Indian captivity narratives. Redemptive violence, violence in the service of honor and justice, seems legitimate in American culture. The *America's Army* website reinforces this goal of valorizing redemptive violence by featuring the biographies of real military heroes. The aggressive marketing of *America's Army* included for a while (2007–2010) a mobile mission simulator (VAE—Virtual Army Experience), which the project took to shopping malls and high schools. Still in the pursuit of duplicating the real experience, several of the *America's Army* game developers attended a five-day "Mini Basic Combat Training" event at the army's Fort Jackson.

A major theme in Allen's book is the larger influence of games like *America's Army* on Americans, especially young people. The extensive marketing of the game contributes to the militarization of the culture, with a goal (intended or not) of turning everyone into a "virtual soldier" (p. 10). Allen sees his case study as unveiling the trend toward collapsing the distinction between virtual space and "meatspace," the "physical world of flesh and blood" (p. 22). This is where his discussion joins the larger scholarly examination of the effects of digital games on cognition, including the structures of the brain.

Allen's ethnographic training as an anthropologist means that he embraces the trend of ethnographers' eschewing "objectivity" and comfortably making his own experiences and reactions part of the ethnographic account. He felt like one of the "embedded reporters" who work in the combat zone in Iraq and Afghanistan, and like those reporters he had to navigate a tricky balance between being an outsider and an insider. As the funding for the *AA* project began to decline and morale of the workplace also declined, Allen experienced increased stress in his stance as an embedded ethnographer. When he began receiving threatening comments from the project director, General Casey Warynski, he decided the research had concluded.

Play scholars should not overlook Allen's book as just another study of FPS games. His is a unique study, both microscopic in its examination of the work of the game developers and macroscopic in its putting the development of *America's Army* into the larger perspective of the rise of the militarization of American culture and the creation of a military-entertainment complex—the late-capitalist version of the military-industrial complex President Eisenhower warned us about in his 1961 farewell address. Allen's book is smart about many of the issues the reader will find in the body of scholarship on digital gaming and culture.

Jay Mechling, *University of California, Davis, Davis, CA*

On Video Games: The Visual Politics of Race, Gender, and Space

In the current sociopolitical climate, Soraya Murray provides a significant

intervention into the construction of race and gender in video games. She begins by interrogating the intersection of cultural studies, visual studies, and game studies to understand how games work as cultural reflections and tools of cultural production through their representations of social systems. Murray argues that video games, as complex systems of visual culture, "create and uphold value systems and hierarchies of one constituency," often the dominant class, at the expense of another (p. 46).

This study arises from a post-9/11 cultural context undergirded by the widely perpetuated, yet fraught, narrative in which Al-Qaeda, the brown Islamic Other, attacked wholesome white Americans in the World Trade Center complex. She demonstrates how AAA title video games (games with the highest budgets and levels of promotiomn) reflect and spur the political anxieties regarding race, gender, and globalization that followed the attacks on the twin towers. The first two chapters, which focus on representations through avatars, draw upon the theories of racial and ethnic constructions from Edward Said, Lisa Nakamura, and Tara McPherson to engage Adrienne Shaw's discussion of representation in games in *Gaming at the Edge*. Murray argues that games reflect real-world matrices of power. Her readings of *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation* (Ubisoft, 2012), *The Last of Us* (Naughty Dog, 2013), *Spec Ops: The Line* (Yager Development, 2012)*,* and *Tomb Raider* (Crystal Dynamics, 2013) analyze intersectionality in the politics of identity and digital representation. Murray's close reading of Avaline, the protagonist of *Liberation* who is creole and mulata from an affluent father, depicts how the character

deploys her ethnic and racial identities to infiltrate different socioeconomic and racialized contexts in Colonial America.

Contrasting her discussion of Aveline's ethnic and racial performances, Murray observes that the construction of whiteness often goes unstudied and turns a critical eye toward how games as forms of visual politics of the dominant culture construct "whiteness in peril." Situating Joel from *The Last of Us* in conversation with *Spec Ops: The Line*, Murray underscores the White-Other dichotomy in which a white male protagonist is tasked with defending the world from a racialized enemy. Murray highlights how the tensions in these games conjure the same anxieties as the 9/11 narrative of whiteness traumatized by a racialized Other. She engages Lara Croft in *Tomb Raider* to complicate the discourse of traumatized whiteness with gender. This title presents Lara Croft's victimhood and vulnerability to evoke the sense that the player must protect her. Invoking Stuart Hall, Murray demonstrates how gendered whiteness uses ambivalence to construct the myth of imperiled whiteness situated both as tasked with structural power yet victimized by an encroaching racialized threat.

Following the critical analyses of avatars, Murray complicates the discourse of representation in games by arguing that game spaces and landscapes, wrought with cultural ideologies, also deserve scrutiny. In these latter chapters, Murray underscores the reflexive relationship between affective experiences between digital and physical locations. She argues that gaming landscapes are tools of imperialist expansion. She synthesizes level design—the formalized practice of training the

player to understand the game—with W. J. T. Mitchell's discussion of landscapes as cultural constructions that transform processes of representing nature and ways of normalizing imperialist expansions to underscore gamescapes as simulacra of real-world locations. To exemplify this argument, she discusses how *Metal Gear Solid V: Phantom Pain* (Kojima Productions, 2015) draws from a post-9/11 narrative of Afghani-Islamic terrorism to construct a simulacrum of Afghanistan in need of intervention.

Having understood the need to scrutinize gaming spaces in the discourse of representations, Murray turns to games that envision dystopic futures, underscoring the anxieties of globalization, violence, and otherness present in these fantastical worlds. She situates *Max Payne 3* (Rockstar Studios, 2012), in which a Brazilian favela serves as the backdrop for the white male protagonist, in conversation with *Remember Me* (Dontnot Entertainment, 2013), in which the megaghetto literally structures a hierarchy of class. In both these games, the imagined future draws on racial and class stereotypes, presenting dark-skinned enemies in spaces that reflect what Manuel Castells terms the Fourth World—those left out of the utopian vision of globalization. In reflecting on these games, Murray leans on the work of Nezar AlSayyad to argue that futures envisioned by the two games only increase the disparities between class, race, transnational flow. She concludes that video games "offer imaginative capacities to envision poten-

tial geopolitical eventualities" (p. 228).

Critiques of racial representations in games often focus on the construction of marginalized racial and ethnic identities, and a major contribution of this work is its insight into the construction and normalizing of whiteness in the current social climate. Murray's study takes a crucial look at the current sociopolitical context that often situates whiteness in peril, demonstrating how video games also reflect this construct back upon us. Her close readings of games are only strengthened by her engagement with the reflections of developers and critics. This book is provocative in its articulation of games and visual politics of race, gender, and space. Kishonna L. Gray's *Race, Gender, and Deviance in Xbox Live: Theoretical Perspectives from the Virtual Margins* delves into the application of intersectionality to the study of video gaming culture and may provide interesting parallels with Murray's book.

This text offers valuable insight for game studies as well as cultural studies. Each chapter is well theorized, and Murray's writing often includes block quotes from the theorists she uses to build her arguments. This affords readers some help if needed in familiarizing themselves with these theories. She also provides overviews of the games under observation, summarizes her theoretical frameworks and situates them in conversation with each other, and then applies the scholarly frames to the games.

—Michael Anthony DeAnda, *Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, IL*