the game, Cheng describes each scenario so clearly and in such detail that an intimate knowledge of the particular game is not necessary.

Cheng's most interesting discussions are his anecdotes about his own experiences playing the games he examines. The personal touch makes these stories relatable, but Cheng maintains an academic tone that keeps them from sounding like mere journal entries. For instance, Cheng reflects on the timing with which he decided to detonate a nuclear bomb destroying a village in *Fallout 3* as it connected with a John Sousa march playing in the background. Did his timing just at the climactic moment of the march come from his musical expertise, or was it shaped by his desire for maximum showmanship and the fact that the video recordings of his game play would feed the lectures he would eventually deliver (pp. 47–48)? Also compelling is Cheng's study of how the voice chat function in *Team Fortress 2* shapes interactions between players in the real world and their virtual realm. I find particularly fascinating his examination of how female gamers, a minority of *Team Fortress 2* players, are treated differently than male players, that is, his asking if women have a "coming out" moment when they speak over voice chat and are recognized as female (p. 151).

Throughout the book, Cheng has done a superb job of referencing discussions from vibrant online forums where game—and game audio—communities thrive. Links to audio and video examples add depth to the reader's understanding of the written examples and images Cheng provides. Overall, the work is a superb collection of powerful ethnomusicological writings that will undoubtedly become a staple text on the game audio scholar's library shelf.

—Matthew Thompson, *The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI*

Internet Spaceships Are Serious Business: An *EVE Online* Reader

Marcus Carter, Kelly Bergstrom, and Darryl Woodford, eds.
Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016. Introduction, contributors, and index.
230 pp. $22.95 paper.
ISBN: 978081669908

EVE Online is a game I wish I played. The reasons that I do not are numerous but *Internet Spaceships Are Serious Business* highlights one of the most crucial: it is a game space that appears actually to discourage participation. It has a steep learning curve, requires a large commitment of time from participants, and has frequent and brutal sanctions against failure. The editors even go so far as to claim that the game "scream[s] 'don't play me' as a new user" because if "a video game should always be fun, then *EVE Online* isn't a very good video game" (p. xi). Perhaps that is why, although *EVE Online* was released by CCP Games to the public over thirteen years ago, it has not received nearly the academic scrutiny many other Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPG) such as *World of Warcraft* have received. And yet the fifteen essays, written by a mix of academics, developers, and players, tackle the issue of this game's

definitive and enduring appeal to a highly dedicated player base. In doing so, they additionally expand our understanding of how to conceptualize both the nature of a game and the notion of what is entailed in the activity of play.

Incorporating chapters from academic researchers and those who design and play the game allows a nuanced look into the experience of *EVE Online*. These researchers provide perspectives that, we can argue, are lacking in other collections attempting to explain the workings and appeal of an online gaming experience. The chapters by the game players and developers do, indeed, give the reader insight into *EVE Online* that can be especially useful because of the game's unique nature. It is not a game easily undertaken to get a brief feel for the game. I find, then, these perspectives of seasoned players beneficial, though these chapters tend, quite understandably, not to be as complex or long as the chapters written by scholars.

The editors organized the book into three general areas. The first section concerns the structural design of *EVE Online* and how it affects player experience. Kelly Bergstrom and Marcus Carter's chapter serves as an overview of the game, its structures, rules, and some of its unique play styles. The chapter also provides necessary background for those unfamiliar with this MMORPG before delving into more theoretical discussions. Christopher Paul's chapter tackles the central reason for *EVE Online*'s extremely high difficulty curve. Paul argues that the game's difficulty serves to construct a player base that becomes more passionate and driven to interact with the game while also creating players invested in maintaining the unique

characteristics of the *EVE Online* experience. By limiting what the game actually teaches players in their earliest experiences, *EVE Online* forces them to decide to quit or reach out to those already playing the game, that is, to individuals who are invested in maintaining the game's current structure.

The second section focuses on the experience of playing *EVE Online* within the structure created by the rules and design—and the culture that has emerged out of them. Not surprisingly, this section contains the largest number of contributions written by nonacademics. A consistent theme of these essays is how *EVE Online* players have constructed a game that actively encourages contradictory behavior. Players need to rely on others to flourish at the same time they increase their likelihood of success through cheating, lying, stealing, or violence. Writing separately but illustrating similar points, Catherine Goodfellow and Richard Page point out how different external social forces—such as reconceptualized historical ideologies or preexisting social groups that allow players to import their structures into an existing system—influence *EVE Online* players. The authors highlight the interactions that exist when the external world and the virtual world connect and collide.

The final section focuses primarily on the exploration and preservation of history in a game space. With so much of *EVE Online*'s content and interactions generated by players, history also becomes the purview and concern of these players. Martin R. Gibbs, Marcus Carter, and Jo Ji Mori analyze how the *EVE Online* community memorializes the real-world death

of one of its better-known players. The authors interpret such efforts as extending the methods employed in the concrete world into a new virtual space—made especially lasting by the player-driven nature of this game. Nick Weber discusses the nature of history in *EVE Online* as it relates to lore versus the personal history of the players involved in it.

This collection of essays takes a thoughtful and valuable look at an under-researched game phenomenon. It does not require great familiarity with *EVE* because it does an excellent job of providing necessary background in individual chapters, a glossary, and a thorough introduction by Bergstrom and Carter. Including chapters written by both players and designers also adds unique insight compared to similar collections. The inclusion of player-created and in-game images also adds visual clarification to several chapters. Overall this work serves as an excellent consideration of the world of *EVE Online* for any researcher interested in a type of play most of us consider more laborious than entertaining.

—Matthew Wysocki, *Flagler College, St Augustine FL*

Debugging Game History: A Critical Lexicon

Henry Lowood and Raiford Guins, eds. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2016. Foreword, introduction, contributors, and index. 464 pp. $49.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780262034197

As the first book in The MIT Press' new Game Histories series, *Debugging Game History: A Critical Lexicon* has a heavy burden to lift. It needs to establish the importance and usefulness of the series and, because it takes the form of a lexicon for a growing area of study, it also must create a space for a conversation in which it will take part. On both counts, the book succeeds. This success is, at least in part, due to the perceived newness of game studies as a discipline and to a lack of critical historical analysis in the formative years of the discipline. The goal of the book, then, is to provide an explication of key concepts in game history that furthers our historical understanding of games to move beyond "the blindly celebratory" or the "merely descriptive" to a more analytical phase (p. xiii). In trying to achieve this goal, coeditors Henry Lowood and Raiford Guins bring together a broad, interdisciplinary group of authors to examine forty-nine key terms relevant to game history. Though largely focused on issues related specifically to video games, the book seeks a broader stance.

On the surface, the book takes a lexical approach, focusing on the emergence and evolution of the vocabulary of game historians. But smartly, it broadens the approach, allowing the authors of each entry to move away from purely chronological evolution of the terms when needed to provide both connections beyond game studies as well as moments of gentle intervention that break down ideas apparently calcified beyond their usefulness. Moreover, a number of terms provide subtle provocations for how we think about games, recognizing that an understanding of the concepts included and the history of games overall has implications beyond the study of games, particularly into issues of