NAMES, Vol. 63 No. 4, December 2015, 210–219

The Psychosocial Ramifications of Videogame Naming and Representation in the Early Years of *The Simpsons*

JAMES O. BUTLER
The University of Glasgow, UK

The Simpsons is a parody of suburban American life, and, as one member of the titular family is a 10-year-old boy, videogames make a number of appearances. This article is a comprehensive overview of every occurrence or reference to gaming made within the first decade (1989–1999), and will assess the stereotypical aspects of both games and gamers made throughout the series. The majority of entries are not actively depicted on screen, but provide names that match the exaggerated over-the-top violent nature of those that are, which forms a consistent satirical depiction of the hobby. This study seeks to add a new voice to the argument for names possessing semantic content, especially artistic onyms, in the ongoing critical debate.

KEYWORDS stereotypes, parody, videogames, semantics, titles, artistic names

The Simpsons has aired continuously since December 1989, and, given the scope of the show — a satire of typical suburban American family life and aspects of contemporary society — it cannot be contested as a powerful cultural artifact that depicts a representation of the time in which each episode was created. Through this long history, the adaptation of a variety of social aspects and values can be traced — representative of a cultural zeitgeist or snapshot — with the show critically parodying an assortment of social concerns and issues through tropic exaggeration. The show is constructed around social stereotypes, as noted by critics (such as Turner, 2004; Kenny and Kenny, 2006; and Henry, 2012: 15), and, as one family member is a 10-year-old boy, videogames feature periodically. This paper will examine the manner in which games are represented (particularly through their names) within the episodes of the first decade, alongside character reactions and the sociological ramifications of their depiction. This subject has not been broached in any capacity by cultural studies of the show, and was a notable omission from Gray (2005) who assessed the parody of different media forms within the show.

 DOI 10.1179/0027773815Z.000000000123

A brief overview of the turbulent history and reception of videogames in the social consciousness, which persists in some quarters to this day, is provided by Squire (2002). Of particular note is the observation that games became "pawns in a culture war waged by cultural conservatives," and that much of the research conducted on games was sensationalist and fixated on the perceived potential impact of violence, rather than the wider social context. *Doom*, a first-person perspective shooter set in hell, and the notoriously gory combat moves of *Mortal Kombat* (both released 1993) incited major public outcry, moral panic, and even prompted a Congressional hearing on videogame content. The outcome was the formation of the Entertainment Software Ratings Board in 1994 (as outlined in GamePolitics.com 2009), whose purview was the assessment of every published game to assign an appropriate enforceable age rating. The contemporaneous societal perception of videogames was undergoing intense change during this period — what were once identified as children's toys were quickly maturing into an entertainment medium with an audience of all ages. Hamamoto states that the television situation comedy can be read to reveal "the mores, ideals, prejudices, and ideologies shared — by fiat or default — by the majority of the American public" (1989: 20), and this is the fundamental psychosocial backdrop against which representations of the hobby must be read.

This investigation will be conducted through a semantic analysis of all videogame titles that appear within *The Simpsons*, in order for the social ramifications to be addressed from an onymic corpus. For the remit of this paper, arcade machines and home consoles are merged into a single unit for assessment, as the decade covered (the 1990s) saw the popularity of the former decline irreversibly and the latter surge. Titles serving as a primary plot element are those that have gameplay depicted, and serve as providing a plot point (or anchor) within an episode. Although there are only three entries that serve at this level, they succinctly display the semantic framework for videogames that is adhered to throughout the series.

The most prevalent title in this category is **Bonestorm** [*Marge Be not Proud*, Production Code: 3F07, original airdate: December 17 1995]: a hyper-violent fighting game featuring multi-armed demonic entities engaged in close-quarter pummeling, in a hell-like environment to heavy-metal music. Everything about the game is excessive, from the advertising material (featuring comparison against an **unnamed fighting game** wherein a martial-artist fighting a tank cannon is deemed boring), through the marketing slogan that incites the adoption of an aggressive attitude ("Buy me Bonestorm, or go to hell!"). Even mundane features such as the character name entry screen are hyper-exaggerated to the extreme (but limited in the number of characters offered — the chosen moniker of Milhouse is shortened to "Thrillho"). The game is loud, brash, and filled with gratuitous iconography — featuring blood-spewing volcanoes, winged snakes, chained skeletons, and impaled bodies in the background, accompanied by blood splatters streaking down the foreground. All of which match the extreme semantic overtones conveyed through the otherwise nonsensical name of two disparate elements, each laden with violent intent.

Touch of Death [*When Flanders Failed*, Production Code: 7F23, original airdate: October 3 1991] serves as a subplot impetus, on which Bart spends the money intended for karate lessons. He claims the moves featured in the game were the subject of the karate class (e.g. "Today, we learnt how to rip a man's heart out and show it to him

before he dies," "Ooh, that'll learn him!"). The action shown matches the expectations of the audience (who are shown the name prominently emblazoned on the side of the machine immediately prior to panning to the gameplay) upon an opponent being defeated. This may be presented as a direct reference to the end-of-match fatalities of the *Mortal Kombat* series, where players are given a fleeting chance to unleash an ultra-gory finishing combat move upon victory.

The third primary videogame featured is another fighting title: **Super Slugfest** [*Moaning Lisa*, Production Code: 7G06, original airdate: February 11 1990], which is a boxing game, but features the capacity to kill one's opponent — such as through a decapitation move, or watching the body of the defeated being interred before the victor dances and laughs on the grave. Extreme violence is shoehorned into the game, ostensibly for the sake of comedy, but emphatic of the perceived qualities inherent to the medium. The title follows the naming convention for a series of arcade conversions (termed "ports") that were released on the Super Nintendo Entertainment System during the period in which the episode aired (with the prefix "Super"), and the "Slugfest" component provides an apt descriptor of the gaming content, comprised solely of combat.

A secondary-level of videogame depiction involves titles which have game-play action depicted within the series, but do not provide a plot element of any form. Half of the titles follow exactly the semantic patterns of naming and content seen in the previous level. **Escape from Death Row** [*New Kid on the Block*, Production Code: 9F06, original airdate: November 12 1992] requires players to escape from prisons in various stereotyped states, and avoid judges who serve as bosses wielding huge hammers of judgment). **Escape from Grandma's House** [*Bart Gets an F*, Production Code: 7F03, original airdate: October 11 1990] tasks the player with avoiding a kiss from an elderly character, featuring killer mothballs as an enemy to prevent hiding in certain spaces, and shotguns to use against the antagonist. **Larry the Looter** [Radio Bart, Production Code: 8F11, original airdate: January 9 1992], as the title states outright, is a points-scoring, side-scrolling challenge that tasks the player with stealing high-value items whilst committing acts of vandalism and avoiding armed shop owners. The final title that fits this assessment is **Panamanian Strongman** [*Boy Scoutz 'n the Hood*, Production Code: 1F06, original airdate: November 18 1993] which features a bezerking South American athlete, swatting planes atop the Empire State Building (per King Kong), and is set upon by former president George Bush who proclaims "winners don't do drugs" (suggesting the titular character is the result of steroid abuse). These titles revel in socially undesirable behaviors, and the level of enjoyment gleaned by players is a direct jab at the fears of critical opponents.

Three of the remaining titles do not bear any semantic relation to the previously discussed titles, as they are purposefully designed to contrast the appealing qualities and appear as boring alternatives with emphatic intent. **Lee Carvallo's Putting Challenge** is the episodic foil to **Bonestorm**, for which there is a "surprising abundance" of stock, and misleads Marge to it being "the one every boy wants." The episode credits run over a sample of the gameplay, featuring the eponymous golfer suggesting the precise course of action (which is ignored by the player), as simply: "push 7–8-7 to swing," with negligible active player involvement. As the sequence ends, the character asks: "Would you like to play again? You have selected… no," succinctly conveying that the game is never likely to be touched again. The inclusion

of "challenge" in the name reflects a perceived need to enliven the dull premise (the act of putting on simple greens) to superficially appeal to gamers, despite lacking even basic obstacles or unusual effects that would require strategic interplay.

The second direct contrast title is **My Dinner with Andre**, seen immediately prior to **Panamanian Strongman**, and being enjoyed by Martin Prince (who is a stereotypical nerd: academically gifted, "teacher's pet," and a target for frequent bullying due to his penchant for both adult fawning and peer condescension). As per the film from which it is derived, this game does not contain action typical of medium, with the controller providing only three game-play options for verbal exploration, labeled: "Trenchant Insight," "Bon Mot," and "Tell Me More." The theme and maturity of the content is readily suited to the personality of the one boy mesmerized, in contrast to the "mature" content displayed in other games.

A third licensed property parodied in the series is **Kevin Costner's Waterworld** [*The Springfield Files*, Production Code: 3G01, original airdate: January 12 1997] serving as an exemplar of the typically poor quality titles that serve as such tie-ins. The game requires forty quarters (as opposed to just one or two), which allows the player to take a single step before it declares "Game Over," mocking the willingness of the gaming audience (and publishers) to spend so much on lackluster experiences, relying on famous names (and licenses), where style is the priority over substance. Licensed adaptations have a poor reputation, typically poorly received and containing lackluster game-play mechanics, due mostly to rushed development schedules to meet set release windows and the majority of the budget used to secure such rights. Milhouse acknowledges the game is a "rip"[-off], but immediately pulls out another batch of quarters and commences depositing anew.

Two additional games are given active screen time, whose appearances also serve to emphasize particular personality traits of the character engaging with them, in a manner similar to the two titles just assessed. The one entry for which the viewer is not provided a title is an **unnamed spaceship combat game** [*Lisa's Pony*, Production Code: 8F06, original airdate: November 7 1991], as it serves the role of a generic videogame and acts as a conceptual representation of the entire medium. The effect of the game upon "Grampa" Abe Simpson being beset by a cavalcade of bright lights, odd sprites, and unusual noises, is that he has no clue as to what is happening on screen, despite Bart's best attempts to guide him. The following dialogue is overlaid with scenes of Grampa furiously turning the controller interspersed with gameplay wherein the controlled spaceship is shown to be spinning on the spot and firing randomly:

> "What do I do? What do I do?! / Grampa if you want to go the left … / Yes? / Put the joystick to the right. / Move the — what's a joystick? You didn't tell me … / […] Oh! Go into hyperspace! Ready, hit it! / Wait, where's the hyperspace-? / Grampa you're the spaceship! / I'm the whaaat? I thought I was this guy?"

This sequence ultimately culminates in the question: "I got down on the floor for this?" not only playing up the stereotype of seniors not readily understanding recent technology and propensity to confusion, but also implicitly questioning the overall value of the experience.

The other depiction that falls within this category is **Bowling 2000** [*A Streetcar Named Marge*, Production Code: 8F18, original airdate: October 1 1992], a handheld

game played by Homer. The theme of the game is used to emphasize his selfish attitude (especially in not caring about his wife's amateur theatre production, the central plot of the episode) and borderline obsession with the sport. The shape, controller layout, and monochrome graphics of the unit match the Nintendo Gameboy (an extremely popular console that launched in 1989) providing a referential identity, but it is the theme that provides the main draw of the game in this context, serving as a suitable prop to distract attention, much to the annoyance of Marge. This is emblematic of the semantic cues applied to games across the series and corresponds with the wider sentiments expressed by this character.

The final category of videogame appearances may be classed as tertiary — or background — elements, where the viewer is only provided a name, which provides an ideal opportunity to assess the power of onyms to express a semantic identity which in turn suggests content. Although serving only in a comparatively minor capacity, these items provide invaluable detail in cementing the negative semantic values that are consistently broadcast, and form an enclosed network of intertextual inference within the fictional world, acting in the manner "dormant signifiers" as defined by Gray (2005: 26). The titles that make an appearance in this manner match the hermeneutic bases of those games with a more prominent inclusion already discussed. **Bloodstorm**, **Bloodstorm II**, and **Bonesquad**, highlighting a shallow pool of violence-related generics being drawn from by developers, and it is implied that these are directly comparable to **Bonestorm** (previously discussed). Several other titles leave the viewer in no doubt as to the nature of the content: **Disembowler 4**, described as "the game where condemned criminals dig at each other with rusty hooks" [*Homer Badman*, Production Code: 2F06, original airdate: November 27 1994], **Escape From Grandma's House III: The Great Thanksgiving Disaster** (a sequel that no doubt follows its predecessor in style), **Itchy vs. Scratchy** (based on a hyper-violent in-world cartoon), **Killer Joe**, **Razor Fight II: The Slashening**, **A Streetcar Named Death**, and **Cat Fight**. All of these names convey the content with unmistakable semantically driven concision. Deserving particular note is **Robert Goulet: Destroyer**, the cabinet for which contains sniper crosshair iconography and an explosive blast, and a few scant seconds of screen-time depict the singer in the center of a spotlight with bullets flashing around him. This is a primary example of parodic spoofing, that even a softly spoken crooner is recast within a violent context, to fulfill an audience's blood thirst. A degree of ambiguity could be cast on this suggestion, however, as this title could allude to Goulet's early acting career in which he played violent roles; but since he guest starred as a singer in a later episode [*$prinfield (Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Legalized Gambling)*, Production Code: 1F08, original airdate: December 16 1993], this is likely the persona being lampooned.

A degree of ambiguity exists as to the exact content included in the following games, but they all still contain graphic onymic elements that are highly suggestive of the properties. **Celebrity Autopsy**, **Coffee Fiend**, **Great White Hunter**, **Nuclear Winter**, **Nuke**, **Prey**, **Satan's Funhouse**, and **Shark-Bait**. These titles do not allow for their thematic premises to be mistaken, nor ambiguity in the likely content. **Save Hitler's Brain** slightly subverts the onomastic trend by framing the premise with heroic intent through the verb choice, but this property is instantly mitigated by the

focal object; a name so laden with horrific underlying associations, that any title bearing reference to it is semantically tainted (and this is no exception). **Terminator** is succinct its likely premise, even without taking advantage of the intertextual reference that viewers may mistake as being directly related to the real-world franchise of the same name. **Aloen** provides a second example of seemingly deliberate external referencing, where the name draws on the *Alien* franchise, with the name substituting the "i" with the number "0," matching the stylistic penchant of the film series to visually adapt this letter in their title iconography. This indirect association allows for allusions to be drawn from the nature of the popular franchise, to the likely content of the videogame — such is the power of titles in their shaping expectation through associative properties. Even the innocuous development-and-management flagship series *Sim City* is perverted with a horrific premise, through **Sim Reich**. Replacing a generic element to that noun, laden with horrific implications, lays out a strong semantic overtone for the premise of the game, and is a mockery of ever-extreme themes being adopted to engage desensitizing consumer interest.

Three iterations of a title appear in various episodes, with a slightly different spelling each time, all of which make a indiscrete jab at gamers: **Time Waister**, **Time Waste**, **Time Waster**, leaving the viewer with little doubt as to the implications of the pursuit. Similarly a spoof of Namco's Pacman series is featured, entitled: **Pac-Rat** and **Pack-Rat II**, with the slight onymic alteration between the two clearly portraying the inspirational material (Namco's *Pac-Man* series which provides a recognizable generic game-play base upon which specific ramifications may be built), as well as being highly suggestive of the theme likely entailed.

A small number of miscellaneously named exceptions to the general semantic patterns do occur, but these are a statistical minority when measured against the full array of titles that comprise the videogame market of *The Simpsons*' world. There is little that can be said of **Canasta Master**, **Swim-meet**, and **Viewmaster**, apart from their being featured alongside the other titles discussed. **Comic Shop** is an extremely generic title that imparts no explicit information about the gameplay content, outside of the viewer's imagination. **Eat My Shorts** title is taken directly from an early catchphrase of Bart Simpson used to insult or ridicule. It may be that this expression was learned through the game, but there is no evidence of this. Moreover, given the fleeting background appearance of the cabinet — it is likely just a familiar phrase used as filler content — and given this association, game-play content may be argued as likely containing the petty vandalism and trouble-raising deeds typical of that character. A single appearance is made by **Pong**, seen in the confines of an abducting alien ship in the first non-canonical Halloween special [*Treehouse of Horror*, Production Code: F04, original airdate: October 25 1990], which is used solely as a visual gag suggesting the time it has taken for the visitors to reach Springfield. **Pffox** appears to be a minor mockery of the station that produces and broadcasts *The Simpsons*, and is frequently targeted by jokes regarding poor quality. No joke of the nature is made or even implied by the appearance of this game, but it may be taken as part of a long-running gag that has an alternate target.

There is a small subset of semantically ambiguous titles that do not expressly convey violent overtones, but as even innocuous premises — such as that of the **Escape**

From Grandma's House series — can be perverted with overly violent mechanics, it is extremely likely that these entries possess a similarly graphic nature. The titles that fall under this categorization are innocuous, semantically generic, and offer little descriptive detail, arguably bearing a closer formational relationship with real-world game naming conventions, rendering them a little trickier to discuss with certainty, but for the sake of a complete overview they shall not be discarded. The title of **Space Eye** combines two generic elements that work together to form a clichéd 1980s videogame trapping, that heavily imply it to be a ship-based shooter, which provided a core genre during that period. **Freeway!** is also a highly generic title that refers to a stretch of motorway that has a high speed limit, which in turn provides succinct and unmistakable information as to the nature of the game, like the previous game. **Nurse** provides perhaps the hardest title to classify, as it could intonate any form of gameplay pertinent to the profession, but as it appears physically next to the cabinet of **Robert Goulet: Destroyer**, opposite **Touch of Death**, and is being played by a young adult male, a similar form of content may be contextually presumed. It otherwise runs counter to the expected semantic network established by most other videogames in this fictional setting. The final game of this category is **Operation: Rescue**, comprised of militaristic overtones, and although the specific element of the name is positive (and could have easily been "Revenge" or some related synonym, to bring it closer in line with the other games experienced), it is highly suggestive of forced intervention to recover captured assets.

One episode, *Lisa's First Word* [Production Code: 9F08, original airdate: December 3 1992], features a brief flashback to a satirical 1980s with a number of incidental characters rendered in the style of post-war archetypes, including a group of adolescents who decide to play **Stickball**, before running to the local arcade where it is revealed to be a videogame. Two additional machines are visible in the background, **Kick the Can** and **Mumblety PEG**, serving as onomastic references to the fact that games were more technologically limited, and were forced to adopt much simpler scopes and premises at that time. These are exaggerated simplifications as befits the parodic representation, of course, but succinctly conveyed through the naming of these games.

Also relevant to this investigation is Springfield's sole arcade **Noise Land**, the name of which succinctly conveys the defining characteristic of both it and its charges, at least to an external non-gaming audience: all flash and incessant noise. Whenever this location is shown, the primary audience is comprised almost entirely of adolescent males, which reflects further social stereotyping. Notable appearances detail the practices of the arcade as being focused around a single objective: to make money from its adolescent audience, both by physically checking pupils for change during a prolonged teacher strike by shaking them to hear the rattle of change [*The PTA Disbands*, Production Code: 2F19, original airdate: April 16 1995], and fitting security cameras to listen for cues that patrons have run out of money, ejecting Bart and Milhouse after monitoring them say as such [*Boy Scoutz 'n the Hood*]. These actions are exaggerated for comedic effect, but are entirely in line with the stylization of such places described by Burrill (2008). Of the 73 total depictions of characters within arcades or plying arcade machines (excluding Bart), 21 were female (all pre-adolescent), a much higher number (28.8%) than might be

expected — in this respect, the representation of the gaming audience is notably progressive.

Arguments on the development of game design may be made around the majority of the games featured consisting of arcade machines, which by their very nature were designed specifically to have fast and frantic gameplay to purposefully facilitate quick play-times in order to maximize potential profit. This portrayal within *The Simpsons* is a concise reflection of this attribute; but the names are semantically direct and graphic so as to leave the viewer with no doubt as to the intended game-play content of those experiences. The videogame market, industry, and social perception have all changed radically since theses early episodes were written, but contemporary research indicate exploration as being the key gameplay element enjoyed by adolescent males (Lawry et al., 1995), rather than the violent combative traits emphasized throughout these depictions. Henry notes, "the show is sometimes complicit in perpetuating rather than challenging certain dominant ideologies" (2012: 207), which may be superficially taken as being the case for the remit of this study, but an inversion of this social involvement may instead be suggested. Through the names conveying psychosocial ramifications that might be expected during this period, they are not a mockery of the medium, but rather the detractors and their critical fears.

Sentiments about videogames are consistently negative, with Marge characterizing all games as being: "upwards of fifty dollars, and they're violent, and they distract you from your schoolwork" [*Marge Be Not Proud*]. They are expensive, comprised of no meaningful content, and unproductive activities that take time from productive pursuits, which was shown to be the exact scenario in an earlier episode [*Bart Gets an F*]. Adding further negative implications, Milhouse quickly grows bored of **Bonestorm**, and changes from not wanting to share or even play the two-player mode with Bart, to showing it to be a fleeting obsession. Similarly, a fantastic advertising campaign to "Meet Donkey Kong in person" outside the arcade is a failure, as he is deemed to be "just not a draw any more" [*The Springfield Files*], as attention is drawn towards newer, more graphic titles — the response is to angrily throw a barrel, knocking down the proprietor.

The perceived association between games and undesirable characteristics follows an earlier episode where Bart teaches Martin Prince about schoolyard popularity and the art of slacking off, which culminates in the latter breaking the agreement and solidifying his newfound rebellious social status by declaring, to chanting approval: "come on fellows, to the arcade!" [*Bart Gets an F*]. Associating the place (and games) with wayward behavior, troublemakers, and those not academically orientated, the underlying commentary is made clear. Likewise, physical implications and compulsive behaviors are hinted at when one teenage character commenting to a friend: "I probably should stop. My doctor says I have the wrists of an 80 year." Further commentary is made through Ashley Grant, an archetypal female college student supporting herself through babysitting (showcasing positive traits of being smart, sensible, and reliable), who uses games as a means of manipulating Bart into agreeing to do housework in order to play for just a few minutes. She claims: "See Lisa? Males aren't hard to tame, they all follow their video cartridges," demonstrating the hypnotic power of the cartridge by making Bart physically follow and run into a wall [*Homer Badman*].

Perhaps most tellingly, the subplot of the episode featuring **Super Slugfest** features Homer trying to win a single match, trying different tactical approaches, distracting Bart, and even seeking tutorage from a local "game wizard" at the local arcade, before both are admonished by the boy's mother; the boy for "wasting your money at this stupid place," and Homer just for engaging in the activity: "a man of your age. You should be ashamed of yourself." Belittling and demeaning an adult for what is perceived as a childish pursuit, Marge further chastises Homer (and by extension the entire hobby) by describing it as: "that silly, loud game," which serves as the stereotyped sentiment of the typical suburban mother during this decade.

The inclusion of videogames in the world of *The Simpsons* is indicative of the medium having been deemed socially relevant enough to be adapted and, as parodic exaggerations, the representations highlight the characteristics perceived as definitive of the medium. Henry further notes that "mainstream media [...] work largely to reproduce the dominant norms, values, and practices of contemporary American society" (2012: 4), and it was unavoidable that these values were regrettably far from positive. The names of the games are direct in their expression of information, almost entirely representative of the sort of content feared, as public engagement with any object, as observed by Danesi that they match, and even form, unconscious meanings to the product, generated entirely through association (2011: 175). Titles make for an efficient depiction that showcase the fears being mocked by the show to great effect — the overarching semantic content expressed by the names leaves little doubt of the faux-deleterious social commentary being made by the production team. The depictions and references made in this period make for a well-crafted onomasticon that is reflective of the prevailing social concerns against the medium during the period through masterful satirical expression.

Bibliography

Burrill, D. A. 2008. *Die Tryin': Videogames, Masculinity, Culture*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Danesi, M. 2011. "What's in a Brand Name? A Note on the Onomastics of Brand Naming." *Names* 59: 175–185.

Bitzer, J. M. 2008. "Political Culture and Public Opinion: The American Dream on Springfield's Evergreen Terrace." *Homer Simpson Goes to Washington: American Politics Through Popular Culture*. Ed. J. J. Foy. Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, pp. 41–62.

GamePolitics.com 2009. "Happy Birthday ESRB: Game Biz Unveiled Rating System to Congress 15 Years Ago." <http://www.gamepolitics.com/2009/07/29/happy-birthday-esrb-game-biz-unveiled-rating-system-congress-15-years-ago> (accessed December 30 2014).

Gray, J. 2005. *Watching with The Simpsons: Television, Parody, and Intertextuality*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hamamoto, D. Y. 1989. *Nervous Laughter: Television Situation Comedy and Liberal Democratic Ideology*. New York: Praeger.

Henry, M. 2012. *The Simpsons, Satire, and American Culture*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kenny, D. A. and D. T. Kenny. 2006. "The Personalities of The Simpsons." *The Psychology of the Simpsons: D'oh!* Ed. A. S. Brown and C. Logan. Dallas, TX: BenBella Books, Inc., 187–200.

Lawry, J., R Upitis, M. Klawe, A. Anderson, K. Inkpen, M. Ndunda, D. Hsu, S. Leroux, and K. Sedighian. 1995. "Exploring Common Conceptions About Boys and Electronic Games." *Journal of Computers in Mathematics and Science Teaching* 14: 439–459.

Squire, K. 2002. "Cultural Framing of Computer/Video Games." *Game Studies* 2, <http://gamestudies.org/0102/squire/> (accessed December 30 2014).

Turner, C. 2004. *Planet Simpson*. Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press.

Notes on contributor

James Butler is an affiliate researcher at the University of Glasgow, currently independently investigating the role of naming strategies in aiding cognitive map formation. His doctoral research examined the role of terrapsychology in influencing environmental names, and is a life-long gamer pleased at the current academic interest in the hobby.

Correspondence to: James Butler, c/o School of Critical Studies, The University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8QQ, UK. Email: james.butler@glasgow.ac.uk