Pranks
Ian Bogost
in How to Do Things With Videogames

This chapter discusses the use of videogames in pranks. Pranks act as profound social interventions and allow people to look at life from a different perspective. In Syobon Action (Dejected Action), a Japanese platformer, also known in the West as “Cat Mario” or simply “Mario from Hell,” bends the rules of the game arbitrarily, defying every expectation of Mario-style platform conventions and demands that the player undertake bizarre routes. As videogames become a larger part of everyday life, the opportunity to prank friends and families will surely increase. Videogame pranksters must have the competence to develop games and integrate prankish ideas into them, or to manipulate the contexts for existing games to transform them into pranks.

Down Where on a Visit?
Rebecca Gordon Stewart
in The American Isherwood

This chapter examines how Christopher Isherwood manipulates his creation of a “mythology of self” in the 1962 novel Down There on a Visit. In the 1950s, as Isherwood continued to struggle with elements of The World in the Evening, he notes in his “Writing Notebook” that he has a new idea for a story, one that would turn out to be Down There on a Visit. An analysis of Isherwood’s unpublished notes alongside the final novel reveals that many of the themes that formed his original plan of rewriting Dante’s journey through Hell and Purgatory as narrated in The Divine
Comedy in fact have remained at the forefront of Down There on a Visit. This chapter considers Down There on a Visit’s connection to both The Divine Comedy and Joris-Karl Huysmans’s novel Là-bas in terms of style and themes.

“A Delicious Purgatory”: Sex and “Salvation”
Jaime Harker

in Middlebrow Queer: Christopher Isherwood in America

Published in print: 2013 Published Online: August 2015
Publisher: University of Minnesota Press
DOI: 10.5749/
Item type: chapter

This chapter focuses on how Christopher Isherwood conceptualized homosexuals as antiheroes yet saints in his own and his friends’ novels. It begins by presenting the link between gay life and “queer” hell through the “intertextual” conversations he had with his gay friends. Among the novels featured in the conversations were: Isherwood’s Down There on a Visit, James Baldwin’s Giovanni’s Room, Jane Rule’s Desert of the Heart, and John Rechey’s City of Night and Another Country—all of which are centered on the theme of sex. These novels aimed to criticize “mainstream” society, and argued for a “queer” reimagination of American culture.