Queer Play Affect between Characters and LGBT+ Fans

Dr. Nicolle Lamerichs, HU Utrecht
#getelsaagirlfriend
Agenda

Affect & Characters

Queer Play

What’s Next?
Characters are not just text/media-based; they are actors that evoke feelings, both positive & negative – I call this affective reception.
Figure 1: Factors in the affective reception of characters
‘My friends always thought I was Doctor Who with my travel stories. When the thirteenth doctor was announced, and she had short blonde hair like I do, everyone started to comment on it. This cosplay just had to be done’
But a cosplay like this is also a manifestation of queer play where we portray a gender-fluid alien and can express ourselves in new, non-heteronormative ways.
Key Readings about Queer Play
“Queer play” is more than representation. Ruberg argues that queer play pertains to both game play & story/representation. Especially in games, players can bend the rules and play “queer” in alternative, unusual, non-heteronormative ways.
Some examples in the next slides are queer play in Octodad, fans queering Link in BoTW, and the trans-motifs in *Death Stranding*
Death Stranding
This reception and type of play is by no means stable. That’s partly because the source-text are not. Many games franchises and transmedia worlds are rife with contradictions and queer erasure.
Characters mean business and merchandise. They are business models. What does it mean to keep selling instances of Kassandra?
Are there best practices?
Sayonara wild hearts
Reception

Representation

Play
Interested? Read more about games and queerness in my *Game Theory* blogs on this site.