

Country of Origin I

**A 3d animated
conceptual adventure game**

Country of Origin I is a computer game that uses the AGI engine that was exploited commercially by Sierra Online from 1984 to 1989. This is the user manual. The game itself can be downloaded from <http://www.ericschrijver.nl>.

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I. Introduction

When you, the player, take control of *Country of Origin I*, it is a bright sunny morning in the early spring of 2007. Outside you can hear the cries of seagulls. You live in a city next to the sea which is also the residence of the country's government: just this week a member of parliament proposed to exclude people with double nationalities from public positions. Like in any Western European nation, xenophobia and provincialism have been rampant in the past few years.

Frankly, you don't notice this very much in your day-to-day life. Your country is still extremely rich. You and your friends are in a position to spend their time pursuing careers in contemporary art or linguistics, and to drink coffee uptown or in any other Western-European town.

That makes you wonder. How does this very place and this very time affect you and your life? Or, more precisely, what is the inalienable here and now of your seaside city?

You don't like talking in ahistorical categories such as 'space' and 'time'. You are more tempted to think Aldo van Eyck was right when he said: 'whatever space and time mean, place and occurrence mean more'. But you have the nagging suspicion that wanting to embody your spatiotemporal position, amounts to the same thing as wanting to escape it...

Thus you have arrived in the first ever 3d-animated conceptual adventure game. Your quest is to find a satisfactory relation to the categories of time and space. To achieve your goal, you will have to make clever use of thoughts feelings and desires. You'll have to make eloquent conversation and nimbly shift your paradigms.

You might be tempted to think your quest is in vain, because you think that questions are more important than answers. But, you are in a computer game. Games have solutions for they consist of puzzles. And even though intrinsic value is no criterion for a puzzle, the assured existence of a solution is! Good luck.

II. Installation

Downloading

To increase the scope of *Country of Origin* I we decided to mainly distribute it electronically as opposed to physically. The game is available for download from <http://www.ericsschrijver.nl>.

The game can be run in two ways. One is to download the PC-version. It will probably run on any IBM compatible pc which is between five and fifteen years of age, such as the 286 and the 386 series. The game will run great in MSDOS, MS Windows 3.1 and Windows 95. It will also probably run on newer computers with Windows XP or Windows Vista - in this case however, there is a possibility of driver-conflicts which might lead to crashes.

When using Windows XP or any other recent operating system, you can also run the game using a different procedure. What you do is that you use a so-called emulator to execute these files. The recommended emulator is ScummVM (<http://www.scummvm.org>), which is an open-source project build around platform-independent libraries. This allows for operation on a wide variety of systems including not only Mac and Windows and many Unix variants, but also handheld consoles, PDA's and mobile phones. More information and links can be found on [ericsschrijver.nl](http://www.ericsschrijver.nl).

Installation and Launch

Unpack the archive you downloaded into a folder you choose. To start the game, run the 'origin.exe' executable. Alternatively, if you use an emulator, launch the emulator and add the folder you just created as a game folder and subsequently launch it.

III. Gameplay

Country of Origin I is an adventure game. Adventure games were a genre of computer games most popular during the late 1980s and early 1990s.



Moving about

An important aspect of adventure games is the ability to explore different locations. You control your character using the arrow buttons on the keyboard. Press a button to walk in a given direction, then press another button to move in another direction – or press the same button again to stop moving. Once you reach an accessible edge of the screen, moving into it will move you to the adjacent screen. Keeping track of which screens you have visited and how they relate to each other can become somewhat tedious: keeping a map is a well known key to success.

Doing stuff

Unlike other popular game genres, in the adventure game you don't use buttons to perform actions. Instead you interact with your environment by typing simple English phrases as 'open door'. More on this in the next chapter: 'Interacting with language'. One important command to remember is 'look'. You can use it to look at an object as in 'look house'. When you enter a screen however, just typing 'look' will give you a detailed description of the place where you are. This descriptions might contain clues on what to do next!

Inventory

During the course of the game you can acquire a range of physical and conceptual assets. When you pick up an object it is stored in your Inventory and you can try and use it anywhere on the map. For example, picking up a key somewhere may allow you to 'unlock door' somewhere else! To see the contents of your Inventory use the Action menu.

Menu options

The File menu allows you to Save, Restore, Quit or Restart the game. Save and Restore are important functions. When you Save, the game remembers where you are and what you've done. You can Restore at any time to a previous location when you start the game, or when during the course of the game you have made a physical and/or conceptual mess. You can choose the location to Save to on your harddisk, and you can keep multiple savegames.

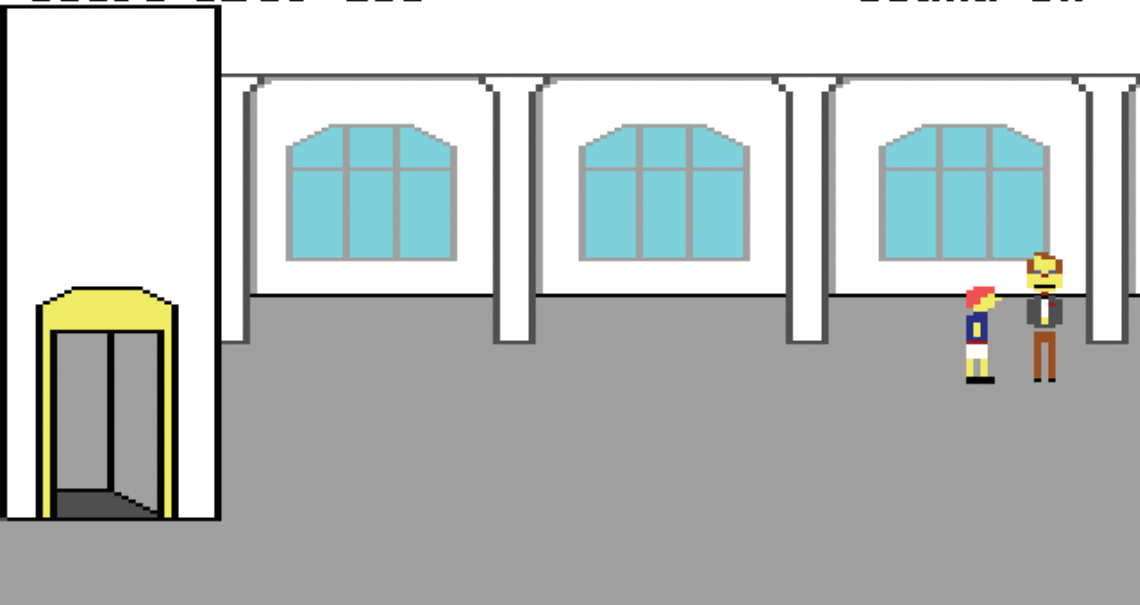
There are three additional menus: The Action menu allows you to look at your Inventory. The Special menu allows you to turn the sound off and to pause the game. The Speed menu allows you to change the speed of player-movement.

IV. Interacting with language

Country of Origin I is a conceptual adventure game. A traditional adventure game uses commands which are related to physical actions with tangible objects: 'take ball', 'unlock fence', 'move stone'. Yet language which is obviously referential, is only a small part of the vocabulary of human speech: try and count how many words in the last sentence relate to something you can touch. However, this insight from linguistics has failed to leave it's mark on the adventure game genre. Country of Origin I tries to make up for that - by allowing you, the player, to handle both physical and conceptual objects and activities.

Score: 32 of 185

Sound: on



>talk art roland_

Physical activity

(look, take, move, open)

Country of Origin I does not do away with physical activity altogether. Firstly, as described in the section 'Gameplay' you move about the city using your keyboard. Looking at your surroundings is also important (you can use the general command 'look', or be more specific i.e. 'look sign'). The game also has several commands to physically engage with your surroundings: take, move, open.

example:

>take pigeon

Thoughts feelings and desires

(think, feel, want)

At any time during the game, you can choose to think, feel or want something. This action will always be effective: you will actually think, feel or want whatever you choose. Your thoughts feelings and desires are not limited to the vocabulary recognized by the program. Whether this action has consequences on your environment, however, remains to be seen. This depends on what screen you are in and what tasks you have accomplished.

example:

>want consolation_
>feel remorse_

Conversation

(love, death, life, art, space, time)

When you are in a screen with other characters you can talk with them. This is the most important way to add new conceptual items to your inventory. Specify what to talk about and to whom. You can talk about everything yet for conversation to have consequences you are best of talking about either love, death, life, art, space or time. Your action might be more effective if you shift paradigm as described below.

example:

>talk death francis_
>talk love bastian_

Shift Paradigm.

(classicist, marxist, post-structuralist, pragmaticist, romanticist)

To win the conceptual adventure game one set of beliefs, values and conceptual techniques won't suffice. During the course of 'Country of Origin I' you will be able to acquire five different paradigms. What's more you can shift paradigm at any time you see fit. Sometimes a conversation or desire will only be effective when you are in a specific paradigm.

When you start the game you are in possession of both the romanticist and the pragmaticist paradigm. See also Appendix A 'List of paradigms'.

example:

>shift paradigm poststructuralist_

V. Characters

These are the people you'll encounter when playing *Country of Origin I*.



You

This is you, the player. A young artist inquisitive about time and space.



Riley

Riley is your younger brother. He is the only one of your relatives who is in your vicinity. Look for him to show up at unexpected places. Talk to him and listen carefully for in the game he functions as your oracle, giving clues about what to say, do, think or feel next.



Roland B. Stickhouses

Roland is your friend, your confrère and your conscience. During the game he will remind you of your romanticist longings for authenticity and honesty.



Francis B. Creekmanor

Francis is your friend and a strikingly handsome young academic. He shares your pragmaticist paradigm, your metamothertongue so to speak. When you carry a concept there is good chance Creekmanor can interact with it.



Josie J. Tapburrough

Josie is your friend and a strikingly handsome young academic. You conceptually interact on a wide range of subjects. Having studied art history she is also in possession of some paradigms that are strange to you and might be of use.



Bastian F. Notchdorf

Bastian is your friend and a strikingly handsome young academic. He shares your pragmaticist paradigm, your metamothertongue so to speak. When you carry a concept there is good chance Notchdorf can interact with it.

Appendix A:

List of Paradigms

classicist

You desire a life and art which has a graceful and noble beauty which can be attained by adhering to universal standards of unity. You regard 'truth' as both an intrinsic and a desirable property of what you should, do, make or think.

marxist

You stress the historical necessity of whatever. You understand teleological thinking. You can choose to see either yourself or a social class or an intellectual concept as part of a dialectic which will lead from thesis to antithesis to synthesis.

poststructuralist

You strongly oppose logocentric thinking for you are witnessing the end of the human subject – when everything is in flux and reality which is meaning which is language which is desire which is power is structured rhizomatically, disseminating like the pleat, the curve, the twisting surface of science and mathematics. Cinema is sensation conditioned by cinema's plastic mass of visual material that puts into operation the open whole as both incessant flux and instantaneous disjunction. Writing is the becoming-multiple that de-territorializes a major language: it makes philosophy happen by giving the event a body, a life, a universe.

pragmaticist

You regard 'truth' as a recommendation as opposed to a property. You think nihilism does not imply cynicism. You strongly oppose essentialism and you like to stress the spatiotemporal quality of whatever. You are opposed to teleological thinking.

romanticist

You regard 'true', 'authentic', 'honest' and 'individual' as both intrinsic and desirable properties of what you should, do, make or think. You long to express your individuality. Second to that you desire that which you can not have; therefore you suffer.

Appendix B:

Credits

‘Country of Origin I’

written and programmed by eric schrijver

graphics by eric schrijver and lauren schrijver

produced and published by onomatopoe

‘Country of Origin I’ – user manual

written and designed by eric schrijver

thank you sonya richards
for conceptual sanitization
(‘despair is always a drag’).

i only realized after i’d begun
work on CoO that femke
whom i met on the train
made an adventure game
with her brother two years
ago. thank you femke, thank
you lauren.

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A 3d-animated conceptual adventure game
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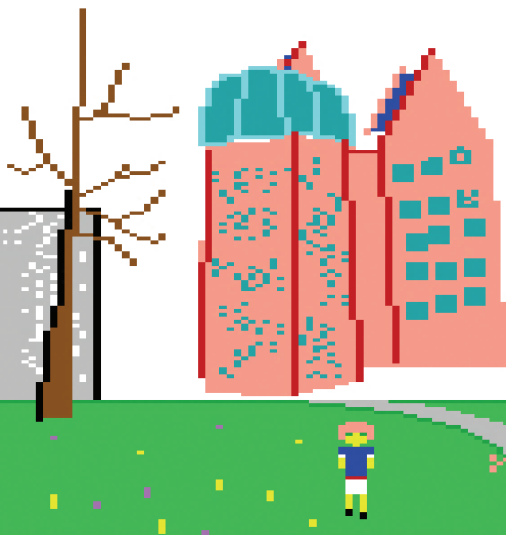
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