Contents

Acknowledgements — V	
Introduction —— 1	
What About Games? —— 2	
Games As and Through Myth —— 4	
Defining Games — 7	
The Goal of this Book —— 8	
The Rest of the Book —— 9	
What is Myth? —— 10	
Origins and Etymologies —— 10	
Myth as Genre —— 12	
Myth as Archetypes —— 12	
Myth as Explanation —— 16	
Myth as Structure —— 17	
Myth as Discourse —— 21	
Previous Research Into Myth and Games —— 22	
Towards Mytholudics —— 25	
Barthesian Myth —— 26	
Naturalisation: Precontextualisation and the Denial of Contingency —— 2	8
Cycles of Myth —— 30	
Ossification —— 32	
Fossilisation —— 35	
Mythic Discourse Analysis —— 37	
Image —— 40	
Motif —— 40	
Diagrammatic Schemata —— 41	
Partial —— 41	
Theme —— 42	
Narrative Pattern —— 43	
Plot —— 43	
Brackets —— 44	
What About Games? —— 44	
Virtuality —— 45	
Nonlinear Time and Space —— 49	
Performativity —— 52	
Mytholudics —— 60	

```
Heroes — 67
    Strands of Heroic Thinking — 70
        Homeric and Socratic Heroes —— 70
        Rousseauian Heroes — 71
       Jungian Heroes —— 72
        Banal Heroes in Contemporary Psychology and Sociology —— 74
        Heavy Heroes —— 76
        What Makes a Hero? —— 78
    The Hero and the Avatar —— 78
    Hero-types —— 81
        The Hero-victim —— 82
        The Hero-sceptic —— 86
        The Preordained Hero —— 87
        The Unsung Hero —— 90
    Call of Duty —— 93
       War is Hell, War is Eternal: The Inevitability and Perpetuity of War as
        Depoliticising —— 103
       You're on Your Own, Boys: The Squad as the Depoliticised Semantic
        Centre —— 105
        Military Techno-fetishism and Selective Realism —— 107
        One-man Army: The Player as Supersoldier —— 110
       The Ordinary Soldier: The Supersoldier can be Anyone —— 112
       The Unsung Hero of War —— 113
        Discussion —— 115
   The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim —— 120
       Fate, Prophecy and the Last Dragonborn —— 121
       You Can Go Your Own Way: Choice, Customisation and Mythic
       Reconfiguration —— 122
       Words of Power: Magic, Language and Heroism —— 129
       Scandinavian Skyrim: Neomedievalism and Neo-Norse Influence — 132
       Discussion —— 138
   Assassin's Creed — 140
       True Sight: Truth and the User Interface —— 145
       The Unsung Heroes of History —— 148
       Genetics, Technology and Sci-fi's Version of the Preordained Hero —— 149
       Birds and Their Meanings —— 150
       "Requiescat in Pace": Dignity, Mercy and Ritual —— 154
       Discussion —— 156
   Heaven's Vault —— 157
       Aliya the Outsider: Secularism and Upbringing —— 159
```

```
Understanding the Nebula Through Linguistics —— 160
        Archaeology and Adventure in the Shadow of Indiana Jones and Lara
        Croft —— 163
        Time and Archaeology —— 165
        Discussion —— 166
    Horizon Zero Dawn —— 168
        Child of the Mountain? Types of Preordination —— 168
        Divine AIs and the Technologization of Deities —— 170
        Last of the Old Ones: Remnants of a Mythic Past —— 172
        The Critical Distance of the Innocent Outcast —— 175
        Discussion —— 176
   Conclusion: Heroism, Mythology and Games —— 179
Monsters —— 189
   Doom —— 211
        Demons: Evil Manifest —— 213
        Marines: Uncomplicated Badassery —— 215
        Mars: The Sterile Red Planet —— 219
        Discussion — 222
   Pokémon — 226
        Kawaisa: Cute, Obedient, Powerful —— 227
        The Trainer-Pokémon Relationship: Pets, Slaves, Servants, Partners or
        Friends? —— 229
        Yōkai, Japanese Folklore and the Folkloresque —— 236
        Meta-mythical Cultural Marketing —— 239
        Discussion —— 241
   Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice — 243
        Senua's Psychosis: Darkness and Inner Demons —— 244
        Senua's Psychosis: The Sight and Superpowers —— 253
        Discussion —— 259
   Ghost of Tsushima —— 262
        Language and Babbling: Mythologies of Speech —— 263
        Brutes, Corpses and Pollution: Indexical Signs of Mongol Brutality
       Versus Japanese Harmony with Nature —— 266
       The Noble Samurai Lord in Contrast to the Mongol Occupiers —— 269
        Colluding with Oni —— 273
        Discussion — 277
   The Witcher —— 278
       Witchers as Monstrous Monster Hunters —— 279
        Monsters of Slavic Folklore and the Polish Romantic Mode —— 281
```

The Monstrous-feminine —— 287
The Conjunction of the Spheres as an Apocalyptic-cosmogenic Context for Monstrosity —— 293
Discussion —— 296

Conclusion: Monstrosity, Mythology and Games —— 298

Conclusion: Heroes, Monsters and Mytholudics —— 307

Heroism and Monstrosity —— 308
How You can Use Mytholudics —— 317
The End: Mythologies in Flux —— 318

References —— 327

Index —— 353