FEZ
A Critical Commentary
• Fez can function as a subject of a critical analysis of the assumptions of the culture within which it was produced
• Fez accomplishes this via a nuanced reading, it is self-aware, it is ‘polysematic’ (Dante’s term)
• These together make it, if not art, something that functions quite like art, so like whatever.
The best way to show that Fez can be the subject of critical analysis is by offering that analysis.

Thus, we need a metathesis (or maybe a matethesis?)

Thesis (i) – Fez models assumptions about how cultures are defined and how the process by which we, as subjects of a modern empiricist worldview, perform the exploration of a culture – that is, anthropology.
Welcome to NU.

What the hell am I on about?
FEZ is about exploring NU

• Every puzzle you solve uncovers some new historical riddle about the culture of this alien race in a city called NU, whose world you cohabit.

• You don’t actually meet living citizens of NU until about 2/3s of the way through the first 100% of the game (completion is like 210%, one more irritant to blame Phil Fish about)

• This means you’re wandering in this beautiful, mysterious, world of ruins.
What is relevant enough about NU that it got put in the game?
prehistory
Religion

Hear the owls.
See their effigy.
Assemble the parliament.
Class Structure, ties of dependence
Mythology and Legitimating Superstructure
But above all, Science and Language. These are centre stage for the puzzles—the game.
How do we discover these facts?
We rummage through ruins
We decipher old texts
We look at old paintings
This functions similarly to nascent anthropology during the colonial period.
We have our Rosetta Stone
Our study of mythological kings
Dicking around in graves
Finding premodern humanoid remains
Questions of race and speciation

But this time reversed
There are problematics and differentiators, but I think those function as a response to this core analogy, rather than breaking it.
Thesis (ii) - Fez accomplishes this via a nuanced reading, it is self-aware, it is ‘polysemeanctic’ (Dante)
Self Awareness
The reboot sequence

Polytron -- BirdyBIOS - V12.23b, a Laser Check (TM) Ally
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PLYTRN PRTBLPRO2.0 Deluxe ACPI BIOS Rev 1008

Main Processor : PLY Powertron(tm) 23Mhz
Memory Testing : 640k OK

Memory Frequency is at 16 Mhz, Quad Channel mode
  Primary Master : PLYTRN PL1000-23
  Primary Slave : Empty
  Secondary Master : PLYTRN DSK-100 Floppy Disk Drive
  Secondary Slave : Empty

Press DEL to enter SETUP ; press Alt+F2 to enter FISH utility
14/12/2009-Plytrn-PPP-2.0
The sidechannel puzzle solutions

• Sometimes you have to hear things
• The qr codes
  • The qr codes being *constructed*
Polysemanty

Something Dante Alighieri came up with to sound smart, also biblical interpretations and stuff. Basically, that a text has multiple meanings addressed to multiple audiences (like an esoteric crowd, Sufis and shit.)

But I mean, from a formalist perspective, what does this mean? Imma say – the Existence of signifiers with loose yet potent meaning.
Aliens?

The game ends with a star portal to the moon or an asteroid, populated with statues of mythological figures (the squids) and gods (the owls).

Does this mean they were real?
The whole 2d subjects of a 3d world thing
The 2001-esque ending sequence

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tidAS_1l-ME#t=178
Reminiscent of powers of ten, the old science vid
Point being, Fez is art and stuff.