we are in, but, rather, a different way of being emplaced.

With this in mind, Casey (1993, 133) makes a phenomenological argument for the existence of two distinct modes of dwelling. Drawing on Greek mythology to anchor the terms in the roots of the Western imagination, Casey calls these the *hestial* (after Hestia, goddess of the hearth) and the *hermetic* (after Hermes, the fleet-footed messenger of the gods). The hestial and the hermetic "call upon two ways of being bodily in the world (stationary and mobile)" (ibid., 140-141). Hestial dwelling is inward-looking, centralized and enclosed. It represents a gathering-in, a lingering, a staying. Its model is the domestic enclosure of the home – "the centered, long-suffering, and measured movements of Hestia at the hearth epitomize the habitual body motions and memories that are part and parcel of domestic life" (ibid., 140). Hermetic dwelling is the opposite – "if the hestial mainly gathers in […] the hermetic moves out resolutely" (ibid., 137-138). It is dynamic and decentred, implying outward movement, openness and divergent lines: "the mercurial movements of Hermes, god of thieves, are suited to the nonhabitual, de-centered actions of traversing open spaces rapidly," being characterized by "mobile actions that proceed swiftly and in decidedly linear fashion" (ibid., 140). Where hestial

dwelling is gathered up in the figure of the home, hermetic dwelling is defined through its absence, through being "*somewhere else* than home, not 'settled in'" (ibid., 121).

For an aesthetic representation of this opposition between the hestial and the hermetic, being-at-home and being-not-at-home, we need look no further than the narrative of the journey. As a chronotopic form (Bakhtin 1981, 84) the journey strings the events of its story along a geographical vector, resulting in a simultaneous temporal and spatial progression – "a narrative of *events in place*" (Casey 1993, 277). Its archetypal form is the "arduous journey" of the epic hero (Moseley 2009, 64). When Gilgamesh, in the ancient Mesopotamian text that bears his name – and that lies at the root of the written epic tradition – announces his intention to travel to the distant Cedar Forest to kill Humbaba, its divine guardian, he states that, "I must travel on a road that I do not know" (Kovacs 1989, 25-26).

It is the journey itself, as much as any foe to be faced at the end of it, that constitutes the epic hero's trial, and its first step represents the crossing of a fundamental boundary. The boundary enshrines the binary opposition of *home* and *not-home*, around which is structured a dense layering of symbolic oppositions – between inside and outside, center and periphery, the familiar and the unfamiliar, the safe and the perilous, order and disorder, society and the wilderness. So strong is this opposition that each of the two terms appears to gain its meaning purely as a negation of the other: the wilderness is a wilderness because it is not home, and home is that which is shored up to stand against the wilderness outside.

Across the threshold, being-at-home and being-not-at-home, hestial and hermetic dwelling, frame, and reflect upon, each other. These are not mutually exclusive dispositions. Instead, "the two basic modes of dwelling act to enhance each other's presence" (Casey 1993, 143). The traveler carries her home with her along the journey – the hardships of the wilderness are sharpened by the memory of the home that has been left behind, and mitigated by the hope of either returning or of settling down in a new home at the journey's end. Tuan (1993, 149) has noted that "home is of course necessary to the adventurer as a secure base and point of departure," and, as Casey (1993, 274) notes, "it is also where one returns to in a journey of homecoming."

This theme is foregrounded most forcefully in the *nostos* (Ancient Greek νόστος, meaning 'homecoming') narrative, which, as an element of "the archetypal Greek foundation story" (Purves 2010, 165), has cast a long shadow on Western culture. The *nostos* narrative inverts the outward impulse of the hero's journey on the quest for glory or *kleos* (κλέος) impulse motivating the epic hero's departure from home), presenting us with a situation in which "a voyage out is only incidentally a journey of discovery and victory. Primarily it is an ardent quest to return home" (Reed 2006, 153). The *Odyssey* is the most famous, though far from the only, example of this trope, and its enduring resonance is evident – the journey away from home

and the subsequent return home is a particularly recurrent pattern, for instance, in children's narratives: In the film adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz* (Fleming 1939), Dorothy Gale is whisked away from her habitual *topos* by a tornado, and her initial reaction to the magical land of Oz in which she inexplicably finds herself is precisely to note that she has been, very literally, *displaced* – that she is "not in Kansas anymore." In her subsequent adventures in the land of Oz, Dorothy is driven by the quest to return home, motivated by the realization that, "there's no place like home."

If home is ineluctably present on the journey's path, the inverse is also true: the lure of the journey reaches its tendrils into the stationary being of the home-dweller. In Charlotte Brontë's (1994, 87) *Jane Eyre*, we encounter a scene every bit as familiar and resonant as that of the traveler pining for home – that of the home-dweller dreaming of the adventure of the journey. Jane, having spent eight years at Lowood Institution, first as a pupil, then as a teacher, finds herself one evening looking out of the window of her attic, past the wings of the building, to the distant horizon: "I traced the white road winding round the base of one mountain, and vanishing in a gorge between two. How I wished to follow it further!" It is not only her physical surroundings she has grown weary of, but her being within the place: "school rules, school duties, school habits and notions, and voices, and faces, and phrases, and costumes, and preferences, and antipathies […] I tired of the routine of eight years" (ibid.).

Lost in an unfamiliar landscape, the familiar safety of the homeplace, as it is for Odysseus and Dorothy Gale, is a refuge to which we retreat in spirit. In Tuan's (1977, 3) words, "place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other." Nestled in the gathering of the hearth, we yearn, like Jane Eyre, for unknown open spaces and the undetermined, unfettered being for which they can serve, to borrow a term from Heidegger, as *Spielraum*, room to unfold and play out (2008, 419). The hestial and the hermetic, inside and outside, mapped place and unmapped space, are equally essential components of our dwelling in the world.

Games and the Hermetic Mode of Dwelling

Given how fundamental this dual-sided structure appears to be to our spatial practice of being-in-the-world, it would appear safe to assume that videogames, so invested in spatial themes, would similarly reflect this duality in the existence they grant the player in the gameworld. However, a survey of the existing theorizations of game space reveals a more one-sided understanding of the player's spatial practice. With some notable exceptions, an all but exclusive emphasis is placed on practices that enact a hermetic mode of dwelling, sidelining, virtually

to the point of erasure, the complete category of experiences and practices relating to hestial dwelling – the pause, the rest, the return, the home.

This is already evident in Espen Aarseth's (1997, 1) theorization of the ergodic as the mode of textuality that applies to videogame form. In fact, the term *ergodic*, derived from the combination of the Greek terms *ergon* and *hodos*, 'work' and 'path,' is itself inscribed with the assumption of a hermetic mode of dwelling. The concept of the ergodic text as that which requires the user to actively work out a path implies the presupposition that it is in fact experienced precisely as a path of traversal – in other words, as a journey, with a beginning, end and constant forward motion between the two. It is unsurprising that the spatial metaphors Aarseth reaches for in order to convey the aesthetic experience of the ergodic text describe a hermetic spatial practice: "it is possible to explore, get lost, and discover secret paths" (ibid., 4).

This is only reinforced by the image of the labyrinth or maze which proves central to the conceptualization of the ergodic text. In terms of the spatial practices it invites, a labyrinth is a complex place, requiring multiple modes of engagement as we move around it. And yet, *move around* is what we inevitably do. One does not feel at home in a maze; one wanders, one moves towards the center. One tends not to pause at all, except perhaps momentarily, in order to determine the best way to proceed: First, we are likely to meander, making a trial of the routes the maze suggests, trying to find our way – it is with this in mind that Aarseth notes that the "spatially oriented themes" which are brought to the fore by the adventure game, as a specific form of the ergodic text that has been particularly central to the development of videogames, are those of "travel and discovery" (ibid., 100).

Once we have, or believe ourselves to have, found our way, we proceed, in linear fashion, along the path that will take us to the center. Ariadne's thread traces a line through Minos' labyrinth, bringing into view one path of traversal and turning the complex network of routes into background to this path. As Alison Gazzard (2012, 20) points out, the mode of spatial being we engage in when venturing into a labyrinth is that of "traveling across a landscape," a highly determined, convoluted, but ultimately linear journey from point A to point B – which, in turn, suggests (and here again the link to the notion of ergodicity comes to the surface) that the topological structure that describes the existential engagement with the maze is the path. In videogames, she argues, "the maze (even with its choices and multiple routes) is seen as directing the player to one goal with a "single solution"' (ibid., 14). The movement, moreover, is inherently teleological: "the game-maze is a *pathway to*, a device for *completing* the multiple objectives of the game" (ibid., 40).

The image of the maze, then, reveals the phenomenological assumptions underlying game studies' grasp of the player's spatial involvement with the game-world. These are the assumptions at work when Mark Wolf (2011, 21) theorizes game space as "navigable space," which he defines as "a space in which way-find-

ing is necessary" – a procedure he links specifically to movement (ibid., 23). The necessity of finding one's way – of working out one's path – implies an understanding of oneself as being *on the way* towards a final destination, which marks one's spatial practice as being focused on movement, and one's dwelling as hermetic. In the same vein, Stephan Günzel's (2007, 174) comment that "the ego has to wander through game space in order to apprehend the spatial setting" assumes a rootless, peripatetic existence for the player in the gameworld.

On the basis of these assumptions, typologies of game space are often, in effect, typologies of "path structures" (Gazzard 2012, 12). Whichever spatial organization a particular game adopts, it can be understood, in the experience of play, as a path. The most direct forms this takes are the tracks of racing games and the "invisible tracks" the player is led along in rail-shooters, and it is only a small leap to the rigidly drawn corridors of the unicursal pathways of games like the first-person shooter *Medal of Honor* (DreamWorks Interactive 1999), which Nitsche (2008, 172-175) goes so far as to call "invisible rails."

Even in the case of multicursal or open game spaces, the structure of the quest as a determiner for the vector of the player's movement (Tosca 2003; Aarseth 2004) "presents a unicursal path overlaid onto the maze" (Nitsche 2008, 178). As a result, "the virtual journeys of players criss-crossing the available space can be interpreted as the creation process of a labyrinth of experienced locations. Their movements form a spatial practice, and this practice leads to labyrinthine spaces" (ibid., 183). In other words, even an open world is experienced as a linear journey, with everything that implies for the player's spatial being.

The same purely hermetic understanding of the player's mode of dwelling in the gameworld is in evidence in Gordon Calleja's development of Nitsche's typology of game spaces. Calleja (2011, 73) emphasizes "exploration" as the macro-level driving force for the player's moment-to-moment navigation of the game space. The player is cast as a wanderer, traveling in an unfamiliar landscape, and this basic assumption carries across Calleja's discussion of the various spatial structures, whether this is the unicursal corridor in which "traversing the scenarios is a strictly linear affair" (ibid., 78), multicursal mazes which "offer multiple routes through their domains" (ibid., 80), or an open landscape structure "in which one can freely roam" (ibid., 84).

By pointing out that game studies have overwhelmingly discussed the player's experience of game space in terms of a hermetic mode of dwelling, I do not wish to suggest that game scholars have distorted their object of study. In the tradition that spans the four decades between the aforementioned examples from *Adventure* and *Everybody's Gone to the Rapture*, genres as diverse as the adventure game, the role-playing game, the first-person shooter and the platform game have overwhelmingly foregrounded practices of exploration, navigation, pathfinding, travel and movement. Game studies' emphasis on such themes in its engagement

with the spatiality of games appears to be, by and large, an accurate descriptive analysis.

This, perhaps, should not be too surprising. For most of their history, videogames and the act of videogame play have been firmly ensconced in hestial dwelling-places: bars, video arcades and, eventually, the home itself, in the private domain of the bedroom and around the television set, the heart(h) at the center of the contemporary home. Taking their place in the midst of our repose in habitual, hestial dwelling, videogames came to represent a new way of escaping the routines of familiar dwelling in familiar places into a reverie of hermetic adventure. The screen becomes a virtual window, offering a prospect onto a virtual hermetic space that highlights its promise of exploration, discovery and, most fundamentally, spatial freedom; And yet, once we venture through this window – once, through a cognitive mechanism of "incorporation," we find ourselves occupying an embodied subjective standpoint within the gameworld (ibid., 169), once, in other words, we have made that *there* our *here*, must our being remain rootless and uncentred?

Speaking of the aesthetics of landscape in *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* (Bethesda Softworks 2006), Paul Martin (2011) argues that the player's engagement with the virtual word of Tamriel shifts from the sublime to the pastoral as it becomes familiar and 'domesticated' – in other words, as the player's being in this place becomes habitual. The aesthetic movement from the sublime to the pastoral describes a shift between an experience of the landscape as unbounded, formless, extending beyond the limits of perception and knowledge, and a markedly divergent experience of the same landscape rendered familiar, mapped out according to the existential practices of action within it. The window of the screen no longer opens onto a path leading out into the unknown, but onto a placescape shaped by a network of habitual practices.

Martin's aesthetic analysis of the experience of landscape in *Oblivion* thereby suggests that processes of familiarization and emplacement are as intrinsic to our engagement with game space as they are to our negotiation of physical space, and that, as players, we do, in an important sense, arrive at a form of settled habitation of the gameworld. The instances of spatial dwelling I have already mentioned in *Life is Strange*, *Dark Souls*, *Mass Effect*, *This War of Mine* and *AC: NL* demonstrate the forms that such a habitation might take. All enact ways of being-in-the-gameworld defined by a hestial orientation, and by the emergence of figures of home.

On this evidence, an understanding of dwelling in gameworlds that subscribes to a purely hermetic understanding is a reductive one that fails to account for the richness of the player's spatial engagement with the gameworld. In order to address this markedly undertheorized presence of hestial dwelling-in-the-gameworld, it is necessary to pay attention to the phenomenological mechanisms, and the related existential practices, by which the hermetic practices of exploration,

traversal and movement give way to settlement, stasis and domesticity – in other words, by which the path through the gameworld finds its terminus in the home in the gameworld.

Minecraft and *AC:NL* can serve as useful case studies on which to ground the investigation. Both are examples of games in which hestial dwelling is primary, with the player's movements around the gameworld centering on a figure of home rather than following the linear advance represented by the path. In the sandbox construction game *Minecraft*, the home that the player builds in the gameworld – as an activity of building and as an architectural form – both motivates and anchors the player's hermetic explorations of the landscape, thematizing the interweaving of hestial and hermetic practices. In the community simulation game *AC:NL*, on the other hand, the gameworld as a whole constitutes an elaborate homeplace, a concentric organization of spheres of dwelling, the home proper contained within the hometown, resulting in a focused enactment of the multiple, mutually supportive practices of hestial dwelling. Thanks to these divergent approaches, *Minecraft* and *AC:NL*, taken together, can demonstrate the range of hestial practices through which the player can come to feel at home in the gameworld.

Pausing and Lingering

The first step between the hermetic and the hestial mode of dwelling is the interruption of movement. Tuan (1977, 138) gives the moment of pause a great importance, suggesting it represents the experiential move from space to place: "place is a pause in movement […] the pause makes it possible for a locality to become a center of felt value". Very rarely in games do we have the time, or the motivation, to stand and stare. 'Pausing' generally refers to an interruption of play, rather than an act or disposition within it. In fact, the idea of 'play' as an existential concept has been linked explicitly to movement, both in philosophy (Gadamer 1989, 104) and in game studies (Salen/Zimmerman 2004, 304). In this regard, the fact that the general term for a guide to playing a videogame is a 'walkthrough' is hardly surprising.

In this context, one of the most mundane icons of pausing along a journey – the pathside bench – becomes practically a subversive gesture. The very idea that, while playing a videogame, we might wish to stop and sit along the way, rather than moving forward at all costs, almost strikes us as absurd, and yet, now and again, we do come across benches in our wanderings through various gameworlds. In the adventure game *Ico* (Team ICO 2001), for example, benches serve as a checkpoint, allowing the player to save their progress. Upon choosing to 'use' one of the stone-benches the player encounters in the game's ruined milieu, the

eponymous player-character and his companion, Yorda, take a break from their journey to rest on the bench. However, this pausing is not a part of the player's spatial being-in-the-gameworld, but an interruption of it: upon performing this action, the scene fades away and the player is taken to a menu in order to save their game. There is no meaningful lingering here.

Compare this to the park benches in *AC: NL*, which give the player the opportunity to linger as long as she wishes. When the player sits on the park-bench she constructed on a cliff overlooking the beach in her *AC:NL* town, the camera angles downwards from the usual top-down point-of-view to grant a more panoramic perspective, bringing together earth and sky to frame the avatar peacefully seated on the bench. This sitting serves no functional purpose – it does not advance the player's progress in any way, except for time continuing to pass. It can go on for as long as the player likes – the avatar will only get up once the player gives the command to do so. It is, in other words, a pure lingering, a pause in the teleology of the player's spatial practice.

It is revealing to note the way in which the phenomenological implications of this deliberate choice to linger in a particular place – through the act of sitting on the bench – are represented through the language of the game's visual presentation. The avatar's sitting results in a picturesque visual framing which brings the *genius loci* of the surrounding scene – its placeness in all its sensual richness – into view. Tuan's observation regarding the phenomenology of the pause, and its bringing of a place into view, holds true. However, there is an added dimension to what is being presented. When I choose to sit on the bench overlooking the sea in my hometown, *AC:NL* does not present me with the view over the ocean that my avatar is presumably enjoying; instead, my avatar himself remains the point of visual focus, with the scene composed around him. True to Fink's (2016, 21) depiction of play as the representation of existential practices, this is not only the experience of lingering, but the *presentation* of the experience of lingering.

Minecraft, conversely, provides no formalized enactment of the experience of lingering. In fact, the instrumental mode into which the player's being-in-the-gameworld is enframed brings the things of its world into consciousness, in Heideggerian terms, as ready-to-hand (2008, 98), visible only insofar as they figure towards the player's purposes and are incorporated into the player's practices (Vella 2013) – a teleological, forward-looking (and forward-moving) orientation which runs counter to the unassuming gaze of the settled pause, which reveals things as present-at-hand for their own sake. Nonetheless, this does not mean the player cannot choose to pause during her explorations of the game's landscape – say, to disinterestedly, with no instrumental purpose in mind, take in the view after climbing to the summit of a hill. Even more than this, the player can choose to set this possibility for lingering in stone while building her home in the gameworld – for instance, by constructing a tower with a west-facing window in

its highest room, intended for the primary purpose of serving as a lookout from which to take in the sun setting on the horizon at the end of the day. However, this observation takes us beyond the momentary pause and into the more settled practice of building in place (and building *a* place), which – as a more advanced step in the enshrining of hestial dwelling – I shall consider next.

Building

I have already referred to Tuan's (1977, 13) claim that the point at which we interrupt our wandering to linger in a particular locus is the point at which that location is revealed to us as a place within which we can dwell. Keeping in mind that "to dwell implies the establishment of a meaningful relationship between man and a given environment," what is revealed, primarily, is a way of being-in-the-world, which "comprises a *how* as well as a *where*" (Norberg-Schulz 1985, 15).

For Christian Norberg-Schulz, the determination of this *how* occurs in a twofold manner. First – relating back to the pause and the lingering, the bringing-into-view of place – we employ "the faculty of understanding the given things," a receptive dimension or openness to the possibilities a place holds for the determination of our dwelling. Second, once we have understood the particular way of being-in that a place *is* for us, dwelling involves "the making of works which keep and "explain" what has been understood" (ibid., 17). In other words, *building*, in phenomenological terms, is the setting-in-stone of a revealed mode of being. As we have already seen – in the case of the bench looking out onto the sea in *AC:NL* and the window at the top of the tower in *Minecraft* – the built work allows for the "gathering" (Heidegger 2004b, 355) of a landscape into a meaningful place.

Norberg-Schulz's architectonics of dwelling are founded upon Heidegger's conceptual intertwining of *building* and *dwelling*. Heidegger traces the etymological root of *dwelling* in the Old High German *buan*, which, inseparably from the sense of *to build*, also "signifies to remain, to stay in a place" (ibid., 348). *Building* is essential to *dwelling* – not in the sense that "the latter, building, has the former, dwelling, as its goal" (ibid., 347). It is not the case that first we build, then we dwell in the place we have built – rather, "building is really dwelling" (ibid., 350). To pause is to settle is to build is to dwell – all form one continuous existential movement of being-in-place.

In one of the few studies to engage explicitly with the question of dwelling in games, Bjarke Liboriussen documented the building practices of a community of players of *Second Life* (Linden Lab 2003) who identified themselves as 'builders,' and who had embarked on an ambitious collective project to build a castle. What his ethnographic account reveals is that it is the activity of building itself, rather than the final result of the process, that motivates players intrinsically. As a result,

"the building understood as *activity* is never over" (Liboriussen 2012, 39), and it is this activity which gave shape to these players' dwelling in *Second Life*. For Heidegger (2004b, 349), building, in this existential sense, takes two forms: First, there is "building as cultivating," which manifests in the preservation of, and the caring for, that which grows of its own accord; in practices such as agriculture and gardening. Second, there is "building as the raising of edifices," which involves the construction of works within a place.

Both *AC:NL* and *Minecraft* foreground the two forms of building – in this way, they are typical of games that locate the player in a fixed place which she inhabits as 'home' for the duration of the game. In almost all such cases, the player is directly or indirectly tasked with improving this home, a task which brings the existential practices of building-as-dwelling into view. To wit, in *AC:NL*, being vested with the role of town mayor, the player is tasked with developing her village. Building-as-cultivation is present here, in the planting of trees and flower-beds, the patient waiting for trees to grow and bear fruit, and the watering of plants to maintain them in (literal) sparkling good health. However, this village development primarily takes the form of public works projects – constructions such as bridges, benches, fairy-tale clocks and Zen-gardens that the player can undertake in order to improve the town.

Having decided what project she wishes to undertake, the player must then accompany Isabelle, her mayoral assistant, to choose a location for it. When the player suggests a spot, the game provides a representation of how the location will look with the completed project in place – the span of a bridge across the river, the aforementioned bench looking out over a cliff, a totem pole framed against the sky. Before the player confirms her decision and sets the project underway, then, she is given a glimpse of the place that the building work will set in stone.

Few games, however, enact the existential practices of building as richly, and as significantly, as *Minecraft*. At the start of a new game, the player is situated in a complete wilderness, a natural landscape with no mark of human activity. She is shown no path and handed no goal or quest. Instead, what motivates her engagement with the landscape is the existential drive to build, and, through building, to make of the landscape a place of habitation (Vella 2013). Initially, this building answers the need for survival. The player is unlikely to live through her first night if she is not able to build herself a shelter from the hostile creatures that emerge under cover of darkness. Accordingly, the first building the player will work on out of necessity will likely take the form of a single room, or perhaps a walled-off cave – either of which would perform the basic function of keeping out night-time threats.

From these humble beginnings, the player can expand her home in order to structure the various practices of her dwelling. She is likely to build more rooms in order to house crafting tables, chests for storing raw materials and a bed that

serves as a respawn point. She might choose to expand her home downwards, by digging tunnels connecting her home to underground caverns which can be 'domesticated' – made part of 'home' – through the placing of torches for light and the construction of stairways and passages for easy access. She can build upwards, erecting towers and battlements from which the surrounding landscape is gathered into the unity of a prospect. Finally, she can build outwards, enclosing trees and fields within the bounds of the built place of her home.

Two points are important to note here. The first is that this process of building occurs in dialogue with the topological character of the place within which it stakes its claim: "Architecture serves to reveal and emphasize qualities that are already present" (Norberg-Schulz 1984, 31). Thus, a battlement built upon a hill to act as a vantage-point for the player calls attention to the verticality of the hill; a bridge spanning a gorge accentuates its breadth and vertiginous depth; a shaft dug into a cavern underlines its claustrophobic subterranean character and its distance from the surface. All these building-acts respond to the *genius loci*, and shape a way of being-in-the-world which brings it to the fore of the player-dweller's experience. The second thing to note is that, in *Minecraft*, this revealing takes a very particular form. It can be characterized as a technological one, in the sense in which Heidegger (2004a, 320) understands technology as a *Gestell*, an 'enframing' of the world which enshrines a particular way in which the world is revealed to perception. For Heidegger, the essence of the technological way of being lies in the impulse to frame the world in the mode of *standing-reserve*: in his words, "everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately on hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering" (ibid., 322).

The amassing of stockpiles of resources standing in reserve is, indeed, both what makes the player's project of building in *Minecraft* possible, and the primary function of the project of building. Tunnels are dug into the rock and caverns are connected to, and incorporated into, the player's home in order to give the player access to underground seams of coal, iron, gold, diamonds, redstone and obsidian, all of which she can mine. Fields are enclosed and saplings planted so that the player is ensured a supply of wood to chop down. All of this – coal, wood, stone, iron, gold, and so on – is accumulated, through the player's efforts, in the form of stockpiles of resources stored in chests in the player's house, ready to be put to use towards further building. One does not, in *Minecraft*, build to survive; rather, one survives to build.

Centre, Inside, Walls and Outside

Having lingered, in turn, on the phenomenology of the pause along the path, the temporary dwelling along the journey and the existential practice of building-as-dwelling, it is now time to focus on the formal structures of place that are revealed through building – in other words, on the architectural figure of the home itself, as the locus of hestial dwelling. This does not entail a shift away from the discourse of the phenomenology of space towards that of architectural form; rather, it highlights the common ground shared by the two. As Norberg-Schulz (1985, 19) writes, "works of architecture […] *embody* existential meanings," and it is with a view to their existential meanings – to the way they shape our dwelling in place – that I shall consider architectural forms in this section. In order to focus my analysis, I shall concentrate on two fundamental architectural gestures inherent in the idea of the home, which serve to give shape and form to human dwelling. These two gestures, which I shall expand upon in turn, are the setting-down of a center and the delineation of inside and outside.

Home as the marking of a center: Home acts as the center and point of orientation for the human being's engagement with the world, and thereby organizes around itself the entirety of her spatial existence in the world. Norberg-Schulz writes that "the goal or *center* is the basic constituent of existential space" (ibid., 20). Centre and periphery, near and far, local and remote are set forth deictically, in relation to the home as *origo* or point of origin for the individual's spatial being, as that which is taken up as 'her' place. "The center," Norberg-Schulz argues, "represents what is *known*, in contrast to the unknown and perhaps frightening world around" (ibid., 21); it thus enshrines a distinction between the home place which lies at the center and the "alien space" outside its boundaries (Tuan 1993, 140).

Thus, in *Minecraft*, the compass always points back to the player's bed – it is home which serves as the point of orientation in the player's exploration of the wilderness, structuring a relative rather than absolute mode for the player to experientially position herself in the gameworld. Not only direction but also proximity and distance is measured in terms of whether one is near or far from the home as the center. The necessity of finding shelter come nightfall makes the player conscious of how far she has wandered from her home during the course of her daytime explorations, and of how much ground she has to cover to get back to the familiar territory and safety of the home. The vertiginous sense of the enormity of open space in *Minecraft* is felt most keenly when that space spans a too-far distance home. The sense of being out of place, or, in the worst case, of being lost and not knowing the way back home, is possible only because there is a home to be away from and a center to be far from.

The existential domain of being-in-the-world is thus organized, according to the principles of hestial dwelling, around the home as a central point of orienta-

tion. Tuan characterized this organization as "a succession of concentric circles, at the center of which is home narrowly defined, or homeplace" (ibid., 139), beyond which we encounter "broadening, increasingly abstract, rings of 'home space,'" to each of which pertains its respective degree of familiarity and intimacy (ibid., 140) – the hometown, the home country, and so on until, at the furthest extent, we find ourselves not-at-home. Norberg-Schulz (1985, 13) maps out these nested circles from the outside in, locating as the outermost circle of 'home' the settlement within the landscape; within the settlement, the urban space; next, the institution; arriving, finally, at the home itself.

AC:NL deploys this concentric structure of dwelling-places, allowing the player to move between her home proper, the private space she makes her own, and the "*collective dwelling*" (ibid.) of the town, where she can interact with her neighbors. She is no less at home while strolling about the familiar paths of her town than she is while sitting inside her house, with the collection of furniture, decorations and sundry items she has accumulated and arranged in its rooms. She is at home in a different way, in a manner which befits the sphere of urban space, "the place where *meeting* takes place" (ibid., 51): she is taken up into the gathering of the community, greeting her familiar neighbors as they go about the activities that determine the shape of the town as a lifeworld, and which she can also partake in. Within this place of collective dwelling, the player engages in the tasks that determine the role she identifies with as being 'hers' in the community – that of mayor, a role which ties her into an identification with "the totality to which the role belongs" (ibid., 53).

Home as the demarcation of inside and outside: For Tuan (1993, 140), the primary characteristic of the home place is its "enclosure," its being "everywhere a protected – at least partly enclosed – space." Accordingly, the second architectural gesture of home, intimately tied to the first, is the raising of walls to delimit the homeplace and mark out its enclosure of the center. Bachelard (1994, 5) writes that "the sheltered being gives perceptible limits to his shelter": by setting physical boundaries on both geometrical and experiential dimensions, the act of building sets both a space and a place in stone.

The raising of walls renders the space they enclose a shelter, protecting its inhabitants from the elements, from enemies, wild beasts and every other manner of threat. "Come what may the house allows us to say: I will be an inhabitant of the world, in spite of the world" (ibid., 46-47). This clearly applies to *Minecraft*, where every home the player will build – from the simple shelter of the first night to the most extensive and architecturally elaborate palace that weeks of work can muster – will have this as its basic function: before any other consideration, it must shelter the player from the creepers, zombies, skeletons and assorted other hostile mobs that come out at night, and answer her need for survival.

At the same time as the walls define their enclosure as 'inside,' they give everything beyond their enclosure the status of outside. As a result of the architectural

delineation of the circle of home, "outside and inside form a dialectic of division" (ibid., 211), thereby establishing the basic experiential opposition of inside and outside to which the distinction between hestial and hermetic dwelling is intimately tied. If the inside is shelter, the outside is that which we require shelter from; if the inside is the center, the outside is the periphery. In its depiction of an extended sphere of hestial dwelling in the form of the town community, *AC:NL* places less emphasis on the distinction between inside and outside. Having said that, the player can take trips outside the town – either by catching a train from the train station to visit another player's town, or by taking the Kapp'n's boat to Tortimer Island, a linked set of resort-themed areas housing a number of minigames.

In a gameworld that is pointedly free of threats, the opposition between safety and danger that the inside/outside distinction upholds in *Minecraft* does not exist. Instead, the opposition that is structured is that between the habitual and the novel. Taking an excursion to another player's town provides an intriguing glimpse of a home that is not one's own, and whose organization represents the outcome of a different activity of building, resulting in a homeplace that – in perhaps small but significant ways – structures a different way of dwelling. Likewise, a trip to Tortimer Island is explicitly coded as an exotic vacation, with the island's various locales replete with the instantly recognizable iconography of the idyllic tropical getaway. In both cases, returning to one's own town – whether from another player's town or from Tortimer Island – bears the distinct sense of coming back home.

Familiarity

The establishment of a center and the delineation of inside and outside therefore constitute the fundamental architectural qualities of home, setting in stone the conditions for hestial dwelling. However, dwelling is not an architectural feature, or even a spatial one, though it takes its character from the place in which it is situated. Our relation to the home, our dwelling within it, is a happening – it unfolds over time as well as across space, and it is in its temporal dimension that the character of dwelling is shaped. The home is the familiar domain: Norberg-Schulz (1985, 89) writes that "the house is the place where *daily life* takes place. Daily life represents what is continuous in our existence, and therefore supports us like a familiar ground." The home shelters the familiar. It gives rise, through the repetition of the quotidian routine, to the familiarity of habit, to the way of life in which we are so invested we come to identify it as an intrinsic part of our being.

Both *Minecraft* and *AC:NL* encourage – even demand – the formation of such habitual practices around the player's in-game home. In *Minecraft*, this generally

takes the form of a pattern of departure and return, as the player must venture outside her home to gather food and resources for crafting and further building. The paths she treads around the home (between the storage chests where she keeps her resources and the crafting table, or between both and the door to the outside) will be worn into familiarity as the player follows them again and again.

Arguably, this is even more the case in *AC:NL*, which establishes a set of habitual practices organized according to an interlocking system of temporal cycles – not only day and night, but also the days of the week and the changing of the seasons. The player will tend to settle into a routine of daily and weekly tasks which take her along habitual paths around her hometown – the way from her house to the grove of orange trees where she picks fruit every third day, the route between the orange trees and the Re-Tail store where she sells the fruit, her daily hunt for the three fossils which spawn every morning and the subsequent walk to the museum to have the fossils assessed by Blathers, the museum director, her Sunday morning visit to Old Sow Joan to purchase turnips to trade on the turnip market, and so on.

As these examples show, the familiarity of the domestic sphere is mapped out according to the practices that constitute our habitual being within the homeplace. The things we encounter around the home, that are given meaning through their incorporation into this routine – the tools and appliances we use every day, the keepsakes that turn the home into a tissue of memory – concentrate, and come to stand for, these practices: "in the home we find the things we know and cherish," the things to which we form an intense attachment because they "represent 'our world'" (ibid., 91).

For Tuan, the phenomenological playing-out of this familiar attachment to the house and its things takes on a seemingly paradoxical duality. On the one hand, our engagement with the things of the house become so habitual that we barely pay any conscious attention to these "ordinary objects" – instead, "we know them through use […] they are almost a part of ourselves, too close to be seen" (Tuan 1977, 144). The distinct echo here of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (2002, 121) observation regarding the intuitive, almost unconscious engagement of the craftsperson with his tools and the practices of his craft is no accident. What is foregrounded in this philosophical echo is the extent to which we identify with the practices of our homely dwelling – so much so that, in becoming an intrinsic part of our being, they slip below the level of our conscious perception. However, Tuan (1993, 139-140) also argues that, through the leisure we experience in the home, it also opens itself up to us in an aesthetic mode, unfolding in a sensual richness: "homeplace is also a variegated world of shapes and colors, sounds and odors," offering "a complex mix of sensory stimuli" which we come to know thoroughly and intimately, and to which we can develop strong emotional associations.

The instances of dwelling in game homes I have presented so far provide us with examples of both kinds of familiarity. No matter how extensive and convoluted a network of rooms, corridors, stairways and tunnels she has built in *Minecraft*, the player is likely to not even need to consciously consider its traversal. Having integrated the home as a whole into the body-schema of her embodied being-in-the-gameworld, she can ascend from the subterranean coal mine, having excavated as much coal as she can carry, through the bridge over the lava fall, up the stairwell to the third door on the left, down the corridor, taking a left past the glass-roofed room and up a narrower staircase to deposit the coal in a chest in the storeroom – all without paying the slightest intentional attention to what she is doing or where she is going.

Conversely, while residing in her home in *AC:NL*, the player is provided with little in the way of active engagement. This occurs largely in the communal dwelling of the town outside, and there is little for the player to 'do' in the house apart from play their choice of music, lie down on the bed or sit on a sofa or chair, and use the freely rotatable camera to take in the surrounding room and the collection of furniture, wallpaper, *objets d'art*, knick-knacks and decorations she has arranged within it. Divorced of any lived practicality which would allow the things of the home to be engaged with in terms of their readiness-to-hand for the purposes of this or the other task, the player's relation to them becomes entirely aesthetic. She might consider their arrangement and decide to move the furniture around for a more harmonious effect; she might simply sit on the sofa and admire the way light falls through the window onto the carpeted floor. It is the player's intimate familiarity with her in-game home that clears out the space within which thingness of the objects in her game home can be brought forth.

The Home and the Individual

So far, I have discussed the home insofar as its form gathers together the images and existential structures of a generalized sense of dwelling that, as Heidegger argues, is intrinsic to human being-in-the-world. However, one's home is not only a figure that stands for dwelling *in general* – on the contrary, it is a domain whose defining characteristic is its particularity, which rests on the fact that each home, while embodying the overarching phenomenological qualities of hestial dwelling, does so in its own way, and is marked by the specificities which distinguish it from other homes.

The familiarity that is an intrinsic component of the sense of dwelling is nurtured with respect to the specific configuration of things and structures that makes up one's proper home. As such, it is that which sets one house apart from all others which allows me to identify (and identify with) a particular house as my

home. My home is experienced proprioceptively: it is precisely *mine* and no-one else's, an intimate place within which my own particular being takes place. So ingrained is this idea of the home that it might be surprising to note that it is by no means a universal dimension of homeliness – rather, it is tied to a specific historical conception of selfhood. Rybczinski (2001, 36) positions the origin of "the appreciation of the house as a setting for an emerging interior life" in the cultural shift between the Middle Ages and early modernity in Europe, inextricably associating the idea of home as the private sphere with the emergence of the idea of the private self as a cornerstone of bourgeois culture. The home, then, is the cradle of the self – this is what Virginia Woolf (1991, 110) had in mind when she wrote that "a lock on the door means the power to think for oneself." The interior life of consciousness and the private domestic sphere of the home are so closely related as to be inseparable.

In its intimate familiarity, the home in its objective qualities – as an architectural form and as an arrangement of things – becomes an animated structure of being, embodying the practices of a dwelling that is determined equally by the place and by the individual within it. For Jean Baudrillard (1996, 14), "human beings and objects are indeed bound together in a collusion in which the objects have a certain density, an emotional value – what might be called a 'presence.'" As a result, the homeplace comes to represent a "complex structure of interiority, and the objects within it serve for us as boundary markers of the symbolic configuration known as home" (ibid.).

The first sense in which one's home is tied to one's self emerges in the wake of the activities of building or home-making, upkeep and repair – actions that inscribe themselves into the figure of the home. In their ethnographic study of Chicago homeowners, for instance, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton (1981, 131) found that, particularly for men – in view of the cultural notion of the male as the breadwinner and head of the nuclear household – "the house represents the accomplishments of the owner's self," the tangible reward for their hard work, standing not only, to neighbour's eyes, as a marker of hard-earned social status, but, more personally, granting the homeowner "a sense of achievement and control." In this case, the identification of the home as 'mine' includes within its remit not only the home itself, or the things within it, but also the practices through which the home was constructed and maintained in good condition – the building work, the diligent maintenance on weekends, the career which brought in the money to pay off the mortgage, and so on.

This is no less true, on a smaller scale, with respect to games, specifically in cases where the building of the player's home-in-the-gameworld demands active effort and a considerable investment of time and energy. The *Second Life* "builders" studied by Liboriussen (2012, 39) had a strong attachment to the castle they had built due to the extent to which, in their words, it embodied "the long time

and hard but successful work" that went into its construction. A similar feeling of prideful ownership can be felt by the *Minecraft* player standing back to take in the fruits of her labor once she decides that a building project is 'done' – at least, since building is never truly over, for the moment, until the idea for the next addition comes along. Building a home in *Minecraft* demands time, thought and active effort: a completed construction stands for the exploration in search of the necessary resources, the quarrying of stone, the chopping of timber, the transportation of raw materials back to the construction site, the crafting of these materials into building-blocks, the meticulous planning for the building layout, the gradual placing of block on block, and so on. The player's identification with her *Minecraft* home, then, represents not only an attachment to the form of the structure in itself, or to her existence as centered within it, but to the practices that went into the building of it, by which she has defined herself as, for instance, a hard worker, or a creative visionary.

Things in the home can also gain in personal significance thanks to their propensity for accumulating a veneer of associated memories. In the E.M. Forster (2012, 156) novel *Howards End*, as the Schlegel siblings prepare to move out of the London home they had lived in most of their lives, they note that every item in the house bore the weight of associations, bringing to mind past events and departed family members – "round every knob and cushion in the house sentiment gathered." On a more modest scale, our in-game homes speak to us about our existence in the gameworld, keeping a record of our achievements, experiences and attachments just as our homes embody the past they recollect through keepsakes and mementos. In *AC:NL*, the pachira plant the player keeps in the corner might make her recall the friend who gifted it to her, while the trophy on the mantelpiece commemorates her triumph in the town fishing tournament.

Finally, a home can also represent a conscious attempt at self-construction on the part of the individual. Within the network of socio-cultural conventions and practical considerations the dwelling inhabits, the functional and aesthetic choices one makes in the design of one's homes provide, both to oneself and to others, an externalized construction of the dweller's self (Halttunen 1989, 186-189) – "homes are full of hints and clues that should be meticulously coded and interpreted as describing their inhabitant's personality" (Paasonen 2009, 345).

When – as in *Minecraft* and, even more so, *AC:NL* – a game allows the player to make choices regarding the layout, organization and appearance of their in-game home, a similar kind of identification can develop. In *AC:NL*, for instance, the player is invited to seek out and purchase furniture, wallpaper patterns, ornaments and the various other accoutrements of the comfortable bourgeois home. She chooses their arrangement about the house, which ornaments go on the mantelpiece, where each item of furniture should go, what music to fill the space with, and so on. When she invites other players to visit her home through the Nintendo

3DS console's online connectivity, the sense of pride she might feel has as its object her home as a conscious externalization, within the limited choices the game offers her in decorating her home, of her tastes and sensibility. In this regard, it is telling that one of the scripted compliments visiting neighbor NPCs most commonly pay while taking a tour of the player's home is, "This room is so you!" – a statement which effortlessly reinforces the idea of the home as a reflection of the self, and which reinforces the idea that our home in the gameworld serves as the cradle within which an in-game self can be nurtured and represented.

Conclusions

This cursory examination of the experience of dwelling in the gameworld could only hope to serve as an antechamber for a more far-reaching study, from which a number of routes for further investigation could open up for mapping out a more fully-developed poetics of dwelling in games.

I have not, for instance, paused to consider the temporary home-along-the-way represented by examples such as the campsite in *Dragon Age: Origins* (BioWare 2009) or the bonfires in *Dark Souls*, whose kindling tangles together the hestial and the hermetic in complex patterns. Nor have I tackled the theme of the house that is not (or is no longer) a home, in which – as in *Gone Home* (The Fulbright Company 2012), or in the player's later return to their early-game homeplace in *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* (Nintendo EAD 1998) or *Baldur's Gate* (BioWare 1998) – the dissociation of a physical locus from the situation of dwelling it once supported results in a powerful sense of the uncanny. Likewise, I have not addressed the tendency for games to furnish their virtual worlds with the icons of dwelling without structuring a corresponding existential praxis of dwelling for the player (Liboriussen 2012, 40). Also largely left unexplored is the social dimension of dwelling with others in multiplayer gameworlds (Hayot/Wesp 2009; Klastrup 2009). Perhaps most crucially, the phenomenological approach according to which the investigation has proceeded has largely sidelined the socio-cultural and political charges inherent in the notion of home and in the constitution of the homeplace as a Lefebvrean (1991, 39) "representational space" that cannot but bear the mark of ideology.

Instead, it has been my aim with this investigation to clear the ground and set down the foundations for an understanding of dwelling and being-at-home in gameworlds. By identifying, in *Minecraft* and *AC:NL*, the phenomenological qualities and existential practices that relate to dwelling as defined by Heidegger, Tuan and Norberg-Schulz – and, even more specifically, to the idea of hestial dwelling developed by Casey – I have shown that games have the capacity to enact, and play with, this basic dimension of embodied being in space and place. In doing

so, I have not only tried to shed light on aspects of the player's spatial engagement with gameworlds that have, for the most part, not been well accounted for. More fundamentally, by demonstrating that finding our feet in the gameworld is only the beginning (that settled, hestial dwelling can await at the end of our hermetic, exploratory wandering) games can not only re-enact our practices of being at home, but, in doing so, can represent to us these practices and senses of 'home,' and lead us to reflect on – and, perhaps, to engage critically with – what is entailed in the idea of being at home.

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