Max Born who soon strayed from the prescribed structures of Anchor Stone Building Blocks or of Nobel chemist Sir Harry Kroto who built molecules with Meccano.

The bulk of the book, however, covers the cultural context and intentions behind the objects even though Zinguer concedes that it is implausible that direct pedagogical aims, like current professional debates, could be absorbed through play. Still, toys prepare children for later pursuits indirectly because there is architecture in the play of inventors and children through an intimation of modern methods.

—Frederika Eilers, *McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada*

How Games Move Us: Emotion by Design

Katherine Isbister
Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2016.
Acknowledgments, introduction, notes, and index. 192 pp. $24.95 cloth.
ISBN: 9780262034265

How Games Move Us is the latest addition to MIT's Playful Thinking series, a collection of compact, interdisciplinary books designed not for a specialist audience but rather for the generally curious. In the words of the series editors, the Playful Thinking line of books is "for any reader interested in playing more thoughtfully or thinking more playfully" (p. ix).

How Games Move Us fits this charge well: with uncluttered prose, focused discussion, and modest but lively and carefully selected examples, it asks about the principal design mechanisms for creating emotion in players. The provenance of these mechanisms are choice and flow, phenomena that Isbister argues distinguish games from other mediated experiences. The meaningful decisions of the players and the investment and control consequential to those decisions give "games their unique power to create empathy and connection" (p. 2). Games, in other words, work differently from film and television, print and radio. They invite conversation and its attendant intimacy, creating a rich possibile space for evoking a range of emotions and experiences for players.

Consider embodiment, for example, or the way a game's avatar comes to signify its player's desires and decisions over time and space and through various physical and cognitive dimensions. Isbister explains that there is a "joining of player to virtual self through avatar-based action" (p. 13). Control causes connection, connection incites identification, and identification engages the emotional register, which then stimulates more meaningful control and connection. In describing, for example, both the poignant existentialism conjured by *Cart Life* (2011) (and its characters' struggles to balance work and home) and the provocative combination of paranoia and psychosis (and the right to religious freedom) of *Waco Resurrection* (2004), Isbister argues that games—and by extension, their designers—"have the capacity to take us into different emotional territory than any other medium" (p. 131). We are on the verge, ostensibly, of a revolution in creative expression and understanding.

Admittedly, it is hard not to be captivated by Isbister's enthusiasm and to hap-

pily travel with her as she traverses the art and craft of designing for social play, physical play, and more. Still, there is the niggling (and inevitable?) question of what exactly constitutes "meaningful choice." After all, even the most complex games offer players only a handful of options in the grand scheme of things and, therefore, the promise rather than the reality of choice. But I suppose that will have to be a question for another book.

For the uninitiated, I expect that *How Games Move Us* will be pleasant reading, and it might make a good opening text in an Introduction to Game Design course or find its way onto a friend's summer reading list. More experienced readers, though, will likely be better served by exploring Isbister's traditional scholarly work, upon which *How Games Move Us* is based and examples of which are cited in the book's notes. That said, even seasoned researchers will appreciate the ease with which Isbister confronts the complexity and inscrutability of human emotion and play. Games and feelings both are strange and powerful things, and *How Games Move Us* provides an accessible lens for examining them.

—Judd Ethan Ruggill, *University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ*

Shigeru Miyamoto: Super Mario Bros., Donkey Kong, The Legend of Zelda

Jennifer deWinter

New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015. Acknowledgments, foreword, gameography, works cited, and index. 184 pp. $16.00 paper.
ISBN: 9781628923889

As the video game industry ages, the need to discuss game designers and their contributions becomes paramount. While there are several ways of looking at and contextualizing past milestones in the game industry—such as the books in the MIT Press Platform Studies series—Jennifer deWinter and Carly Kocurek's Influential Video Game Designers series, published by Bloomsbury, is an attempt to move forward the conversation between the designers and their games over an entire career.

In the series' debut book, *Shigeru Miyamoto*, deWinter examines the creator of *Mario, Donkey Kong, Pikmin,* and many other games to figure out how the designer's life and interests affected his game designs. Miyamoto is a fitting icon to begin a series like this, considering his contributions to games are both large and significant. It is hard to imagine what games would look like without *Mario, Donkey Kong*, or the *Legend of Zelda's* influence on design. However, biography is hard to write effectively in a book about game design. Readers will want to learn about a designer's life but also see it rooted in his or her art. Game designers are also often collaborative projects with many participants. As deWinter points out, Miyamoto's narrative is tied to Nintendo and its many employees.

DeWinter chooses to move beyond this linkage by emphasizing key aspects of Miyamoto's life and training. The book's structure follows this thinking by focusing on the Miyamoto's work in distinct areas, including hardware and software development, experience design, storytelling, and the overall Japanese cultural context of his work. DeWinter also discusses the late Nintendo game designer Gunpei Yokoi's