

# The Witcher and cultural sociology

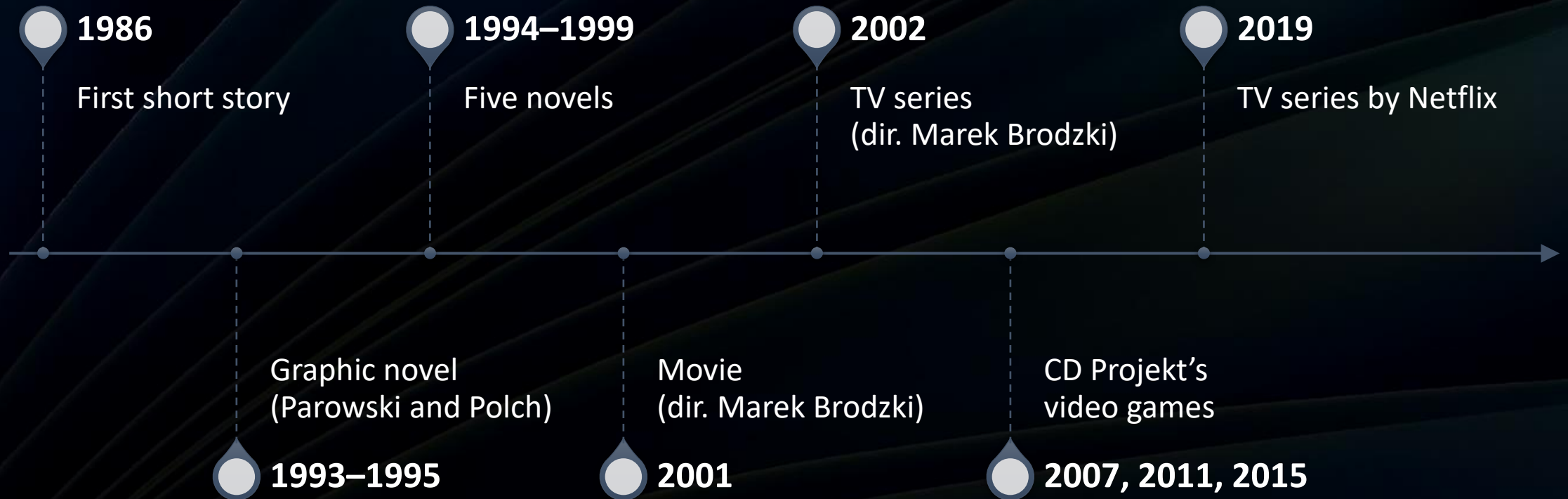
Stanisław Krawczyk  
University of Wrocław

[stanislawkrawczyk.pl](http://stanislawkrawczyk.pl)

University of Turku  
the University Consortium of Pori  
April 28, 2023



# General chronology of the Witcher works



**CONTEXT 1:** Science fiction and fantasy literature in Poland (1980s and 1990s)

**AUTHOR:** Andrzej Sapkowski and his capital



## z polskiej fantastyki

**P**ierwi wiadomo, że rękawiki ten nadawali od góry od...  
 Zarysował mi przed sobą „Bory Karakot”, postać trochę...  
 Naczął się nie widać do „Bory Karakota”. Przekazał mi...  
 Karakotami unosił głowę i miał trochę kłopotliwy...  
 Co podać?  
 Pasa – rudił się...  
 Karakotami wytał mi w piękny...  
 Naczął się nie był stary, ale wtedy miał...  
 Karakotami wytał mi w piękny...  
 Naczął się nie był stary, ale wtedy miał...

Musieli być w polska...  
 Karakotami wytał mi w piękny...  
 Naczął się nie był stary, ale wtedy miał...

Andrzej Sapkowski

# WIEDZMIN

Praca nadesłana na konkurs „Fantastyki”

Pod...  
 Naczął się nie był stary, ale wtedy miał...  
 Karakotami wytał mi w piękny...  
 Naczął się nie był stary, ale wtedy miał...

W...  
 Karakotami wytał mi w piękny...  
 Naczął się nie był stary, ale wtedy miał...

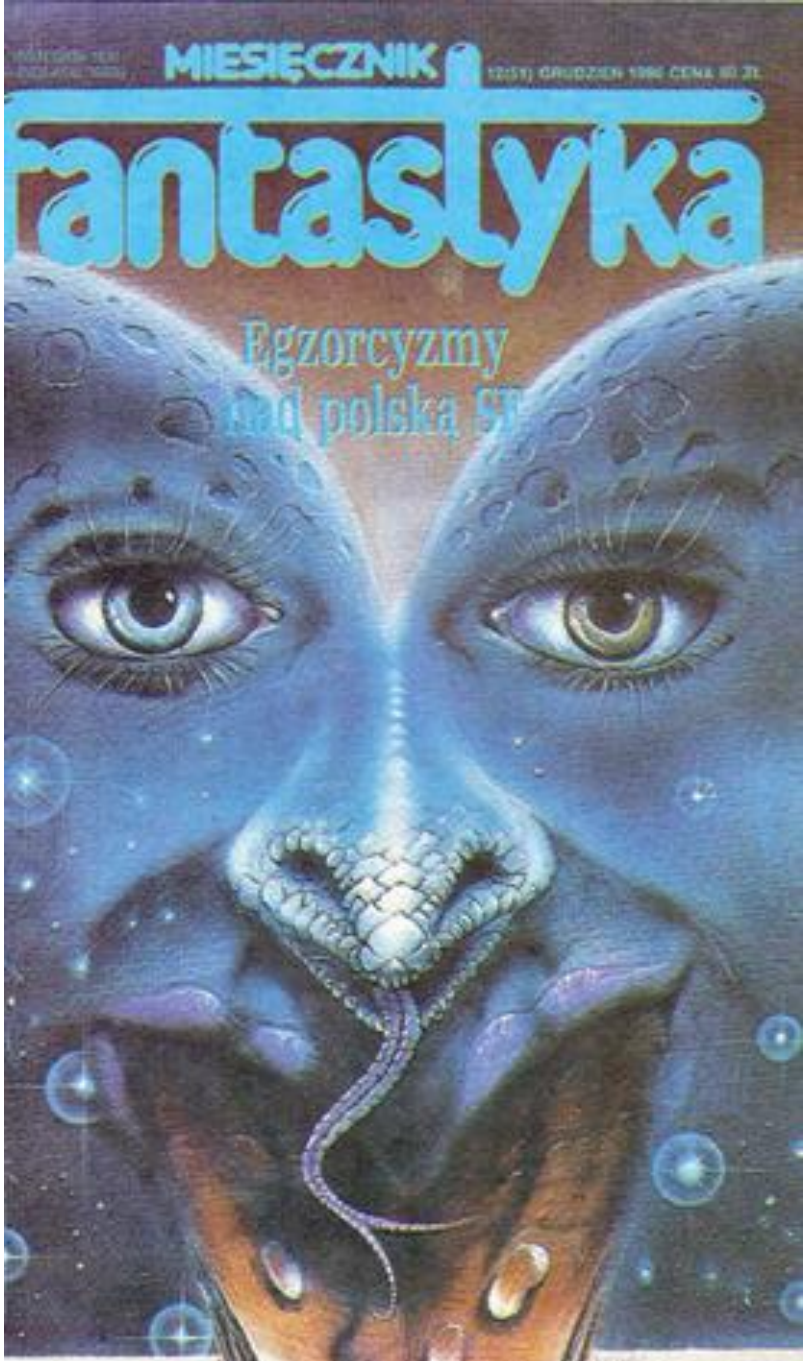


Photo of Andrzej Sapkowski in 2015: [Niccolò Caranti, CC BY-SA 4.0](#), source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

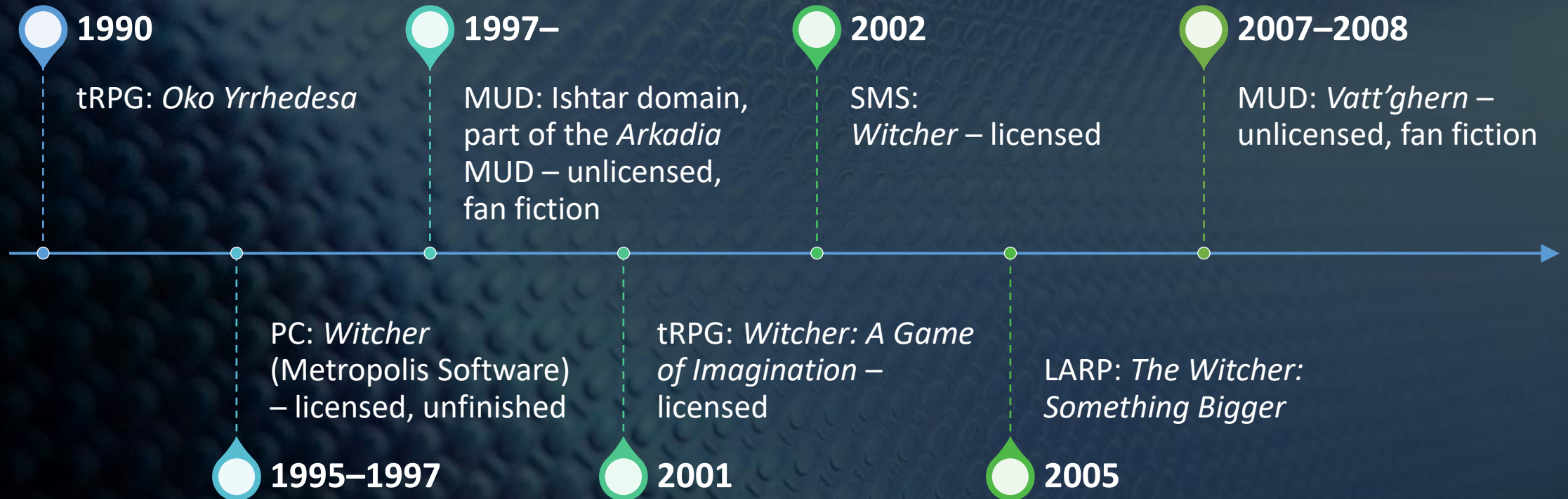


Photo of the Monty Python members: Eduardo Unda-Sanzana, [CC BY 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/), source: [Flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/eduardo_undasanzana/) and [Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Monty_Python_in_red_robes.jpg)

# CONTEXT 2: Games in Poland (1990s and 2000s)

Slides mostly reused from a talk by Maria B. Garda and Stanisław Krawczyk, *The Witcher Before “The Witcher”*: Early Game Adaptations of Andrzej Sapkowski’s *Literary Universe (1990–2007)*, the History of Games conference, October 21–24, 2020.

# Early game adaptations (1990–2007)



ANDRZEJ  
**SAPKOWSKI**

**OKO YRRHEDESA**



Wydawnictwo MAG

Andrzej Sapkowski

**OKO**  
**YRRHEDESA**



Wydawnictwo MAG



# WIEDŹMIN

– gra wyobraźni –

według

Andrzeja Sapkowskiego



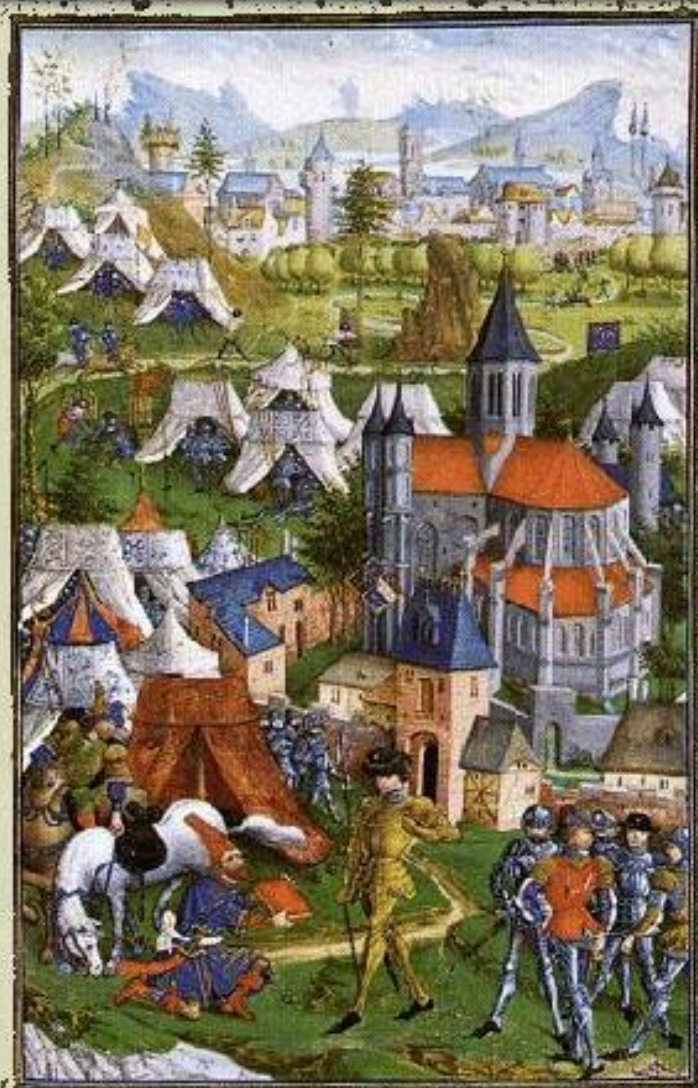
**grę wyślij SMS na nr  
1566 o treści: nowa**

**> nowa**

**Zaczęłeś grę. Możesz  
iść na: S-Pd, E-Wsch.  
Wyślij SMS na nr 1566  
o treści: S pójdziesz  
na południe E  
pójdziesz na wschód,  
PLECAK zobaczysz co  
niesiesz i inne dane**

**> \_**





Wtamy w świecie nowego polskiego MUD'a  
**Vatt'ghern**

[vattghern.servegame.com](http://vattghern.servegame.com) 3011

### *Spis treści*

**Prolog** czyli trochę o nas i o MUD'ach.

**Rozdział 1** - Aktualności.

**Rozdział 2** - Plany na przyszłość.

**Rozdział 3** - Poradnik, jak zostać czarodziejem.

**Rozdział 4** - Linki.

**Rozdział 5** - Kontakt.

**Rozdział 6** - Zielona Księga Gości.

**Epilog** czyli Forum Vatt'gherna.



<https://www.polygon.com/features/2014/7/16/5884227/cd-projekt-the-witcher-3>

# HOW THE TEAM BEHIND THE WITCHER CONQUERED POLAND

By *Russ Pitts* @russpitts

# CONTEXT 3: Polish politics and memory (2000s and 2010s)



Podczas ostatniego spotkania dał mi pan prezent,  
grę "Wiedźmin" popularną na całym świecie.

# BY SVAROG! SLAVIC GAME RENAISSANCE AND THE IDEOLOGY OF THE EXTREME RIGHT

**Full text:** [PDF](#)

**Authors:** [Majkowski Tomasz Z.](#)

**Source:** [DiGRA '19 - Abstract Proceedings of the 2019 DiGRA International Conference: Game, Play and the Emerging Ludo-Mix](#)  
DiGRA, August, 2019

**Export:** [BibTex](#)  
[EndNote](#)

**Abstract:**

**Keywords:** [Conspiracy theories](#), [Nationalism](#), [Slavic aesthetics](#), [The Witcher 3](#)

This entry was posted by [Jose Zagal](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

**CONTEXT 4:**

Global video game industry





# THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT REVIEW: OFF THE PATH

By *Arthur Gies* on May 13, 2015 at 7:30pm



Also, while I did not by any means see every city, burg and outpost in *The Witcher 3*'s world in my 70+ hours spent within it, I don't recall a single non-white humanoid anywhere — not in Skellige, Novograd, Oxenfurt or anywhere else. Once I realized this I couldn't stop looking for any example of a person of color anywhere, and I never found it, unless you count naked monster women sitting at the feet of a boss like a slightly more awkward tribute to a Frank Frazetta painting. But maybe they're in there, somewhere.

**AUDIENCE AND OBJECT:**

Reading the Witcher works

<https://ohl.openlibhums.org/article/id/4463/>

## Abstract

This article is a reading of *The Witcher 3* in relation to postcolonial approaches to Polish culture. It departs from an analysis of an online debate on racial representation in the game as a possible act of epistemic disobedience, and moves on to a consideration of three narrative aspects of the game itself: its representation of political struggle, the ideological stance of the protagonist, and ethnic inspirations in worldbuilding. By referring those three issues to postcolonial analyses of Polish culture, as well as Walter D. Mignolo's concept of decolonization through epistemic disobedience, this article aims to demonstrate paradoxical qualities of the game, which tries to simultaneously distance itself from the established, West-oriented ways of knowledge production and gain recognition as an artifact of modern Western pop culture. Moreover, it employs the tradition of Polish Romanticism to establish itself as a bridge between Slavdom and Western culture, and strengthen the colonial idea of Poland being the proper ruler over Slavs.

## Share



## Authors

Tomasz Z. Majkowski (Department of Anthropology of Literature and Culture Studies, Faculty of Polish Studies, Jagiellonian University in Kraków)

## Download

- [Download Brazilian Portuguese PDF](#)
- [View Brazilian Portuguese PDF](#)
- [Download Brazilian Portuguese XML](#)
- [Download PDF](#)

**METHODOLOGY:**

The cultural diamond

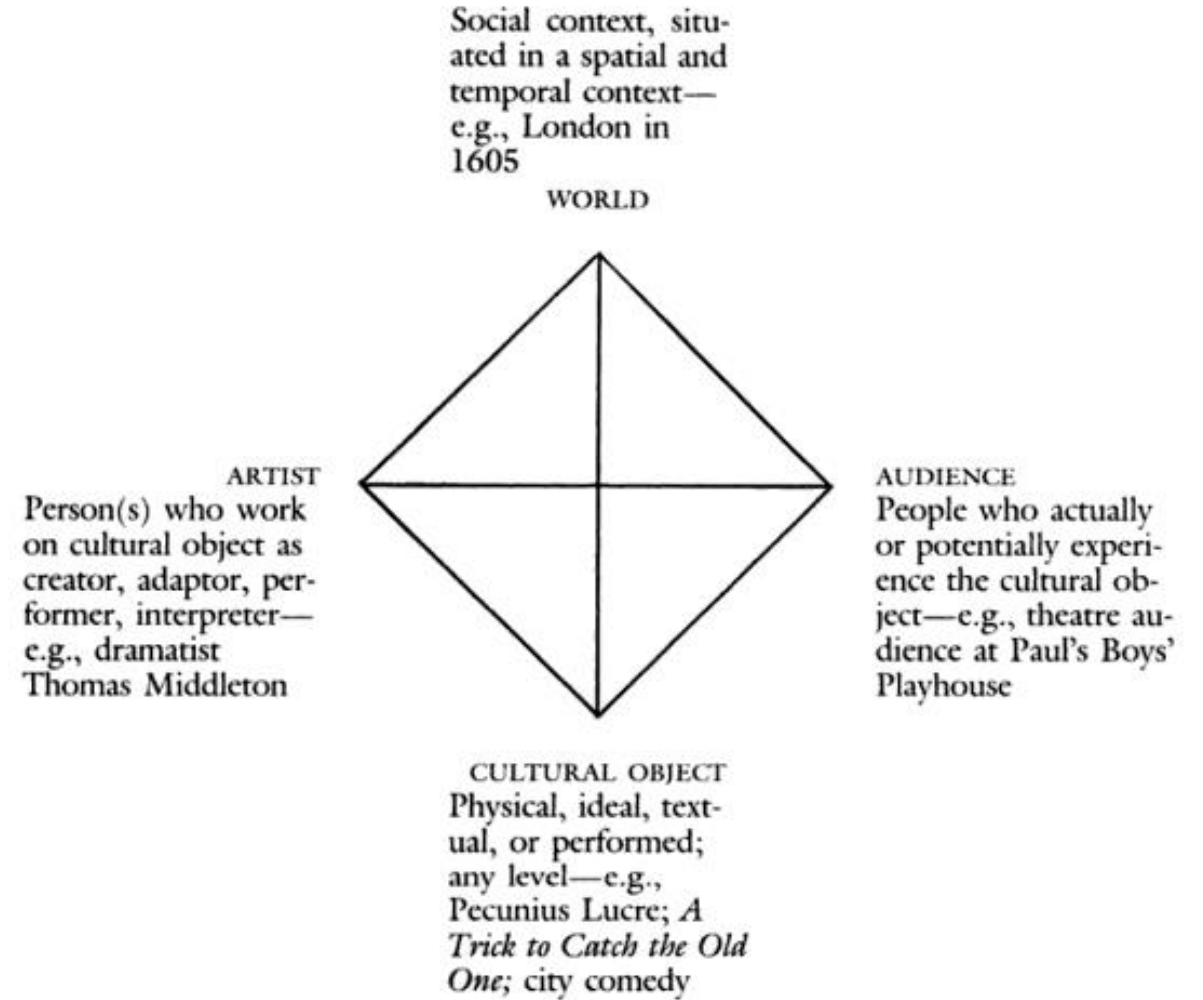


FIG. 1 The Cultural Diamond

Photo of Wendy Griswold (cropped):  
[Northwestern Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences](#)

Wendy Griswold, *Renaissance Revivals*, University of Chicago Press, 1986, p. 8,  
scan taken from [Dustin Stoltz's blog](#)

# “You Must Gather Your Party Before Venturing Forth”: Why Did Computer Games From Around 2000 Become So Important in Poland?

*Stanisław Krawczyk<sup>1</sup>*  
*University of Warsaw*

## **Abstract**

The turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was a significant period for computer games in Poland, especially in the roleplaying and strategy genres. The titles published at that time include *Fallout*, *Starcraft*, *Baldur’s Gate*, *Heroes of Might & Magic III*, or *Planescape: Torment*. This paper seeks to explain why these and other similar games had an important impact on the identities of many Polish players and contributed to the national gaming culture. Several social and cultural factors are analyzed, such as the players’ sociodemographic characteristics, the historical development of cRPG (computer roleplaying games) and RTS (real-time strategy) games, the role of Polish publishers, and the significance of technologies. The methodology of the study draws from Wendy Griswold’s cultural diamond heuristic, which emphasizes the benefits of investigating cultural objects (in this case, games) in relation to their producers, players, and the general social context. In general theoretical terms, the paper is grounded in cultural sociology.<sup>2</sup>