



Figure 1: Maharishi Mahesh Yogi demonstrating the bubble diagram (BBC 2014).

the senses and sciences of the world (Husserl 1999: 19). It is the experience in the present sense and world that is only a glimmer of what is true understanding, whether that be in one's own concept and dissemination for the thinkers in the lineage of Descartes and Husserl or of a universal existence for religious phenomenologists such as the Maharishi.

This concept of gaining the potential to uncover the buried truths at the core of every being has had great appeal to Day. According to Day, beneath the surface of the pond of regular meditation, at the source of where thoughts are born, pure consciousness abounds and true happiness can be felt, and it is through Transcendental Meditation that such experiences can be accessed (Day 2019a). However, the natural order of being able to reach this state can be found by all beings due to the order of creation. Day speaks of paper crumpled into a ball and its desire to uncrumple itself and get back to its original state as “a forward motion that is the key dynamic energy that's behind everybody wanting to do more and achieve more and enjoy more and have more and more happiness” (Day 2019a). For Day this endeavour to reach excellence drives him both spiritually and as a gamer, and this is what led him to become a pioneer of the first video game pilgrimage.

Recognition of “Full Potential” during the First Pilgrimage

Day first played the early video game *Pong* in 1972 and thought little of the experience. A competitive game of electronic table tennis with a simple premise—hitting the square “ball” into the opponent's side and stopping it reaching your own—the

game failed to grab his attention (Day 2017). This early dismissal of video games by Day would change dramatically within a decade. During the late 1970s and early 1980s Day was employed as an oil trader and he travelled around the country in order to secure deals with high-end oil clients who both sold and purchased the commodity. Fatefully, after working late one night in Houston, Texas, a colleague complained that he could not go any further with the job unless he played *Space Invaders*, the hugely popular arcade game (Day 2016). Attending the local video game arcade, Day became intrigued with how players were gaining high scores and attracting small crowds of spectators, seeing a connection with the performativity of athletic achievement. He immediately connected the concept of playing the game and the performance drawing a crowd to an athletic performance and achievement. While he visited the arcade to see his colleague play *Space Invaders*, released in 1978 three years earlier, it was the 1981 new release of *Gorf* that drew his and the crowd's interest (Day 2016). It wasn't the high scores that initially drew Day to have an interest in gaming; rather it was the potentiality afforded by each player and the success and perfection achieved by certain players was of especial interest to him (Day 2019a).

The drive to capture excellence is a desire that Day understands as part of his own character (Day 2019a). One of Day's previous jobs was capturing history through a business of buying and selling newspapers and holding a small museum of business cards. At the same time that he became interested in video games he left his oil brokerage career to take up the purchase and sale of year books across the country, again tracking history with famous people and their end-of-year photos and captions (Day 2018). This pursuit to collect experiences naturally connected to his new interest of video game records. Arcade games in individually operated venues had recorded scores but were not connected: consequently Day found himself visiting arcades more and more as he travelled for work. The Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation movement taught that desire for happiness, as a perpetual experience, would never be fully realized as a finite end. Finite satisfaction in this way is not something that can be achieved, as there is always more satisfaction and achievement to be made (Forem 2012: 68). This desire for satisfaction is manifested and returned by certain players of games. According to Day he was "not just impressed because they were getting high scores. I was impressed by the dynamic of them unfolding more and more potential and expressing it as greater and greater capability" (Day 2019a). The tremendous eye-hand coordination and mind-body coordination needed, where players go into a deep state that Day refers to as "the zone", is evident when players reach their "full potential" (Day 2016). Day says it is "almost like the forces of nature take over" where players are in a refined, silent state, able to access those subconscious states referred to

as the source in the bubble diagram (Figure 1, above) and where players are able to operate for a time like a passenger on a rail line, driven to an end (Day 2019a). This is akin to what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has recognized as a “flow state”, referencing the earlier work of Abraham H. Maslow (Csikszentmihalyi 2014: 137; Maslow 1983). While Csikszentmihalyi would not argue all flow state events are religious, he certainly recognizes that religious events that are not bound within the dogma of an established institution may be considered a flow experience.

Day immediately saw similarities of the type of engagement players were making with certain techniques of Transcendental Meditation (Day 2016), particularly the quiet flow state where players are in contemplation and experience the event, not as active but passive participants. This experience may not be understood intellectually but is nevertheless shared cosmically, as an experience that everyone is drawn to and drawn to return to, a forward motion of perpetual desire to achieve, do and enjoy more in life, and find happiness (Day 2019a). The activity or engagement of the individual may be anything according to Day: the desire to do better in family, work, education or video gaming is a representation of the spiritual principles that operate within every person (Day 2019a). Despite the dynamic experience of the video game and in the “midst of all the noise and clamour ... divine silence is beginning to dawn. But because they’re not truly enlightened, they [the player] only go a little bit down [into their consciousness], but down enough that it becomes an experience that gives them more expansion, more silence, everything slower and they perform better and turn it into a world level score” (Day 2019a). These video game high scores therefore become markers which define the spiritual development of the player and show the potentiality that can be achieved, driving the individual further by giving them more goals to achieve. Elsewhere I have suggested that this process can be called “apophatic gaming” (Banasik 2017).

Essentially, certain games may foster an experience similar to the religious experience, recognized by theologians such as Gregory of Nyssa as an unceasing spiritual journey (Gregory of Nyssa 2004). The perpetual state of journey that Nyssa found in the narrative of Moses became a blueprint for the theologian for the Christian way of life and an acceptance of the perpetual journey towards perfection, always out of reach and always in the distance. In earlier work, I have argued that this apophatic journeying is part of the player experience of games such as *Elite*, *No Man’s Sky*, *World of Warcraft*, *Pokémon* and *Journey*. In such games players enter a world where the promise for an end is either not fully achievable due to the sheer size and amount of content (*Elite*, *World of Warcraft* and *Pokémon* fit into this category), or the looped experience and goal which appear forever on the horizon (*Journey* and *No Man’s Sky* fit into this category). What links these experiences is that they are all modern games, all have immersive interfaces

with individual character development and are all based on home computers or video game consoles. The games that Day was interested in at the time could be considered the opposite of such experiences in many ways. The arcades were money-driven enterprises, meaning games were relatively short endeavours and purposefully designed for players to continue to feed coins into in order to progress or retry. What Day found, however, is that certain players had an affinity to return to certain games, to achieve greater scores and then play for longer and longer periods of time. One of the most influential games on Day's life and one of the most famous of these types of games is *Pac-Man*.

Released in 1980, *Pac-Man* by Namco (or "Puck Man" as the game was known in Japan) would take the world by storm. The game, with its simplistic graphics of a yellow disk that a player controls around a board eating blue dots and avoiding ghosts, captivated players. The game is estimated to have made at least US\$100 million as of 2005 and played at least 10 billion times. At 25 cents per game this is quite a phenomenal achievement for a simplistic video game from the classic arcade era. Day in hindsight believed that

Pac Man changed the psychological profile of the average person ... Suddenly old and young, male and female, doctors, dentists, lawyers and housewives found it acceptable to be playing a video game. And Pac Man opened that door for them. Despite the fact that it was technologically advanced, it was as simple as playing a card game for them. (Morris and Day 2005)

It was in its release year of 1980 that Day first encountered *Pac-Man* while in a bowling alley. Travelling from town to town, Day made an effort to always visit the local arcade not only to play but also to record high scores.

The first of Day's score-recording pilgrimages was a very small step, as he recognizes his own spiritual orientation was pointed towards video game expertise. According to Day, he found that all the players were searching, deep down trying to find "enlightenment" (Day 2019a). This mode of experience was achieved only through a game of excellence, requiring an alignment of players' minds and representative of higher states of consciousness. In this way, Day connects video gaming to the achievements in other fields, as all beings within the human experience are afforded the potentiality of the "art of excellence" (Day 2018). It is the drive that interested him and drove him on to travel to the arcades to track down the "alleged masters" that could achieve 300,000–400,000 points on *Pac-Man* (Day 2019a). Travelling from city to city in America he kept hearing of higher scores achieved in the next town and adding locations to his itinerary. He finally heard of a player in Sandy, Utah who achieved unimaginably high scores in the game. Day focused his pilgrimage to the city to find the player. On visiting the arcade of these masters, Day recalls: "I came in, I started asking questions ... They all

clammed up and they wouldn't tell me anything ... it was like there was an outsider there to steal their ancient secrets" (Day 2019a). Day went from player to player asking about who achieved the highest score, but the players outright refused to give the knowledge or even reveal the high scores (the achievements on the machines were reset when they were turned off each night), nor did they share how to potentially achieve them (Day 2018). Frustrated as Day was, in hindsight he recognizes that he was "a seeker, going on a pilgrimage to try and find higher knowledge and perfection as expressed in a person's capability, it changed their level of consciousness into a marker that's defined by a video game score" (Day 2019a). This pilgrimage would not be Day's last nor would it be the end of his engagement with high-end gaming and competitive scores. The next step of Day on this longer pilgrimage was to become the official scorekeeper of video game records, achieved with the opening of the Twin Galaxies arcade in Ottumwa, Iowa, the "video game capital of the world".

Ottumwa: The Dodge City of Video Games

On November 10, 1981 Walter Day teamed up with John David Block to open an arcade called Twin Galaxies. Restricted by the prohibitions of arcade machine owner operators to not compete with the existing arcade in Fairfield, Day settled on Ottumwa, opening the arcade as close as he could to the home of the Maharishi University in Fairfield. His motivation for opening the arcade was as much a career choice as it was an opportunity to play arcade games and witness games played by great players, keeping a record of their high scores. The arcade's humble beginnings of twenty-two arcade machines was welcomed by players who would frequent the venue until the early hours of the morning. One player alerted Day to an issue of *TIME* magazine from January 18, 1982 detailing the high score of a player from Chicago who achieved 15 million points in 14 hours on the Midway arcade game *Defender*. The player who showed Day the article made the claim that he could beat the record, and so Day challenged the player to show him his ability and the score was subsequently beaten (Day 2016; 2018). When Day, excited by the achievement, called Midway and asked what the top score of the game was, he was informed there was no scoreboard kept by them. Intrigued by the answer he then called *Replay* and *Play Magazine* as well as the other distributors of arcade games who all said they did not keep records for any of their arcade machines (*LIFE Magazine* 1983; Ruchti 2006; Day 2016; 2017). The following day Day called back each of the manufacturers and informed them that he would offer to keep the scores of all the arcades, naming Twin Galaxies the home of the National Scoreboard of Video Games, later renamed the International Scoreboard.

Day's International Scoreboard began to gain traction with the first phone call from a player in Goodlettsville, Tennessee who claimed to have the highest score for *Galaga*. Coincidentally, the score was beaten that night by a staff member of Day's and the caller was informed that he was now the second highest ranked player in the world (Day 2017). From this point, calls were received from across the country, then from other countries, with up to twenty calls a day increasing the momentum of the competition and promoting players to compete with stronger players that they normally would not face. These humble beginnings, based on the assumption of honesty, were soon put to the test and Day devised a system for the manager of an arcade to verify a player's record (*LIFE Magazine* 1983). The summary of high scores would be sent to arcades, recording the arcade at which each score was achieved, and as of June 1983 there were 218 different records set on a variety of video games (Twin Galaxies International Scoreboard 1983).

The momentum felt by Day led him to position the arcade as the centre of gaming in America and the world. His active engagement with the industry from the outset put him on the national map and led to him convincing players that Ottumwa was the "Dodge City of Video Games", a place where the best players from America would come to compete (Ruchti 2006). Mayor Jerry Parker would reinforce this by declaring Ottumwa, Iowa as the "video game capital of the world" and towards the end of 1982, in the first year of the arcade's existence, Day was in discussion with *LIFE* to arrange a photo session of record holders in the street with their arcade machines of choice (Figure 2). Players travelled to Ottumwa, covering their own costs with Day paying for the hotels. The players then competed at the games, some breaking records that would be held for a number of decades, including Billy Mitchell's (pictured in the group photo clutching a plush toy ape), who would on the same day set a record at *Donkey Kong* proving later that Steve Sanders's score claim was false (Ruchti 2006). Day was called upon by players to be in the photo as he held the score for the maze-based game *Make Trax*; however, he refused as he wanted the younger players to own the photo. His record would stand until it was beaten by three players who held their positions on the Twin Galaxies Scoreboard from 1983 until 2011 (*LIFE Magazine* 1983).

The opening of Twin Galaxies as an arcade already established the place as a location for players to visit from surrounding towns. The home of the first International Scoreboard was promoted as a pilgrimage location for players who would see the posters of the scores in their local arcades. The *LIFE* photo series and call-out by Day for players to attend on a set date elevated the event and the pilgrimage with it was viewed positively by those who attended; more recently, receiving even greater attention with the focus of a full-length film, *Chasing Ghosts: Beyond the Arcade* (Ruchti 2006). The players who would travel from other states has entered



<p><i>Ben Gold, 16, of Dallas zoomed to 40,001,150 points playing StarGate.</i></p>	<p><i>Bill Mitchell, 17, Hollywood, Fla., collected 25,000,000 at Centipede.</i></p>	<p><i>Eric Ginner, 20, Mountain View, Calif., Moon Patrolled 536,470 points.</i></p>	<p><i>Jeff Brandt, 20, Bloomington, Ill., totaled 787,400 Donkey Kong Jr.</i></p>	<p><i>Todd Walker, 19, San Jose, Calif., speared 700,000 points at Joust.</i></p>

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<p><i>Steven Sanders, 19, Clinton, Mo., pinned 3,165,300 Donkey Kong tails.</i></p>	<p><i>Ned Trotter, 18, Palm Harbor, Fla., captured 72,999,975 at Defender.</i></p>	<p><i>Mark Robichek, 23, Mountain View, Calif., dug up 221,480 in Tutankham.</i></p>	<p><i>Leo Dante is, 21, Wrightsville, N.C., got 3,086,000 at Tempest.</i></p>	<p><i>Mike Lepkosky, 14, Houston, packed in 296,410 on Ms. Pac-Man.</i></p>

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Figure 2: The infamous LIFE Magazine photo and player profiles (LIFE Magazine 1983: 72-73).

into the collective memory of gamers for generations. The picture found its way into arcades and homes beyond the customer and visitor base of Day's arcade. In this way the spiritual tourism that Day had sought, and learned from Eastern teachers such as the Maharishi (Norman 2011: 144–46), was adopted and exemplified.

The Maharishi's call for Fairfield, Iowa to be the new home of Transcendental Meditation mirrored that call of Day to establish his arcade as the centre of the video game world. Players of games, with ample opportunity to play games in their own hometown and phone-in scores, opted to travel to Ottumwa in order to visit somewhere special. This centred the players' experience as pilgrims travelling to an external location, refocusing the attention to Twin Galaxies as a sacred place beyond their normal activities. This mirrors what Alex Norman has identified in his field study of spiritual tourism in which pilgrims visit places but are not just interested in the individual location; rather it is the experience of the journey that draws them to travel (Norman 2011: 184–85). The video game experience at the locations creates an ongoing activity and effort that must be made by the player in order to impress and satisfy their desires. To achieve the highest score at these locations, like Twin Galaxies of the early 1980s, requires concentration and commitment which Day not only encouraged but for which he also provided a safe, welcoming environment. What is astonishing is that due to the media attention, and strong will of Day, the concept of establishing Twin Galaxies not only worked but would spark an interest by larger companies who sought to promote video game excellence as a feat of athletic achievement and worthy of sharing to a broader community.

In January 1983 the filming of the first competitive video game tournament took place on the TV programme *That's Incredible!* with three players competing to be crowned champion. The players competed for their position initially at Twin Galaxies on the range of arcades in order to choose the three best all-round players (Day 2016). This television coverage sparked further interest when in February 1983 Day was approached by the operators of the Electronic Circus, a travelling road show of live entertainment, to assemble a circus act of the best players who would travel from city to city, setting high scores and allowing local players to compete against the best of their generation (Ruchti 2006). The flip of this experience, from a place to visit or call in, to one that would travel, ultimately failed with the first show closing after five days in Boston, as there were very few attendees (Ruchti 2006). This would not hamper Day's efforts and later in the year he established the first US national video game team and began his relationship with *Guinness World Records*. The US team would go on to tour Europe, and Day would stay in America working with Guinness for the publication of the 1983–86 editions of the book (Day 2016). An achievement of the local Ottumwa resident and video game player Tim McVey who, with only a single quarter played the game *Nibbler*

for forty-four hours straight achieving the first recorded video game score of over one billion points on January 17, 1984 would further elevate Twin Galaxies' prominence in the local and regional news. McVey's effort of 1,000,042,270 points was recognized by the Mayor with a declaration of "Tim McVey Day" on January 28, 1984 (Seklir and Kinzy 2016).

Despite the positive media attention and local support, it would not be smooth sailing for Day. Arcade competition would increase in Ottumwa with the opening of a rival location; this, together with arcades failing to maintain business during the infamous "video game crash", continued to put pressure on the business. The crash hit nations hardest around the globe that had a heavy focus on Atari sales and arcades. The United States was heavily reliant on these markets and due to the saturation in the marketplace of Atari games, particularly poor products pushed by a few major companies, consumers began to lose faith in the experience. The focus on personal computing in other territories such as the United Kingdom and Australia provided a safeguard to the market drop. This alternative market was not well-established in the United States and thus the drop was felt harder and resulted in a number of arcades closing. Twin Galaxies as a location would finally close in 1986, bringing an end to the Scoreboard just three years after the height of Day's endeavours. The first International Scoreboard, however, would predate the Xbox achievements created by Microsoft for the Xbox 360 and similar platforms such as PlayStation, Steam and Nintendo by twenty years. Despite the localized crash, video games were not to disappear from the collective experience of consumers and nor would Day's desire to collect records of players who reached their full potential.

Twin Galaxies Reborn

It took a decade before the Twin Galaxies Scoreboard would be revitalized by Day. Taking advantage of technological advances with arcade games now playable in homes through emulation on platforms such as MAME (Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator), Day registered and created twingalaxies.com, rebranding the enterprise as the Intergalactic Scoreboard and promoting competitions at locations and distance-based submissions where tapes were accepted as proof of scores (Twin Galaxies International Scoreboard 1997). The website would coincide with the publication of score books by Day, along with a re-engagement with *Guinness World Records*, reaffirming Twin Galaxies as the official scorekeeper for video game world records.

Players were now free to submit scores in their own time, initially with the signature of two witnesses (Twin Galaxies International Scoreboard 1997), and later with video submissions or referee recognition at events. After reopening the Scoreboard to players, Day found that a number of people were maxing out scores, reaching the

highest score possible in a game and usually filling the scores with all nines or zeros or reaching the end of a game's memory and automatically "dying". These type of max-out scores, particularly on home-based console games such as Atari, Nintendo or SEGA consoles, left the new management of Twin Galaxies with a decision of who should be awarded the highest score. Day witnessed the competition begin to focus on the fastest score and has attributed the birth of speed running to this type of competition (Day 2016). Speed running is getting through a game in the fastest way possible, using glitches and breaking the game if possible, in order to save seconds on each level or run. Playing games in this way pushed players even further and created a collective experience away from the physical place of the arcade. The evolution of game playing enabled the flow state and reaching the full potential to be achieved in living rooms with console gaming, offices with personal computer gaming and public transport stations with mobile gaming.

The individual scores achieved by players are not the point of the exercise for Twin Galaxies' online scoreboard under Day's stewardship. He recognizes that the players didn't stop at a single high score; it is a desire to get more and more of them. The scores are not the goal, nor is it the "fame or glory"; rather it is the incessant desire for "divine spiritual enlightenment, which is at the basis of everything including their desires to have higher and higher scores" (Day 2019a). Previously the Scoreboard only facilitated names of players that achieved the top score (Twin Galaxies International Scoreboard 1983); now, with players sending in scores from across the globe, each game would have a number of "tracks" with rule sets and an individual scoreboard. Day himself set twenty-three records including lower ranking scores such as the 41st highest score on *Tony Hawk Pro Skater 2* on the PlayStation 1 NTSC—Hangar Level in 2001. The point for Day and the re-establishment of Twin Galaxies as an online Scoreboard is not necessarily the achievement of the highest score; rather it is to provide a space where players are recognized for their excellence even if they are ranked lower than the highest score achieved on the track.

With this re-establishment of the world's Scoreboard there was a need to have a worldwide scorekeeper and Day began to wear the distinctive striped referee outfit that he now wears at every public and personal appearance (Figure 3). Day would don the outfit in both the *King of Kong* (Gordon 2007) and *Chasing Ghosts* films which were released in 2006, retelling the story of Twin Galaxies in their own way. Although Day found *King of Kong* to be an "upsetting experience" (Day 2016), both films elevated the competition of classic arcade game scores, in particular classic-era games like *Donkey Kong* and *Pac-Man*, to a previously unestablished level, with Day obtaining recognition as the global scorekeeper. This acquisition of a persona would go so far for it to be later adopted as an influence of Disney in the 2012



Figure 3: Walter Day in the referee uniform at Uluru, Australia (Day 2019b).

feature film *Wreck It Ralph* with the character and arcade owner Mr Litwak (Day 2016). While Day announced that he would step away from the video game industry in the mid-2000s, the establishment of his image as a scorekeeper, even adopted as the logo of Twin Galaxies' online Scoreboard after its sale, would allow him to re-engage with the industry on a personal basis. His final step would be to engage with gaming on his own terms as a personal pilgrimage across the globe.

Pilgrimage Today

Day announced his retirement from the industry to concentrate on his music career during the filming of *Chasing Ghosts* and saw the film as a final celebration of his time in gaming (Ruchti 2006). He said an interest in other things, rather than the obsessive desire to play video games early in his ownership of Twin Galaxies, was the reason to finally step away (Day 2010). Twin Galaxies would be transferred to new ownership twice within three years until the current ownership and new CEO Jace Hall would take the reins of the worldwide Scoreboard in 2013. However, within the next two years Day would be back in the industry, reconnecting with his original pilgrimage and collecting and sharing the experience of players' excellence.

By 2015 Day had established the *Walter Day Collection*, an ever-expanding collection of trading cards covering historical events, personalities and achievements. Day, who five years earlier referred to himself as the "Patron Saint of Video Games" (Day 2010), had made a prodigal return and established the card

collection as primarily a collection of oral stories. His first card in the series featured the fellow star of the film *Chasing Ghosts* and *King of Kong*, Billy Mitchell (Day 2015). Mitchell would continue to receive more cards in future, along with thousands of other video game players who gave exceptional service to the industry or achieved high score levels considered to be exceptional. Day now travels the globe and has no plans to stop, with a visit to Australia for the first time in 2019 and an intention to visit the United Kingdom in 2020. His new aim to be an oral historian connects players from a games industry into a joint community and creates a pilgrimage event for players at events hosted by arcades and expos (Figure 4). During the events Day acts not just as a bystander but an active participant in the activity, donning the referee uniform again and encouraging players to achieve their full potential at games being played in competitions.

By highlighting the individual achievements of players, Day has been able to show that players have certain unique abilities and that there is a game for every player. The tendencies of players, Day has found, has made players gravitate to certain games where they can get into a flow-like state more easily. Like water flowing down into a gully, the manifestation of traits and tendencies are likened to hard-wired skills, which can be changed but are natural at that moment (Day 2019a). In baseball, Day says there are “outfielders and some of them would have that kind of intuition that when they hear the crack of the ball off the bat somehow at a deep



Figure 4: Walter Day presenting me with a trading card for my high score achievements in the SEGA games *Columns* and *Tetris* at a Walter Day Trading Card ceremony at the BPAC 2019 Showcase (Brisbane Pinball & Arcade Collective 2019).

level, their mind already knew where it was going and they already took one or two steps in the right direction”. Just like these sports people are recognized as being the difference between great and good athletes, video game players intuitively may find a game that they may excel at as “when they’re doing all this stuff they’re fulfilling the nature of their nervous system” (Day 2019a). This bias of the type of game, whether it be a methodical, chaotic or rhythm game, is more an indication of the internal character trait and alignment of the player, rather than their inherent skill. Players that may be good at puzzle-like games such as *Donkey Kong* or *Pac-Man*, he says, may not be as good at chaotic games like *Robotron*. This certainly appears to be evident with players of tournaments such as BPAC (2019), competing in mixed game competitions. Despite being the best in the world at certain games, they are unable or unlikely to play well at games of a different type.

For Day, it is all about the spiritual development of the player: if they find a game that is able to act as a conduit or “trigger” to unfold their full self, unmasking their ability and bringing it to the surface, then they can achieve something truly miraculous. Settling into that space, the quiet reflection and concentration, with a game that is matched to the player’s character trait, the player may achieve great scores bringing in the aspects of their experience at that moment to “settle down to the state of the zone” (Day 2019a). Day, who is present at the moment or recording the oral tale later on one of his trading cards, is able to witness and share the state of excellence that players reach, encouraging them to continue to strive for their full potential.

Conclusion

Controversy may have marred the name of Twin Galaxies in recent years with the back-and-forth battle over controversial scores and classic records; however, this study has sought to show that the driving force behind competitive gaming which influenced speed runs, achievements and global classic gaming was one of a deep spiritual endeavour. Day’s engagement with the Maharishi and his continued daily practice of Transcendental Meditation has informed his experience with the arcades and high score recording, even if this was not explicitly explained by Day himself at times. The religious engagement of his Eastern influenced new religious movement enabled him to change his outlook on life, a change that Day likens to a miraculous experience that he owes his very life to; without it a continued use of drugs would have had a detrimental effect on his life (Day 2019). Due to this moment, and the fortuitousness of finding an interest in gaming at a time when the arcades were at their height, enabled Day, the “patron saint of video games”, to gather a flock and push for higher and higher engagement. While not all modern game players have heard of Twin Galaxies, or know about the *LIFE* photo, the

competitions in America and Europe or even the first worldwide Scoreboard, there is evidence to show that Twin Galaxies under Day's leadership was a vessel that widened the engagement of competitive gaming and e-sports.

Enabling people to submit scores from their own homes came at a risk; however for Day, the risks have been worth the potential rewards. As Day stepped outside the frame of the photo from the *LIFE Magazine* year in review (Figure 2), he made a statement that the players are the drivers of the industry: the games and the physical arcade are really inconsequential to the endeavour. Rather, for Day, it is the effort and engagement of individuals towards reaching their greatest potentiality of excellence that is the key. Whether this is referred to as enlightenment, transcendental consciousness or flow, Day has shown patience and a genuine interest in each and every individual player.

This study has shown that Day has consistently recognized this drive to excellence inside each person and sought to provide a facility for them to reach their full potential. This facility now rests with the encouragement of players from the comfort of his engagement in oral story recording and continues to have an effect on gamers, just like those young players who stepped into his arcade over three decades ago. It is this engagement that facilitates the players to continue to go further, the dynamic energy of each to seek more and more happiness. This happiness is what has given Day his momentum as the first video game pilgrim, and a facilitator and recorder of the excellence of players who reach their full potential.

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