

decide what data to collect during game play and how the data can be used to both inform player progression through the game and to assess the efficacy of the intervention overall. Reliable outcomes assessment is key to demonstrating the utility of spending the time, money, and energy required to design and implement high-quality games in schools. The chapter on measuring success discusses the difficulty of measuring some of the more ineffable aspects of deep learning and also provides tools to help do so.

The book's final chapter addresses the current craze for gamification and makes it clear that the design practices outlined in the book differ importantly from the many ways that gamification has been marketed as a cure-all for society's problems. As the authors emphasize at the start of the book, games must be embedded and contextualized to have a lasting impact on players. In this final section, they only touch on one of the most important issues for games in this space—how to get good games to the audiences that need them most. Despite all the effort that goes into designing demonstrably effective games, it is very difficult to distribute them to any significant percentage of children either in the United States or abroad. There are many structural and political challenges to introducing new elements into school curricula, but unless more efforts are made to address them, resonant games will not reach those who need them most.

*Resonant Games* is an excellent book, written by experienced educators and game designers, that provides both practical suggestions for good educational game development and the theoretical under-

pinnings for the principles the authors espouse. Good quality black and white illustrations also support the text. I highly recommend this book.

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### **Future Gaming: Creative Interventions in Video Game Culture**

*Paolo Ruffino*

London, England: Goldsmiths Press,  
2018. References and index. 145 pp.  
\$30.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9781906897550

In the introduction to *Future Gaming: Creative Interventions in Video Game Culture*, Paolo Ruffino notes that the game industry has been obsessed with predicting its own future as a force for world changing even as it is in the midst of an identity crisis (and, notably, a labor crisis). The narrative of games is certainly forward facing: whole conventions are dedicated to revealing the next big thing. Yet optimistic views of a continually progressive future for gaming do not reconcile well with a cultural moment that includes “gamergate” —a culture war over “gamer” identity that started with an attack on game designer Zoe Quinn by an ex-partner and escalated to include attacks on feminist or inclusive voices in game design, journalism, and academia—and its lingering, inescapable, aftermath. Ruffino notes that “these stories about the medium only hide the complexities of the problems they seek to resolve and are reassuring precisely because they do not change anything” (p. 6). Ruffino

offers his approach to creative game studies as an antidote to the repetitiveness of some of the narratives of the game industry perpetuated in games academia, and as such the volume acts not so much as a history of its own but as a manifesto calling for renewed attention to the potential value of game studies as a field of inquiry.

Throughout the volume, Ruffino offers several case studies to advance the approach of a creative game studies that is “intuitive, timely, performative, anti-authoritarian and anxious” (p. 124). Ruffino moves rapidly between case studies to demonstrate the value of the approach, looking at gamification and the consequences of increased quantification of self; the ethical problems raised by the notion of independence tied to production in “indie” game development; questions of control and ownership raised by PlayStation hacking; the impossibility of unearthing games history through the lens of the Atari *E.T.* dumpsite excavation; and the fundamental controversies of games ownership and identity raised during gamer gate. Due in part to the efficient brevity and conversational style of the volume, some events are explored rather rapidly. However, the connections raised throughout offer fuel for rethinking not only how we tell the history of gaming but also the history of game studies. But the overall readability is commendable, particularly given the ambitious scope of the work.

Ruffino intriguingly advances and even endorses a forum-discovered characterization of games academics as “parasites,” offering a provocation that invites us to embrace the apparent lack of productivity in academic circles: “To become

parasites in gaming means rewriting its history, telling different stories, and making *different differences* between the stories we already know. In the end, we might ‘produce nothing,’ but we might become better hosts and guests for whoever comes next” (p. 119).

Most scholars might argue with the characterization of scholarly work as producing “nothing,” and Ruffino goes on to demonstrate how meaningful both traditional and nontraditional scholarly practices can become. He notably cites Laine Nooney’s work on games history, Anna Anthropy’s work as scholar-designer-archivist, and similar projects as playing a key role in reframing the very stories we tell about games. I would add to his list the important work of Bo Ruberg and Adrienne Shaw among others on queer games (a subject that goes mostly unexplored here); Carly Kocurek and Jennifer deWinter’s series on influential video game designers; and Kishonna Gray’s essential work on race and “woke” gaming, to name only a few, but such scholarship certainly demonstrates what Ruffino argues as the creative potential of alternative narratives of games history.

Placing Ruffino’s work in conversation with these scholars offers an optimistic story for thinking about the future of game studies, if not always much of a case for optimism about the future of games themselves. Given the increased attention within the scholarly community to questions of ethics raised by abusive games industry labor practices and the fundamental social and ecological impacts of the games industry, Ruffino’s work is a timely read for scholars who (like myself) may be questioning the very value of producing

scholarly work that seems to simultaneously go unread while becoming subject to attack. I particularly recommend it to graduate students and others entering game studies as a field of discourse and

looking to reflect on what mark their work might leave.

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